



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO

redmoon

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MAYOR EMANUEL AND REDMOON ANNOUNCE THE GREAT CHICAGO FIRE FESTIVAL

2014 Cultural Event to Activate the Chicago River, Create a Platform for Community Engagement

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today announced a plan to partner with Redmoon, the large-scale spectacle and public art group, to create a new festival that will culminate in a procession of illuminated floating fiberglass sculptures as well as a fire spectacle on the main branch of the Chicago River. The inaugural Great Chicago Fire Festival, presented by Redmoon in partnership with the City of Chicago, will take place in October 2014.

"The Great Chicago Fire Festival will be truly unique, an event worthy of our world class city," said Mayor Emanuel. "The festival puts into action several goals of the Chicago Cultural Plan, including the creation of a new large-scale cultural festival that attracts global attention and highlights our City's cultural assets and heritage. Additionally, it will allow all Chicagoans and all of our guests to enjoy the wonderful Chicago River, one of the city's greatest natural assets."

Thousands of people are expected to gather on the river's shores to watch the fire spectacle next fall, featuring acrobatics, live music, fantastical machines, and more.

"Together with the City of Chicago, we hope to create a unique event for Chicagoans that captures the world's imagination," said Jim Lasko, Co-Artistic Director at Redmoon. "Chicago is distinguished by the determination to innovate, to reinvent, to rise from the ashes. From the earliest prairie fires off Wolf Point to the City's rebirth following the Great Chicago Fire, Chicago's history is marked by episodes of destruction and renewal."

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Redmoon also plans to work with artists to engage community members in the development of art projects across Chicago neighborhoods that would be a part of the spectacle event. The inaugural festival in 2014 has potential to become an annual event tradition celebrating the diversity of Chicago's great neighborhoods and powerful spirit of renewal.

"It's thrilling to collaborate with Redmoon on the development of a new urban festival," said Michelle T. Boone, Commissioner of the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events. "The Great Chicago Fire Festival will showcase and provide a creative platform for the amazing talents of Jim Lasko and the Redmoon creative team. It will engage Chicagoans of all ages, and advance many priorities of the Cultural Plan, such as fostering cultural innovation, strengthening Chicago as a global cultural destination, and making the arts accessible to all residents."

Released in October 2012, the Chicago Cultural Plan created the framework to guide the City's future cultural growth.

The Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events will provide \$100,000 to Redmoon for the planning and development of artistic and cultural programming for the festival on the River next fall.

Additional details will be announced later this year.

Making the river the next recreational frontier is a key goal of Mayor Emanuel's.

This announcement comes one day after U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood joined Mayor Emanuel in Chicago to announce \$100 million in federal TIFIA loan funding, which will allow the completion of the Chicago Riverwalk project. The Chicago Riverwalk will extend from Lake Michigan all the way to the confluences of the three branches of the Chicago river, and will be a dynamic, vibrant area for all Chicagoans to enjoy.

Previously, Mayor Emanuel announced that four boathouses will be constructed along the river, allowing Chicagoans to enjoy water sports such as kayaking or canoeing, or simply eat and enjoy the atmosphere along the river's shore. The boathouses are under construction and the first ones are due to be completed in 2014.

Redmoon's mission is to transform the experience of our urban landscape through ephemeral events that disrupt everyday life and provide opportunities for public engagement, community building, and recognition of the possibility of change. Founded in 1990, Redmoon transforms streets, stages, and architectural landmarks bridging economic, cultural, and generational boundaries with a unique brand of spectacle: a public art form that is equal parts pageantry, gadgetry, puppetry, robust physical performance and visual art. Through its vibrant outdoor performances, high-profile collaborations, and youth-focused Neighborhood Arts Programming,

Redmoon has reached more than 250,000 people in 110 locations throughout 30 Chicago neighborhoods. Redmoon has garnered national and international attention for its unique productions, site-specific performances and events—which have been seen across the US from New York to Los Angeles with 2009 appearance at the White House, and around the globe in Holland, Ireland, France, Australia, and Brazil. For more information, visit www.redmoon.org.

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A rendering of the procession of illuminated floating fiberglass sculptures is attached to this press release. The rendering was created by Lin Ye.