



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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**UNIVERSAL DESTINATIONS & EXPERIENCES PLANS SECOND UNIVERSAL HORROR UNLEASHED
IN CHICAGO**

*Year-Round, Immersive Horror Entertainment Experience on the Chicago River Expected to Create More
Than 400 Jobs*

CHICAGO – Universal Destinations & Experiences, the themed entertainment division of Comcast NBCUniversal, today announced Chicago as the second location for its year-round immersive horror experience Universal Horror Unleashed. The permanent entertainment venue is Universal's first branded experience in the Midwest and is part of the company's plans to invest in the brand and introduce it to new audiences, in new markets with new, original concepts. Universal Horror Unleashed: Chicago will transform a vacant 114,000-square-foot commercial building at 700 W. Chicago Avenue, directly across from the new Bally's Casino, into a world-class horror attraction and entertainment destination. According to World Business Chicago, the project is expected to generate more than \$1 billion in economic impact for the city.

The experience, slated to open in 2027, will include terrifying mazes, unforgettable scares, themed bars and unique food and beverage offerings, and a retail space featuring exclusive merchandise. The venue is expected to operate year-round, creating more than 400 permanent jobs ranging from operations leaders, merchandise hosts, entertainers called scareactors to make-up and prosthetics artists.

"We're thrilled to welcome Universal Horror Unleashed to the City of Chicago," said **Mayor Brandon Johnson**. "This is exactly the kind of creative, high-impact investment we're working to attract—one that brings new life to a vacant site, creates hundreds of jobs, and cements Chicago as a must-visit destination for entertainment tourism."

"Universal's decision to make such a significant investment in Illinois is a testament to the state's unmatched entertainment sector, renowned workforce and strong infrastructure," said **Governor JB Pritzker**. "Universal choosing Illinois didn't happen by accident—we were proud to support this project through our EDGE incentive program, which has helped fortify a positive business climate that

draws world-class companies to the state. I look forward to seeing this iconic brand come to life along the Chicago River as it creates hundreds of jobs and generates more than \$1 billion in economic impact.”

In support of Universal’s decision to locate in Illinois, the company will receive State incentives through the Economic Development for a Growing Economy (EDGE) program. A link to the full agreement can be found [here](#).

Universal’s latest announcement comes on the heels of a series of other investments designed to grow the company’s footprint and its brand. These include the most recent opening—Universal Epic Universe at Universal Orlando Resort, the company’s most transformational and ambitious theme park, the first Universal Horror Unleashed in Las Vegas set to open in August 2025, and Universal Kids Resort, a new regional theme park set to open in 2026 that is designed for families with young children ages 3 to 8 in Frisco, Texas. Additionally, the company announced its intent to build and operate a new theme park and resort development in the United Kingdom, its first in Europe.

“Universal Horror Unleashed delivers on our promise to create highly immersive and terrifying horror experiences that connect with fans year-round,” said **Page Thompson, President, New Ventures, Universal Destinations & Experiences**. “We’re excited to bring this bold concept to life in Chicago, a city known for its vibrant culture. We’re grateful for the City and State’s support as we convert this dormant site into a unique attraction that showcases our storytelling expertise and ability to deliver mind blowing experiences that shatter guest expectations.”

“Universal’s decision to build in Chicago reflects what more and more companies are recognizing: this is the best big city in the U.S. for access to customers, talent, and opportunity,” said **Phil Clement, President & CEO, World Business Chicago**. “We’re proud to have worked closely with the Universal team to bring this project to life—and to showcase, yet again, why Chicago is a destination for bold, imaginative investments.”

Construction is expected to begin in early 2026 following design finalization and permitting.

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