



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
CITY OF CHICAGO

CHOOSE  
**CHICAGO**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

February 21, 2013

**CONTACT:**

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

[press@cityofchicago.org](mailto:press@cityofchicago.org)

**MAYOR EMANUEL ANNOUNCES FURTHER INVESTMENT IN CHOOSE CHICAGO TO BUILD ON FIRST YEAR OF SUCCESS IN PROMOTING CHICAGO AS AN INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL DESTINATION**

*Partnership Will Expand Marketing by \$5 Million to Promote O'Hare and Midway Airports as Part of Mayor Emanuel's Multi-Faceted Approach to Reach 50 Million Visitors in the City of Chicago*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel, along with the Chicago Department of Aviation and Choose Chicago, announced today that Choose Chicago will receive an extra \$5 million in annual funding to foster joint marketing efforts that will promote Chicago and access to the City through O'Hare and Midway Airports. This partnership will enhance both the mission of increasing airport usage and promoting the City of Chicago as an international travel destination, while creating jobs and economic growth.

"The partnership announced today between the Chicago Department of Aviation and Choose Chicago is part of a multi-faceted approach working toward our goal of 50 million visitors in the City of Chicago annually," said Mayor Emanuel. "These new efforts will boost both local economic development and job creation. Increasing tourism and business travel to Chicago is a central part of my economic strategy and it will further establish the city as an international hub for the United States."

Choose Chicago was created during Mayor Emanuel's first year in office through the consolidation of multiple Chicago tourism entities. The new entity was able to save millions of dollars in overhead that was reinvested in the city's first-ever coordinated local, national and international tourism campaign.

"Mayor Emanuel's commitment to Chicago's visitor industry has been unwavering since his first day in office," said Don Welsh, Choose Chicago President and CEO. "This new cash

infusion will allow Choose Chicago to further develop marketing strategies to drive increased visitation to the destination via our two major airports."

The Chicago Department of Aviation will provide funds to Choose Chicago to be used solely for the purpose of marketing the usage of Chicago's two airports. Project funding will go towards advertising programs while promoting airline partnership that build awareness of O'Hare and Midway and are designed to generate passenger and cargo traffic using these airports. Additionally, Choose Chicago will strive to increase participation in travel trade shows featuring O'Hare and Midway airports as international gateways to the United States.

With a current annual rate of 43.6 million visitors, Chicago's travel industry is directly responsible for 128,000 jobs, \$725 million in tax revenue and \$12 billion in direct spending. As the projected rate of 50 million visitors annually, the goals for the team at Choose Chicago is to foster and grow this economic driver. The direct impact of this could result in an increase of 155,000 to 165,000 jobs, \$1.2 to \$1.3 billion per year in tax revenue and \$14.7 billion in direct spending. Last year the city had an outstanding rate of hotel occupancy, at 75.2 percent, which amounted to more than \$100 million in hotel tax revenue.

O'Hare is ranked as the second busiest airport in the world in terms of number of annual aircraft operations, the third busiest in terms of number of annual passengers, and was 18th busiest for air cargo. In 2011, 66.8 million passengers at O'Hare airport traveled to almost 200 destinations.

Midway is ranked 34th in the U.S. in terms of number of annual aircraft operations, 27th in terms of number of annual passengers and 85th for air cargo in 2010. The airport flies to over 60 destinations and recently set a record in 2012 with an increase of 1.8 percent from the previous year to 19.5 million passengers. This is the highest number of passengers in its 85 year history.

###