



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO

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CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

press@cityofchicago.org

**MAYOR EMANUEL AND CHOOSE CHICAGO ANNOUNCE RECORD TOURISM IN FIRST
QUARTER OF 2017**

*Strong First Quarter Builds on Last Year's Record of More Than 54 Million Visitors;
Tourism Industry Creating Thousands of Jobs that Reach Every Part of Chicago*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and David Whitaker, President & CEO of Choose Chicago, today announced projections of visitors to Chicago in the first quarter reached a record 10.51 million, an increase of 3.5 percent over first quarter 2016. The results build on Chicago's record performance in 2016, when 54.1 million people visited Chicago. The results also bring the city even closer to reaching the Mayor's goal of 55 million visitors annually by 2020.

"Tourism creates jobs that reach every part of the city of Chicago," Mayor Emanuel said. "We had a record-breaking year in 2016, and this year is off to a record-breaking start. This progress will ensure that we continue to create economic opportunities across Chicago and grow even closer to my goal of 55 million visitors by 2020."

In the first quarter of 2017, total rooms occupied reached a record 2.12 million, an increase of 5.9 percent. The occupancy rate increased by 2.6 percent to 58 percent, and leisure room demand achieved a record 1.52 million rooms occupied in the quarter, a gain of 4.4 percent. Fourteen out of the last 15 months have now seen leisure room demand growth. Group room demand grew 10 percent, which was driven by nine major meetings convening in Chicago in the first quarter, filling more than 550,000 rooms.

"We are thrilled to see the momentum generated last year continue through the first quarter," Whitaker said. "Chicago continues to excel as a major meetings destination and the growth in leisure demand signals our continued success and reputation as a destination that features amazing vacation and lifestyle experiences."

Chicago welcomed a record 52.55 million domestic visitors and an estimated 1.56 million overseas visitors in 2016. In that year, Chicago's tourism industry supported an estimated

145,137 jobs (3.3 percent increase) and \$15 billion in direct tourism spending (2.6 percent increase). That's an increase of nearly 17,000 new jobs since Mayor Emanuel took office.

Choose Chicago is aggressively working to bring in meetings and conventions that have not previously met in Chicago. The strategy continues to pay off - of the 67 most recent meetings that have chosen to meet in Chicago, 22 will be convening in the city for the first time with an additional eight choosing to meet in Chicago for the first time in over ten years, supporting Choose Chicago's and the City's 2020 strategy.

Eight new hotels opened their doors in Chicago's Central Business District in 2016, bringing the total number of daily rooms available to 40,945, an increase of 4.2 percent. Chicago has welcomed 24 new hotels since 2013 resulting in more than 5,400 daily rooms added. Another five new hotels are scheduled to open in 2017 and eight more planned to open in 2018, further demonstrating investor confidence in Chicago.

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