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North America's Largest Convention Center Announces New Hybrid Event Offerings & Reopening of the Marriott Marquis Chicago

*122 Events Scheduled for the Next 18 Months;
47 Major Events Alone Bringing \$2.35B in Economic Impact*

CHICAGO—Today, McCormick Place, North America's largest convention center, announced that the facility is moving closer to reopening with a robust schedule of events during the second half of 2021 and beyond. In addition to McCormick Place announcing its new hybrid production studio offerings and new health and safety measures, Governor J.B. Pritzker and Mayor Lori Lightfoot weighed in on McCormick Place's importance to the State of Illinois and the City of Chicago. Customers, including the Radiological Society of North America, the International Manufacturing Technology Show, and the Illinois Health and Hospital Association, joined in the event sharing their excitement with the facility's reopening.

“We are thrilled to announce between July 2021 and December 2022 that there are 122 events scheduled at McCormick Place with an estimated attendance of 1,941,239. Of these, 47 events are considered to be ‘major’ events with an estimated economic impact of \$2,348,746,839,” said Larita Clark, CEO of the Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority (MPEA). MPEA owns and operates the McCormick Place Convention Center, Wintrust Arena, Hyatt Regency McCormick Place, and the Marriott Marquis Chicago. “Throughout the pandemic, our customers have stood with us, and now, with the improved health conditions, we are resuming operations. This week, the Chicago Sky welcomed spectators in the Wintrust Arena, and in June, the Marriott Marquis Chicago will reopen to host the NBA Draft Combine. More importantly, this means that MPEA once again will be able to fulfill its mission of creating jobs and generating tax dollars.”

Clark spoke from the ACT Hybrid Production Studio powered by Freeman at McCormick Place located in the Arie Crown Theater. The studio has a capacity for over 4,000 people, but with state-of-the-art technology, it can be used for hybrid events and experiences. Specifically, the studio has a 400 square foot 4k video wall and the capability to host events for audiences in the theater and worldwide. The production studio has Hollywood-grade technology to engage audiences with top-tier set design and the ability to capture content using virtual environments and augmented reality while connecting with audiences worldwide with live streaming.

Clark continued, “As we reflect on the last 14 months, our team at McCormick Place can take pride in the fact that we used the closure to continue to build a best-in-class experience for our customers. We made massive health and safety improvements on campus along with increasing our abilities in hybrid event productions to ensure that McCormick Place thrives in the post-pandemic world.” Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot applauded the efforts of the team at McCormick Place, saying, “The ACT Hybrid Production Studio, powered by Freeman at the Arie Crown Theater, is emblematic of the McCormick Place team’s passion for driving innovation in the conventions and events industry during the pandemic. They are truly leading the rest of the world in this effort and continue to be an international model for what success looks like in a post-COVID society.”

Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker also weighed in on the new facility stating, “Given its legacy as the gold standard of North America’s convention circuit, McCormick Place’s leadership in offering pandemicinformed, hybrid events comes as no surprise. Bringing back events promptly and safely means good union jobs for tens of thousands of people in the service industry and beyond – not to mention a boost to the Chicago-area visitors’ economy. The lifesaving power of vaccinations and the hard work by the people of Chicago and Illinois have led us to this moment, and I have no doubt in McCormick Place’s ability to chart a strong path forward for the convention industry.”

“The convention industry is a key driver of our economy – with every event resulting in hundreds of thousands of dollars in spending—while stimulating the tourism and hospitality industries and supporting thousands of jobs in the region and state. McCormick Place’s continued reopening is a strong indicator of our economic recovery here in Illinois and a testament to the resiliency of the convention industry and its employees,” said Sylvia Garcia, Acting Director of the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. “Under Governor Pritzker’s leadership, we’re making continued progress on a public health recovery that will enable a safe return for industries, communities and workers throughout Chicago and across Illinois.”

Jeff Bethke, CEO of Ingenuity Advising and MPEA Board Chair, said, “The team at McCormick Place continues to demonstrate a commitment to ensuring the best experience for our visitors and industry partners. The desire to constantly evolve and innovate, especially in light of the changed behaviors from COVID, is critical to our success in generating jobs, providing essential economic support for local businesses, and promoting significant tax revenues for Chicago and Illinois.”

During the 14 months that McCormick Place has been closed, there has been an enormous investment into necessary public health mitigations. The entire campus now has GBAC Star Accreditation, the gold standard for facilities. This accreditation means that McCormick Place has established and maintained a cleaning, disinfection, and infectious disease prevention program to minimize risks associated with infectious agents like the coronavirus. This includes the proper cleaning protocols, disinfection techniques, work practices in place to combat biohazards and infectious disease, and highly informed cleaning professionals who are trained for outbreak and infectious disease preparation and response.

The convention center is working hand in hand with the Illinois Department of Public Health and the Chicago Department of Public Health, ensuring that large events are conducted safely.

Dennis Sullivan, Senior Vice President, Delivery and Brand Experience, at Freeman, said, “As we move closer to the exciting return of in-person events at McCormick Place, Freeman is meeting customer needs for creating live experiences no matter the event format. We are pleased to expand our partnership through the operation of the ACT Hybrid Production Studio to ensure McCormick Place continues to be a premier location for events whether they be face-to-face, integrated or virtual experiences.”

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About Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority (MPEA): The Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority owns McCormick Place, the largest exhibition and meeting facility in North America, the Wintrust Arena as well as the Hyatt Regency McCormick Place and the Marriot Marquis Chicago Hotels. Together, the North, South, and West Buildings and Lakeside Center offer 2.6 million square feet of exhibition space. Located along Chicago's lakefront, McCormick Place features 173 meeting rooms, the 4,249-seat Arie Crown Theater, and one of the largest ballrooms in the world.



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