

CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS
NEWS RELEASE
CHICAGO OFFICE OF TOURISM

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CHICAGO: A GALAXY OF MUSEUMS

Chicago is world renowned for its incredibly diverse collection of museums. With over 40 to choose from, highlights range from dinosaur fossils to submarines to 1960s pop art—ensuring something for every age and interest. Most museums are open everyday, some offer free admission and many have weekly free days.

Natural Science Museums

The **John G. Shedd Aquarium/Oceanarium** (1200 S. Lake Shore Drive) offers the world's largest indoor collection of aquatic mammals, reptiles, amphibians, invertebrates and fish. Wild Reef—Sharks at Shedd was unveiled as the Shedd's newest permanent exhibition in 2003. With more than 750,000 gallons of water, this exhibit allows guests to get face-to-face with 30 sharks—one of the most diverse shark exhibits in North America. The newly renovated exotic Coral Reef exhibit houses more than 500 aquatic species, demonstrating the crucial role coral reefs play in the health of oceans. Guests can watch daily feedings at the Coral Reef, where a diver hand-feeds fish and answers audience questions about the different species.

The Shedd's 3 million gallon Oceanarium—the world's largest marine mammal pavilion—will be undergoing renovations from September 2008 to summer 2009, bringing home improvements to its resident Beluga whales, dolphins, Alaskan sea otters, seals and penguins. An additional 20,000 square feet will be used to debut a major exhibit on the Great Lakes.

After exploring the oceans, visitors can gaze at the heavens at the nearby **Adler Planetarium & Astronomy Museum** (1300 S. Lake Shore Drive). The museum allows guests to lean back and relax as the Planetarium sky show takes them on a journey into outer space. The Sky Theater and StarRider™ Theater shows transport visitors to planets, moons, and distant galaxies, and cover the latest topics in space news. "Shoot for the Moon" opened in fall 2006 as the Adler's newest permanent exhibit, following the life of Captain Jim Lovell and providing an interactive look into America's plans to return to the Moon.

Mummies, Egyptian tombs, Native American artifacts, dinosaur skeletons and more than 16 million other specimens for the fields of anthropology, botany, geology and zoology are on display at **The Field Museum** (1400 S. Lake Shore Drive). In May 2008, the DNA Discovery Center opened as the Field Museum's newest permanent exhibition. The DNA Discovery Center features the state-of-the-art Pritzker Laboratory, the only facility in the world that allows visitors to watch DNA research up-close.

The city's oldest cultural institution is the **Chicago History Museum** (North Avenue & Clark Street). Through artifacts, dioramas, photographs, paintings and video presentations, the museum tells Chicago's complete story, from early frontier days to the present. Museum highlights include the Hands-On History Gallery with "please touch" artifacts; an exhibit and film on the Great Chicago Fire of 1871; and the American History Wing documenting history from the revolution to the aftermath of the Civil War. The museum underwent a massive renovation in 2005-06 and reopened in September 2006. For families with older children, teen audio tours are available for download through the museum's website.

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The Museum of Science and Industry (5700 S. Lake Shore Drive) is the largest science museum in the Western hemisphere and one of the city's most popular attractions. The museum's Henry Crown Space Center allows visitors to blast off in a simulated space shuttle ride and view the Apollo 8 spacecraft. The U-505 German submarine--on display since 1954--is the only remaining submarine of its type and a National Historic Landmark. A new underground, climate-controlled exhibit opened in 2005 and includes veteran testimonials, interactive replicas and re-enactments. Launched in May 2008, "Smart Home: Green + Wired" is a real, three-story modular and sustainable "green" home in the Museum's own backyard, teaching visitors about big and small ways to make eco-friendly living a part of your life.

Cultural History Museums

The nearby **DuSable Museum of African-American History** (740 E. 56th Place) is dedicated to the collection, documentation, preservation and study of the history and culture of Africans and Americans of African descent. Performances of music and dance, film presentations, and educational seminars are also offered.

The cultural diversity of Chicagoans has created a unique demand for neighborhood museums that focus on ethnic heritage. Mexican, Polish, Lithuanian, Swedish, Greek, and Ukrainian residents and visitors can find collections featuring their histories. There are also more than 3,500 years of Jewish history explored at **Spertus Museum** (618 S. Michigan Avenue), which features over 10,000 artifacts, objects and artworks. Spertus Museum opened their new facility, designed by the award-winning Krueck + Sexton Architects, in fall 2007. Seminars, lectures and public programming are offered year-round.

With the world's largest Polish population outside of Warsaw, it is not surprising that Chicago is home to the **Polish Museum of America** (984 N. Milwaukee Avenue) featuring art archives, costumes and a 30,000-volume library. Other neighborhood-based museums include: **Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture** (6500 S. Pulaski Road), **Swedish American Museum Center** (5211 N. Clark Street), **Hellenic Museum and Cultural Center** (801 W. Adams Street), **Ukrainian National Museum** (721 N. Oakley Boulevard) and the **Chinese-American Museum of Chicago** (238 W. 23rd Street).

The Midwest's first and the nation's largest Latino cultural museum is the **National Museum of Mexican Art** (formerly the Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum; 1852 W. 19th Street). After a recent expansion, the admission-free museum now offers 68,000 square feet of Mexican culture through a variety of art exhibits, art classes, theater, and music and dance events.

