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MAYOR EMANUEL AND CHOOSE CHICAGO ANNOUNCE RECORD TOURISM IN 2016

Chicago Welcomed 54.1 Million Visitors in 2016 - an Increase of 1.5 Million Visitors over Previous Year, Supporting More Than 4,600 New Jobs

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and David Whitaker, President & CEO of Choose Chicago, today announced that visitors to Chicago in 2016 reached 54.1 million – a new record and 2.9 percent increase over the previous year's record performance. The increase of 1.5 million visitors moves the city closer to reaching the Mayor's goal of 55 million visitors.

"Three years ago we set a goal for Chicago to reach 55 million visitors by 2020," Mayor Emanuel said. "We had an incredible and record-breaking year in 2016, but we are not stopping there. We have seen record increases in jobs and investment from our tourism industry, which is creating economic opportunities that reach every neighborhood in the city of Chicago."

"We are thrilled to be pacing so well in our collective efforts to grow visitation to Chicago, and the impact of these numbers speak to the importance of our industry and the role we can play in moving Chicago forward not only as a great city to live, work and play but also a great city to visit or meet in," Whitaker said. "As we look ahead to 2017 and beyond, it remains imperative for us to focus on building the destination's profile internationally and educating and reminding our partners in the travel industry, and the travelers we target, that Chicago is not only an amazing city to visit, but a top-notch place to convene and do business."

In 2016, Chicago's tourism industry supported an estimated 145,137 jobs (3.3 percent increase) and \$15 billion in direct tourism spending (2.6 percent increase). That's an increase of more than 20,000 new jobs since Mayor Emanuel took office.

Chicago's visitor industry is supported by group business (also known as major meetings and conventions), paired with increasing leisure visitation. Leisure visitation reached a record of 40.65 million in 2016, a gain of 3.4 percent. Meanwhile, business visitation grew by 2.1 percent to 11.9 million.

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Chicago welcomed 52.55 million domestic visitors (+3.1 percent) and an estimated 1.56 million overseas visitors (-3.7 percent) in 2016. While there is projected continued growth from emerging markets such as China (+22.7 percent), India (+7.1 percent) and South Korea (+10.2 percent), economic uncertainty and unfavorable exchange rates are expected to influence declines in key European markets such as the United Kingdom (-18.3 percent), Germany (-6.1 percent), France (-3.6 percent) and Spain (-14.5 percent), as well as South America's largest market, Brazil (-19.4 percent).

Of the 31 major meetings and conventions held in Chicago in 2016, several set records: eight saw record-setting attendance; four had their most exhibiting companies participate; and four had their highest net square footage of exhibition space. These 31 meetings and conventions welcomed 916,888 attendees to Chicago in 2016. The estimated overall economic impact of major meetings and conventions held in Chicago in 2016 totals \$1.32 billion.

Looking ahead, there will be 35 major meetings and conventions coming to Chicago in 2017. The number of room nights projected to be generated from these groups is 1.04 million, a 6.4 percent increase in room nights from those hosted in 2016.

Assisting in continuing the momentum, Choose Chicago's convention sales team surpassed its 2016 annual sales goal by successfully booking 59 new major future meetings and conventions to be held at and in collaboration with McCormick Place (up from 55 new meetings secured in 2015). Choose Chicago's convention sales team collaborated with the local hotel industry to secure commitments from bids on 2,173 future "in-house" meetings. Total bookings resulted in 2,505,207 room nights for Chicago hotels. The economic impact of these combined meetings is estimated at just under \$3.8 billion in estimated future spend in Chicago.

Choose Chicago is aggressively working to bring in meetings and conventions that have never been held in Chicago. The strategy is paying off - of the 59 new future major meetings and conventions that have chosen to meet in Chicago, 22 will be convening in the city for the first time with an additional eight choosing to meet in Chicago for the first time in over ten years. Supporting Choose Chicago and the City's 2020 strategy, 30 of the 59 meetings bid on and won are scheduled to meet in Chicago in the next three years.

Eight new hotels opened their doors in Chicago's Central Business District in 2016 bringing the total number of daily rooms available to 40,947, an increase of 4.2 percent. Overall room demand trailed closely at nearly three percent growth in 2016, setting a record in nine out of twelve months of the year, with leisure room demand reaching record levels eleven out of twelve months of the year. Chicago has welcomed 24 new hotels since 2013 resulting in more than 5,400 daily rooms added over the past four years. Another six new hotels are scheduled to open in 2017 and eight in 2018, further demonstrating investor confidence in Chicago.

In 2016 tourism in Chicago generated \$911 million in total tax revenue (2.2 percent increase), \$2.28 billion in Chicago Hotel Revenue, and \$127.3 million in Chicago Hotel Tax Revenue. For every dollar invested in Choose Chicago, \$32 dollars in state and local taxes are generated.

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