



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO

CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF
DCASE news
CULTURAL AFFAIRS & SPECIAL EVENTS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

September 29, 2013

Media Contact:

Cindy Gatziolis

312.744.0573

Cindy.gatziolis@cityofchicago.org

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

press@cityofchicago.org

REVITALIZED 2013 TASTE OF CHICAGO PROFITABLE FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE 2007

Festival Generated a Profit of \$272,000; Generated an Estimated \$106 million in Economic Impact and \$2.35 Million Dollars in Tax Revenue to the City; Supported over 1,100 Jobs

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) announced today that the 2013 Taste of Chicago was profitable for the first time since 2007 as the revitalized festival continues to improve and succeed. The festival made \$272,000 in profit, generated an estimated \$106 million in total business activity to the Chicago economy and generated more than \$2.35 million in tax receipts for the city. In addition, the festival supported 1,122 full- and part-time jobs generating \$39.5 million in wages and salaries earned by employees of businesses associated with or impacted by the Taste of Chicago.

“We revamped the Taste to bring new food options, including food trucks and internationally-renowned chefs and music from chart-topping acts to attract people from all over the world to our city,” said Mayor Rahm Emanuel. “I am pleased to see that the Taste is proving to be popular, with higher attendance this year and its first profit since 2007. The Taste is a great event that has far-reaching economic impact on our city and I am pleased that we continue to put on an outstanding week of activities.”

The Emanuel administration made critical changes to revitalize the Taste – a shorter time period, top-level music acts, innovations such as pop-up restaurants and chef du jour, as well as creative ideas like adding food trucks to the evening concerts. All of these factors contributed to the outstanding attendance to the festival, which led to positive economic results. The Taste of Chicago had, for several years, been operating at a loss, with diminishing interest and attendance from the public. Upon taking office, Mayor Emanuel returned control of Taste to DCASE and refocused the festival.

“The economic impact comes, in large part, from visitors traveling to Chicago to attend Taste,” said Scott Ranssi, Chief Operating Officer of Custom Intercept Solutions. “Our research indicates that approximately 59 percent of the event attendees were from outside of Chicago and 15 percent of these non-local

residents stayed in a hotel. Approximately 74 percent of visitors indicated that Taste of Chicago was their primary reason for visiting Chicago. Including hotel spending, these visitors report, on average, spending \$46 per person per day in Chicago outside of the Taste.”

The findings were compiled in a report by Custom Intercept Solutions. The estimates used in this analysis were based on the IMPLAN system, which is currently used by hundreds of universities and government entities throughout the country.

“This year at the Taste we brought exciting new options together with timeless favorites and the result was an outstanding five day festival,” said Michelle T. Boone, Commissioner, Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events. “We’ll continue to work to have Taste drive tourism and strengthen our economy and provide residents and visitors an annual opportunity to enjoy our fantastic culinary scene.”

The 65 participating restaurants which included Wishbone, The Smoke Daddy and Jin Ju were excited about the success of this year’s festival and look forward to next year.

“The Taste of Chicago was the best move we made in 2013,” said Antoine Elie of FliP Crêpes. “As a first time vendor, we were very pleased with the support provided by the City and organizers. We will definitely come back next year.”

“After doing cooking demos at the Taste for years, we finally took the plunge and had a pop-up booth for two days,” said Dan Smith of Hearty Restaurant. “The experience was fantastic and we’re already making plans for next year’s event!”

Next year’s Taste is already being planned, as the City looks to build on this success. The 2014 Taste of Chicago is scheduled for July 9-13 in Chicago’s Grant Park. For more information, visit tasteofchicago.us

The Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) is dedicated to enriching Chicago’s artistic vitality and cultural vibrancy. This includes fostering the development of Chicago’s non-profit arts sector, independent working artists and for-profit arts businesses; providing a framework to guide the City’s future cultural and economic growth, via the 2012 Chicago Cultural Plan; marketing the City’s cultural assets to a worldwide audience; and presenting high-quality, free and affordable cultural programs for residents and visitors.

#