Art Museums

Several Chicago museums explore particular aspects of the visual arts. **The Art Institute of Chicago** (111 S. Michigan Avenue) is one of the world's leading art museums houses over 300,000 works of art, including a renowned impressionist and post-impressionist collection of works by Monet, Renoir, Degas, Van Gogh, Gauguin and others. Visitors can study classics such as *A Sunday on La Grande Jatte--1884* (Seurat), as well as later masterpieces such as *Nighthawks* (Edward Hopper) and *Inventions of the Monsters* (Salvador Dali). The Kraft Education Center helps young visitors appreciate art from around the world with interactive computers, videos and games.

The Art Institute expansion is underway and is expected to open in spring 2009. Known as the Modern Wing, the sparkling temple of steel, glass and limestone is being built at the southwest corner of Monroe and Columbus Drives. It will be the Art Institute's largest structure since its familiar Beaux-Arts edifice along Michigan Avenue rose in 1893 atop rubble from the Great Chicago Fire. The new wing, as well as the Nichols Bridgeway (a pedestrian bridge linking the Art Institute and Millennium Park), were designed by celebrated architect, Renzo Piano of Italy,

The Museum of Contemporary Art (220 E. Chicago Avenue) explores art dating from 1945 to present-day with a strong focus on surrealism, minimalism, conceptual photography and work by Chicago-based artists. Iconic pieces by Jasper Johns, Chuck Close and Andy Warhol are seen alongside a diverse rotation of temporary exhibits, demonstrating the many facets of contemporary visual culture. Art workshops, lectures and musical performances are held at the MCA regularly.

Loyola University Museum of Art (820 N. Michigan Avenue) opened October 2005. The Loyola University Museum of Art is dedicated to exploring art in relation to spirituality—illustrated by the first floor lobby's "five windows of faith", representing the five major world views of Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam. As a museum with an interest in educational programming, Loyola University Museum of Art reflects the University's Jesuit Mission and is dedicated to helping people of all creeds explore the roots of their own faith.

A resident organization of Columbia College, the admission-free **Museum of Contemporary Photography** (600 S. Michigan Avenue) is the only museum in the Midwest committed exclusively to photography. A more unusual form of visual art can be viewed at the **Museum of Holography** (1134 W. Washington Street) where visitors can be amazed by the three-dimensional images created by lasers.

Chicago is also home to the **National Vietnam Veterans Art Museum** (1801 S. Indiana Avenue). The collection includes more than 500 works of art, including paintings, drawings and sculptures, created by more than 95 artists from around the world, all of whom served in the Vietnam War. An audio-visual presentation and artifacts of war are also on display.

The work of local and emerging artists, as well as major traveling exhibitions from the U.S. and abroad, is frequently featured in the galleries of the **Chicago Cultural Center** (78 E. Washington Street). Housed in the first permanent Chicago Public Library building, this historical landmark boasts the world's largest Tiffany stained-glass dome (restoration scheduled for completion in June 2008), broad marble staircases, colorful mosaics and Beaux-Arts architecture. The Cultural Center offers free programs daily, including concerts, films, plays and dance performances.

Special Interest Museums

Chicago also offers museums that cater to visitors with specific interests. The **International Museum of Surgical Science** (1524 N. Lake Shore Drive), explores more than 4,000 years of the world's surgical history through artifacts, sculptures and paintings.

The McCormick Tribune Freedom Museum (445 N. Michigan Avenue) opened in April 2006. The museum was created and funded by the McCormick Tribune Foundation to commemorate its 50th anniversary and to provide an inspiring public service for America's youngest citizens. The museum is a living manifestation of the foundation's commitment to investing in our children, communities and county. It honors the three passions of the foundation's benefactor, Col. Robert McCormick—defending the First Amendment, civic engagement and the City of Chicago. A new interactive exhibit, "Vote4Me! Inside a Presidential Election", puts visitors into the shoes of a presidential candidate. "Vote4Me!" provides voter registration services for visitors and runs through election week of November 2008.

The Museum of Broadcast Communications (coming soon to 400 N. State Street) is one of only three broadcast museums in America and home to the nation's only Radio Hall of Fame. The MBC opened to the public in 1987 in Chicago's South Loop. From 1992 until 2003, the MBC was located in the Chicago Cultural Center. The Museum is closed to the public at this time and will reopen in its new 70,000-square-foot facility on State and Kinzie Streets in 2008.

The 150-year old **Notebaert Nature Museum** of the Chicago Academy of Sciences (2430 N. Cannon Drive) is the only museum that specializes in the ecology and natural history of the Midwest, from the Great Lakes to the prairies, and from rural to urban areas. The museum offers several permanent and visiting exhibits that examine the relationship between people and nature and the impact humans have on their environment, as well as summer camps and family-friendly overnight programs.

Visitors and Chicagoans planning to entertain out-of-town guests can receive Chicago brochures, reserve hotel accommodations and receive trip-planning assistance by calling toll-free 1.877.CHICAGO (1.877.244.2246), or visiting www.explorechicago.org. Brochures and information on Chicago's exciting events and activities are also available at the Visitor Information Centers. The centers are located at Chicago Water Works, 163 East Pearson Street at Michigan Avenue and the Chicago Cultural Center, 77 East Randolph Street. The TTY toll-free number for the hearing impaired is 1.866.710.0294.

The Chicago Office of Tourism, a division of the Department of Cultural Affairs, is the official City agency dedicated to promoting Chicago to domestic and international visitors and to providing innovative visitor programs and services.

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