



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 THE CHICAGO PARK DISTRICT ANNOUNCE THE OPENING OF PING
TOM MEMORIAL PARK BOATHOUSE**

*Chicago River Boathouses Will Provide Direct River Access, Concessions, Restrooms, and Storage;
Boathouse Dedication Part of "Shall We Gather at the River" Festivities in Partnership with the
Chicago Symphony Orchestra*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Chicago Park District Superintendent Michael Kelly opened the first new city boathouse at Ping Tom Memorial Park in the city's Chinatown neighborhood.

"These boathouses, beginning with this one at Ping Tom Park, will help increase recreational activities and greater enjoyment of all that the Chicago River has to offer residents and visitors," said Mayor Emanuel. "Today's celebration also expands on the array of cultural and arts activities available in our parks and throughout the City this summer, and is a perfect way to mark this occasion."

The Ping Tom Memorial Park boathouse is the first new Chicago River boathouses funded by public and private investments that will provide community rooms, concessions, fitness centers, restrooms, storage and direct river access. The next boathouses to open are Clark Park and River Park.

"The Chicago Park District already oversees recreational opportunities along the lakefront, making the Chicago River a natural next step," said General Superintendent and CEO Michael P. Kelly. "The festivities are also a perfect fit with our efforts to bring cultural programming to parks this summer."

In the fall of 2011, Mayor Emanuel and representatives from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced plans to make the Chicago River the city's next recreational frontier, with

121 NORTH LASALLE STREET, ROOM 507, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60602

new boathouses to serve as anchors of the river's future development. The EPA provided nearly \$1 million in grant funds to help clean up the river and spur job creation.

The boathouse sites were chosen to align with improvements the Chicago Department of Transportation is making to extend trails along the river, providing easier and more consistent river access for runners, bikers, and walkers.

Designed by Johnson & Lee Architects, the Ping Tom Memorial Park boathouse is approximately 2,485 square feet. A portion of the facility has kayak and canoe storage with the other section of the building housing restrooms and office space. The exterior plaza space consists of a metal canopy and a walkway to a floating dock.

The boathouse opening coincides with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's month-long RIVERS Festival that culminates with "Shall We Gather at the River," a celebration of the river that is admission free and open to the public.

"Shall We Gather at the River" is presented in conjunction with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the City of Chicago, the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events, Chicago's First Lady Cruises, Choose Chicago, the Chinatown Chamber of Commerce, the Chicago Children's Choir, Friends of the Chicago River, and Redmoon Theater. For more information, visit cso.org/rivers.

"Shall We Gather at the River," is also part of the Chicago Park District's Night Out in the Parks initiative, which features more than 750 citywide cultural and arts activities this summer, making parks a safe haven and a hub of activity.

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