

CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS
NEWS RELEASE
CHICAGO OFFICE OF TOURISM

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CITY OF CHICAGO LAUNCHES NEW TOURISM WEBSITE: WWW.EXPLORECHICAGO.ORG

Dynamic site features event listings, multi-media content,
comprehensive neighborhood descriptions, interactive maps and more

Mayor Richard M. Daley announced the launch of www.explorechicago.org, a dynamic new tourism site that showcases Chicago as a lively and beautiful world-class city to audiences around the globe.

“Chicago's convention and tourism industry is among our city's most important. With that in mind, we're announcing a great new website – ExploreChicago.org – that will increase our visibility all around the world and make it easier for visitors and residents alike to take advantage of the great things our city has to offer,” Daley said.

The website is a highly useful planning tool for both visitors and residents alike. Highlights of the new site include:

- Listings of hundreds of current events, tours and attractions, searchable by date, neighborhood and area of interest;
- Multi-media content, including audio tours, slideshows, podcasts, video clips and an itinerary builder;
- Orbitz.com, the provider of comprehensive travel booking services, conveniently allows site visitors to book their flights to Chicago, make hotel reservations and more;
- “Insider Profiles” of real Chicagoans, who share their favorite things to see and do in the city;
- Comprehensive information on each of Chicago's many distinct neighborhoods, complete with interactive Google™ maps;
- A Virtual Visitor's Center with downloadable brochures, maps and resources for international travelers including information on using public transportation, tipping, using emergency services and exchanging foreign currency.

Explorechicago.org provides visitors with a highly-personalized experience of Chicago. It features a rich repository of up-to-date content, written in a compelling, conversational tone, combined with effective interactive tools.

Throughout Explorechicago.org, stunning photography showcases the city's best assets, including its iconic skyline, architecture, parks, neighborhoods, festivals, and

more. The images will change seasonally, giving visitors a current view of the city throughout the year. Many of the images are available for purchase by site visitors through the City of Chicago's Graphics and Reproduction Department.

Explorechicago.org is expected to have more than 190,000 visitors each month. Beginning in Spring 2009, the site will be available in Spanish and French, as well as English. Translation and localization services will be provided by Translations.com, the travel and tourism industry leader in website and ecommerce translation services, featuring their GlobalLink language management technology.

In creating explorechicago.org, several city agencies, including the Chicago Office of Tourism, Department of Cultural Affairs, Mayor's Office of Special Events, and the Chicago Park District, worked with Crowe Horwath LLP.

The site was developed in close partnership with the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities to be fully accessible to all Chicagoans and visitors.

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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.