



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
CITY OF CHICAGO



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

July 31, 2012

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**CHICAGO'S VISITOR INDUSTRY SEES BOOM IN BOTH JOBS AND SPENDING**

*2011 Shows Outstanding Progress; Best Numbers in Several Years*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Choose Chicago President and CEO Don Welsh announced today that Chicago's visitor industry generated new jobs and record-setting spending as a result of the 43.6 million domestic and overseas visitors to Chicago in 2011.

Recently released data from the U. S. Travel Association reveals that visitors to Chicago throughout 2011 generated \$12 billion in total direct spending, (up 7.8%) over 2010. That spending yielded more than \$725 million in tax revenues (up 17.8%) and more than 128,000 jobs (up 3.1%) over 2010.

"Tourism is a huge driver of economic growth and jobs in the city of Chicago, and I am pleased that our efforts to showcase Chicago for the world have resulted in these outstanding numbers," said Mayor Emanuel. "Visitors to Chicago see the most American of American cities and are certain to enjoy our world-class culture and attraction throughout the City's many neighborhoods."

Total spending by the domestic traveler was up 7.2% over 2010 at \$10.5 billion while international spending was up 12% at \$1.5 billion. On average the domestic traveler



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spends \$1,300 per trip. International travelers spend \$4,000 per trip and are a key focus for Choose Chicago as it seeks to grow tourism overall in the city. To this end, Choose Chicago now operates eight overseas offices to promote international tourism.

“Don and his team are well on their way to achieving Mayor Emanuel's goal of 50 million visitors annually to Chicago, and increasing the city's share of international travel to the US,” said Bruce Rauner, Choose Chicago Chairman. “At a rate of 50 million visitors annually, the direct economic benefit would be \$14.7 billion in direct spending, \$1.2 billion per year in tax revenue and 160,000 jobs.”

“Choose Chicago's bold thinking and action has laid the groundwork to grow visitation to the destination,” said Welsh. “Significant increases in total spending, tax revenue and jobs are extremely encouraging. While these metrics are a solid beginning to achieving Mayor Emanuel's goals, there is much work to be done to ensure we achieve our vision of making Chicago the premier destination for leisure and business travelers.”

A purposeful national and international public relations effort is garnering substantial media coverage and elevating Chicago's position as a leading global visitor destination. Global marketing and public relations offices are active in Sao Paolo, Toronto, Beijing, Shanghai, Tokyo, Mexico City, London and the Benelux. A new brand campaign, including regional advertising and reimagined marketing strategies to promote Chicago's iconic assets is reshaping the image of the destination and delivering more visitors to ChooseChicago.com, the city's official tourism website. Hotel rates in June topped out at over 90 percent, marking the first time in years that the City has had a month this optimistic, and as a result of historic labor reform more than \$3.25 billion in new and recommitted meetings and conventions has been booked.

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Sources: D.K. Shifflet Associates, Ltd., Smith Travel Research, Choose Chicago, US Travel Association