



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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HAPPY 188TH BIRTHDAY TO CHICAGO, FROM CHICAGOANS

CHICAGO – Today, the City of Chicago celebrates its 188th birthday, honoring nearly two centuries of resilience, innovation and civic pride. From its world-renowned architecture to its vibrant cultural institutions, diverse neighborhoods and thriving economy, Chicago continues to lead on the global stage. To mark the occasion, civic and business leaders have come together to share their reflections and well wishes – like a signed birthday card to the city they proudly call home.

"As we celebrate Chicago's 188th birthday, we recognize the strength of our communities, the richness of our culture, and the resilience that defines this great city. Chicago has always been a place where people come together to build something greater than themselves. Our future is bright because of the dedication of our residents, the leadership of our institutions and the investments we continue to make to ensure prosperity reaches every neighborhood. Happy birthday, Chicago." – **Mayor Brandon Johnson**.

"As a lifelong Chicagoan, I know that what truly sets our city apart is the passion and civic pride of its people. Chicagoans are deeply engaged, constantly looking for opportunities to lead on the global stage. From our world-renowned cultural institutions to our beautiful and diverse neighborhoods, this is a place where the past and future meet in a way that has inspired generations of visitors and residents. I am excited for all that lies ahead as Chicago continues to grow and evolve as a global destination." - **Rich Gamble, Interim President & CEO, Choose Chicago**

"Chicago's leadership as a destination for business expansion and investment continues to set us apart. As we mark the city's 188th birthday, we celebrate a thriving and diverse economy powered by innovation, industry and a workforce that ranks among the best in the world. Under Mayor Johnson's leadership, Chicago has once again been recognized as the top metro for corporate relocation and site selection based on project count – a reflection of our unmatched ability to attract and support businesses of all sizes. From advanced manufacturing to the cutting edge of quantum computing, we are strengthening



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our position as a city where companies can launch, scale and succeed." – **Phil Clement, President & CEO, World Business Chicago**

"Happy birthday to the greatest city in the world. Chicago has had a profound impact on my life both personally and professionally, and I am forever proud to be a Chicagoan. This city's bold ideas, stunning architecture, vibrant cultural life and natural beauty continue to take my breath away no matter the season." – **Glenn Eden, Board Chair, Choose Chicago**

"It is the rich cultural fabric of this city and the indelible spirit of its people that inspire our mission and inform the experiences we create. As Chicago's 'front porch,' we could not be more honored to showcase the stories of this great city to nearly nine million visitors from across the six counties and around the globe every year. Happy birthday to the incredible city we are proud to call home." – **Marilynn Gardner, President & CEO, Navy Pier**

"Chicago has always been a city of transformation – built by visionaries, strengthened by resilience, and driven by opportunity. Mayor Johnson's administration is making bold investments to fuel growth, from a historic \$1.25 billion bond for economic development to major revitalization efforts, including Google's new Midwest headquarters, the LaSalle Corridor transformation, and the \$7 billion United Center redevelopment. The \$8.5 billion expansion of O'Hare and the redevelopment of the former USX Steel site into a quantum innovation hub further cement our city's global leadership. By investing in both people and place, we are building a stronger, more inclusive Chicago where businesses thrive and communities flourish." – **Charles Smith, Vice Chair, World Business Chicago & CEO, CS Insurance Strategies, Inc., a division of MMA.**

"As Chicago's hometown airline, United is honored to be a part of this city's rich legacy. From the iconic skyline to the dazzling lakefront and vibrant 77 neighborhoods, we are proud to connect millions of travelers every year to this world-class city. Happy 188th Birthday, Chicago!" – **Brett J. Hart, President, United Airlines**

"Chicago is built on hard work, community, and resilience—values that define both our great city and Eli's Cheesecake. We take pride in serving Chicagoans and visitors alike, sharing the sweet taste of our hometown with the world. Today, we raise a slice to Chicago's 188th birthday and the people who make this city great." – **Marc Schulman, President, Eli's Cheesecake**

"Chicago's history is one of transformation, from rebuilding after the Great Fire to shaping culture, commerce and industry. At the Chicago History Museum, we tell the stories that



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make this city an icon of progress and perseverance. As Chicago turns 188, we remain committed to preserving its incredible legacy." – **Donald Lassere, President & CEO, Chicago History Museum**

"Chicago's theater scene reflects the city's creativity, diversity and passion for the arts. From the grand stages of the Loop to performances in every neighborhood, our theater community is second to none. Broadway In Chicago is proud to be part of this city's cultural fabric. Happy birthday, Chicago!" – **Lou Raizin, President, Broadway In Chicago**

"Happy birthday, Chicago! You are the very soul of this nation. You are the beautiful, brash, benevolent beacon on the shore. The biggest small town in America, I always say. You are the "where'd you go to high school" question every Chicagoan asks when meeting another anywhere in the world, that immediately places the responder within the comforting landscape of community, family, faith, and other touchpoints, like the "where your people from?" question in the times of the Great Migration - even now relevant, even now connecting. Chicago, I love you through thick, thin, and in between. I love our people, the city's greatest asset of all. We are a very proud city, and rightfully so! We have attitude, and when we feel a certain way, we say so. Do not expect this town to bow or capitulate, especially when our people or our values are at stake. That's not us. We are Chicago and we lead, not follow. We're the center of it all. And the center will hold." – **Perri Irmer, President & CEO, DuSable Black History Museum and Education Center**

"As we honor this remarkable milestone, we celebrate not only Chicago's rich history and bold innovation but also its enduring spirit of community – a spirit that also defines the association community. Like our incredible city, the association community flourishes through connection, innovation, and resilience. Chicago's vibrant spirit inspires us to unite, overcome challenges, and create a brighter future for our members and the communities we serve. Here's to the next chapter of impactful growth, from one proud Chicago community to another!" – **Artesha Moore, FASAE, CAE President & CEO, Association Forum**

As Chicago enters its next chapter, its legacy of innovation, resilience and inclusivity remains at the forefront. With bold investments in economic development, infrastructure and cultural enrichment, the city is poised to continue its tradition of growth and leadership on the global stage. From its storied past to its limitless future, Chicago remains a city of opportunity, creativity and collective ambition. Today, we celebrate not just our history but the people who make Chicago the vibrant, world-class city it is today.



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