



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO

CHOOSE
CHICAGO

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 22, 2013

CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

press@cityofchicago.org

MAYOR EMANUEL AND CHOOSE CHICAGO ANNOUNCE CHICAGO IS THE FIRST TOP TIER CITY TO EARN CERTIFICATION AS SUSTAINABLE DESTINATION FOR MEETINGS AND EVENTS

As the Largest Convention Center in North America, McCormick Place is the First Top-Tier Convention Destination to Achieve Distinction

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Choose Chicago today announced that the City of Chicago has been certified as a sustainable destination for meetings and events. Chicago is one of the first cities in the world and the only top-tier convention destination to achieve this distinction to date. In April, McCormick Place became the world's largest convention center to be certified as a sustainable venue under the APEX-ASTM standard pertaining to the evaluation and selection of venues for environmentally sustainable meetings, events, trade shows and conferences. This achievement highlights Chicago's continuing efforts to be the greenest city in the world.

"The City of Chicago is one of the world's premier convention and tourism markets, and a leader in global sustainability," said Mayor Rahm Emanuel. "Chicago's sustainability as a destination is a key competitive advantage, and part of a strategy to achieve my goal of 50 million annual visitors by 2020. This certification will bring more events and trade shows to the City, boosting local economic development and job growth."

The accomplishment follows Choose Chicago's recent announcement that the City of Chicago hosted a near-record 46.2 million visitors in 2012, a 6.1 percent increase over 2011. This included an increase in trade show visitors to 882,609, up from 768,685 in 2011. Sustainable certification will play an important role in attracting more visitors. This will further Mayor Emanuel's goal of 50 million annual visitors and push Chicago to be among the top U.S. destinations for overseas visitors.

"This certification reinforces Mayor Emanuel and the City of Chicago's commitment and leadership as a sustainable conference destination," says Choose Chicago President and CEO Don Welsh. "It will continue to bolster Chicago as a leader in a modern economic

environment. Businesses and organizations will be able to operate at maximum efficiency as conventions and trade shows attract thousands of visitors each year to the City of Chicago.”

The sustainable destination certification is the latest in a number of recent environmental achievements for Chicago. In June, Chicago was ranked the #1 U.S. city for Environmental Governance by the Economist Intelligence Unit’s *2025 Global City Competitiveness Index*. In May of this year Mayor Emanuel’s *Sustainable Chicago 2015 Action Agenda* was awarded the Emerald Award by the US Green Building Council Illinois Chapter for outstanding work in sustainability, including have the most Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rated buildings

The APEX-ASTM Standard was launched in 2012 by ASTM international and the Convention Industry Council’s (CIC) Accepted Practices Exchange (APEX). It is the first standard to provide comprehensive performance requirements for nine areas of meeting and event production: Accommodations, Audio/Visual, Communication, Exhibits, Food and Beverage, On-Site Office, Destinations, Meeting Venue and Transportation. Development of the standard involved more than 300 volunteers from across the industry, and was spearheaded by the Green Meeting Industry Council International, which held its annual conference in Chicago in April.

“We are proud to have worked alongside Mayor Emanuel, the City of Chicago and Choose Chicago to achieve recognition for Chicago’s many sustainable assets,” said Robin Malpass, president of the Green Meeting Industry Council’s Chicago Chapter. “Chicago was able to achieve the certification thanks to the large number of sustainable hotels, venues, attractions, caterers, restaurants and other suppliers operating in the destination.”

To support the initiative, GMIC Chicago collaborated with Chicago-based nonprofits Green Events Source and CNT Energy to create an App (www.greeneventapp.org) to help planners find and evaluate sustainable hotels, venues, caterers, restaurants and other local suppliers. Green Events Source also provided technical assistance and consultation to the City of Chicago and Choose Chicago related to the certification process.

iCompli, a nonprofit international auditing organization, certified compliance with the APEX destination standard.

###