

Simon: The Onion brings tears to my eyes

Written by Kara Beach
Tuesday, 31 July 2012 11:53

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Digital media company calls sweet home Chicago

CHICAGO – July 30, 2012. Crediting The Onion for uniting all of its business and editorial operations in Chicago, Lt. Governor Sheila Simon will [declare](#) it “The Onion Day” on Tuesday to celebrate the digital media company’s consolidation of its headquarters in Illinois.

Formerly based in Madison, Wis., with its editorial staff headquartered in New York City, The Onion consolidated its media operations in Chicago this month, which will include a new studio for digital video production. The Onion, along with its sister publication The A.V. Club, will house approximately 100 employees in its new offices and studio in River North in October.

“No matter how you slice it, The Onion brings tears to my eyes,” Simon said. “From its spot-on satire of our politics, to its use of our web video tax credit, The Onion shows that Illinois is a great place to do business and that Chicago is a great comedy town. We encourage other digital media companies to make us their first choice for their international headquarters.”

Among other factors, The Onion management attributes its relocation to the Illinois tax credit for web video, TV and film production, the city’s vibrant comedy scene and proximity to Hot Doug's Encased Meat Emporium and Hotdog Superstore.

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Meanwhile, “Chicago” loosely translates from the Native American Potawatami language to “wild onion” or “native garlic,” which was surely a selling point, Simon said.

“The Onion is very happy to return to its Midwestern roots,” said Steve Hannah, President and CEO of Onion, Inc. “and especially happy to land in Chicago. Our brand of journalism has a peculiarly Midwestern sensibility and, combined with the state’s generous tax credit for video production, we feel that we have landed in the right place.”

The declaration will come during a fundraiser for the Better Government Association emceed by WGN TV’s Larry Potash and Robin Baumgarten. Simon will dedicate a country music parody to The Onion and the BGA for their work in exposing political corruption and promoting government transparency.

“Corruption isn’t funny, but sometimes you have to laugh to keep from crying,” said BGA president Andy Shaw, “so we’ll laugh at The Onion’s unique brand of journalism and the lieutenant governor’s unique way of welcoming them to Illinois, and then we’ll go back to our unique anti-corruption watchdog mission of shining a light on government and holding public officials accountable.”

The Onion is the self-proclaimed “biggest, most powerful, most terrifying and most influential media company in the civilized world.” Figures provided by company say it has an audience of approximately 3 billion people worldwide across its various media platforms, including The Onion newspaper syndicate, The Onion News Network in web video and on television, The Onion Radio Network, the pop-culture A.V. Club, Zweibel Worldwide Productions and Onion Digital Studios.

Chicago politicians, media outlets and sports teams frequently have been targets of The Onion’s writers. Past headlines in The Onion include: “City of Chicago to Modernize Outdated Graft Programs”; “Chicago Cubs Sell Naming Rights to Chewing Gum Company”; and “[Struggling 'Chicago Tribune' Cuts Asia Bureau, Expands Sudoku Staff](#)”. It was the only news outlet to report on the deadly 2003 “meatwave” in Chicago.

Supposedly founded by two University of Wisconsin-Madison students in 1988, The Onion is published and/or broadcast in 87 different languages in 159 countries. At any given moment

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approximately 80 percent of the world's population is being watched by one of The Onion News Network's cameras, its sources say.

Among other awards, The Onion has won the Thurber Prize for American Humor, numerous Webbys for the best journalism in multiple creative categories on the Internet, and the prestigious Peabody Award for excellence in broadcasting. In recent months, The Onion produced four original shows for its premium YouTube channel and, along with its staff, hired numerous members of Chicago's television community to assist in production.

Lt. Governor Simon's declaration in honor of The Onion can be [found here](#).

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