

Written by Andrew Mason

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Labor Agreements Solidify Chicago's Position as Most Customer-Friendly Convention and Trade Show Venue in the Country

CHICAGO – October 21, 2011. Governor Pat Quinn and Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel today announced agreements with two McCormick Place labor groups that will preserve Chicago's status as the country's premier convention destination. These agreements, forged under the leadership of Governor Quinn and Mayor Emanuel in strong partnership with the Chicago Regional Council of Carpenters and Teamsters Local 727, solidify the reforms enacted last year and end the uncertainty surrounding Illinois' vital convention industry.

"McCormick Place is a cornerstone of Illinois' economy, and we weren't going to stop working with our labor partners until we delivered the reforms needed to bring more shows and jobs to our state," Governor Quinn said. "These historic reforms will save exhibitors money by giving them the flexibility they need and help to attract even more shows to Illinois, while making sure the many hard-working men and women who support McCormick Place stay on the job."

"McCormick Place is a major economic engine for the City of Chicago, bringing more than 3 million visitors to the city every year," said Mayor Emanuel. "I am grateful that labor is our partner in implementing these reforms that will keep thousands of Chicagoans working, save exhibitors money and ensure our city remains a competitive destination and leader in the convention and tradeshow industry."

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Settlements reached with the Chicago Regional Council of Carpenters and Teamsters Local 727 will end their federal lawsuits challenging some of the reform measures passed into law in 2010. Those reforms were hailed by industry groups who have pushed for years for measures that would keep Chicago competitive with other convention cities.

Under the agreements, the major reforms passed in 2010 will remain intact. The Exhibitors' Bill of Rights allows show managers and exhibitors to perform their own work in any size booth, using their own ladders or hand tools, cordless tools and power tools. Exhibitors will also be allowed to operate, load and unload their own vehicles at McCormick Place. Additionally, work will also now be able to be done by two-person work crews instead of the three-person crews required prior to the reforms.

MPEA Trustee Jim Reilly says the agreement will help ensure that Chicago keeps pace with its key competitors. "We made changes last year in direct response to what our customers demanded. Now, working in partnership with labor, we have overcome some of the biggest obstacles to our efforts to lure new shows to the city. It is especially gratifying that all of the elements of the Chicago Trade Show industry – the City, the State, the Carpenters, the Teamsters and Freeman and GES - came together and generously contributed to reaching this historic settlement."

Other reforms, including reduced parking rates, lower food and beverage pricing, enhanced menu options, and free Wi-Fi access, will remain. Show organizers will also be allowed to choose electrical service providers from a list of approved vendors that will lead to cost savings through competitive pricing. In addition, the city of Chicago will complement an existing state program by committing resources to a promotional campaign that will highlight the new competitive measures reached in this agreement with the goal of attracting even more shows to McCormick Place.

"Throughout this process, our goal has been to ensure that McCormick Place continues to set the standard for convention excellence," said Frank Libby, President of the Chicago Regional Council of Carpenters. "This agreement will help our members stay on the job and keep Chicago's trade show industry healthy for years to come."

"Our members remain committed to keeping McCormick Place a sought-after venue for

Governor Quinn and Mayor Emanuel Announce Historic Agreements to Preserve McCormick Place Reform

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conventions from around the country,” said John Coli, President of Teamsters Joint Council 25. “This agreement clears the way for McPier to continue to grow its business.”

“These agreements demonstrate the commitment from the men and women of organized labor to keep Chicago a premiere convention destination,” said Chicago Federation of Labor President Jorge Ramirez. “By working in a collaborative way, we were able to take steps that will benefit the city of the Chicago and the entire region.”

“This is an extremely important sign that all of the key parties involved understand the importance of the trade show industry in Chicago and how critical this agreement is to a successful future,” said Peter Eelman, Vice President-Exhibitions and Communications for The Association for Manufacturing Technology. “Earlier this year, the Mayor and the Governor committed to the trade show community that the positive changes introduced last year would be sustained, and we are pleased to see that all parties have come together to deliver on that commitment.”

McCormick Place is the cornerstone of Illinois’ Convention and Tourism industry, supporting 66,000 jobs and generating \$8 billion in spending each year. It acts as a magnet for Chicago, attracting millions of business leaders from around the globe who stay in hotels, dine out, shop and experience the city’s world-class culture and entertainment.

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