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**MAYOR EMANUEL AND CHOOSE CHICAGO ANNOUNCE CONDE NAST TRAVELER'S
NAMES CHICAGO AS BEST BIG CITY IN THE U.S. FOR SECOND YEAR IN A ROW**

*The travel publication's top accolade comes as Choose Chicago releases third quarter
of record high tourism levels in 2018*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and David Whitaker, President & CEO of Choose Chicago, today announced that for the second consecutive year, Conde Nast Traveler's readers have voted Chicago as the best big city in the U.S. Last year was a first for Chicago and once again, the publication's Reader's Choice Awards voted the city to the top spot in its annual survey.

Condé Nast Traveler is a luxury and lifestyle travel magazine published by Condé Nast. The publication's Readers' Choice Awards are billed as the longest-running and most prestigious recognition of excellence in the travel industry and are commonly known as 'the best of the best of travel.'

"Congratulations to all of our residents who worked to make Chicago the best big city in America. From our award-winning restaurants, to world-renowned cultural institutions and every exciting neighborhood in between, this recognition is as much about their efforts as it is about our strong tourism industry. Together, we'll continue highlighting all the best our City has to offer, making sure Chicago remains a top tourist destination for years to come," said Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel.

This award comes on the heels of the city garnering national and international acclaim and buzz for its world-renowned culinary scene, Michelin-starred and James Beard award-winning restaurants, its popular riverfront cruises and the new Riverwalk as well as the increasing number of hotel options and the city's reputation for world-class architecture, live theater and entertainment.

"It is always significant when a leading travel publication and its savvy and knowledgeable readers vote you the number one travel destination in the nation," said David Whitaker, President & CEO of Choose Chicago. "But to be selected now for a second year in a row – this simply speaks volumes of the kind of city and destination Chicago has become, the kind

of experiences discovered here and validation of the overall effort so many in our community are making every day to invite and welcome the world here.”

The Condé Nast Traveler Readers’ Choice Awards are the longest-running and most prestigious recognition of excellence in the travel industry and are commonly known as “the best of the best of travel.” Conde Nast readers have been rating their travel experiences via the publication’s Readers’ Choice Awards since 1988.

This recognition affirms the continued positive momentum being generated by Chicago’s Hospitality and Meetings Industry.

Mayor Emanuel and Whitaker also announced Chicago closed three quarters of 2018 with record tourism levels. For the first nine months of 2018, Hotel Room Demand grew 4.9%, establishing another record for that time period.

Choose Chicago has also updated the annual visitor arrival analysis for the first half of the year. Overall visitors to Chicago are pacing up 4.4%. Of particular importance, of all visitors to Chicago, Overnight Visitors are up 6.0% through the first half of the year (double the pace of last year).

Along with record high Hotel Room Demand, Group Room Demand, including attendance for major meetings and conventions, was particularly strong through third quarter 2018, generating a year-to-date growth of 12.5%. Fifteen of the major citywide conventions hosted this year in Chicago have reported record-breaking attendance and ten reported record-breaking exhibitor participation, helping fuel growth in Group Demand.

Growth was also reported from numerous key international arrival markets. Arrival data compiled by US Customs at O’Hare and Midway tracking country-of-origin passport holders on direct flights now through August reflect an overall growth in International Visitor Arrivals of 3.4%. Leading key inbound markets included Brazil (up 18.3%), the United Kingdom (up 12.7%), South Korea (up 9.6%), Italy (up 7.2%), Mexico (up 6.0%) and China (up 4.8%).

Today’s announcement occurred at the Sophy Hyde Park. Developed by The Olympia Companies and SMART Hotels, Sophy Hyde Park is a 98-room boutique hotel, located at the corner of 53rd Street and Dorchester Avenue in Hyde Park. The Sophy Hotel opened on October 1 and is one of eight new hotels that have opened in Chicago in 2018 with an additional three scheduled to open between now and the end of the year.

About Condé Nast Traveler

As the most discerning, up-to-the-minute voice in all things travel, Condé Nast Traveler is the global citizen's bible and muse, offering both inspiration and vital intel. Condé Nast Traveler is the most trusted and celebrated name in travel with 6 National Magazine Award wins and 26 nominations in its 30-year history. Advertising Age named Pilar Guzmán Editor of the Year in 2014 and CNTraveler.com attained 3 Webby Awards in 2015. For more, visit www.cntraveler.com.

About Choose Chicago

Choose Chicago is the official destination marketing organization for Chicago, Illinois. Its mission is to attract regional, national and international leisure visitors and major meetings and conventions to Chicago for the economic benefit of the city, the community and its membership.