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CONTACT:
Mary Kay Marquisos
(312) 791-6237
mmarquisos@mpea.com

MPEA and Labor Unions Reach Agreement to Solidify Work Rule Reforms at McCormick Place

*Agreement positions Chicago as the most customer-friendly
convention and tradeshow destination in the country.*

CHICAGO - Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority (MPEA) and the labor organizations that represent the McCormick Place workforce have reached settlement on the lawsuit challenging the MPEA's authority to implement work rule reforms outlined in the May 2010 legislation package. These work rule changes align McCormick Place operations with its major competitors in the convention and trade show industries.

The settlement between MPEA, the Chicago Regional Council of Carpenters and the International Association of Teamsters, Local 727 eliminates any questions about organized labor's support to help Chicago be more competitive in the convention and tourism industry.

The two unions will join with MPEA in asking the federal court to dismiss their lawsuit filed earlier this year, challenging the MPEA's authority to implement some of the reforms. Under the terms of the settlement, four key reforms important to exhibitors have been solidified:

- **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, power tools and other tools designated by the Authority.
- **Expanded Straight-time Provisions** roll back double-time pay for the following holidays (Columbus, Day, Veteran's Day, Martin Luther King, Jr., Day and President's Day and time worked beyond eight hours per day on the weekend.
- **Auto Small Utility Vehicles (ASUV)** a.k.a. POV- Provisions allow exhibitors to operate, load and unload their own vehicles at McCormick Place docks and designated loading areas.
- **Crew Size Reductions** will immediately allow work at McCormick Place to be done by 2-person crews rather than the 3-person crews required prior to the reforms.

Other reforms already implemented at McCormick Place include measures to lower food and beverage pricing, and enhance menu options. Additionally, show organizers now have the flexibility to select an electrical provider of their choice (from an approved vendor list), thereby enabling cost-savings through competitive pricing. McCormick Place also continues to offer reduced parking rates at its' surface parking lot as well as free Wi-Fi access throughout the facility.

Settlement with the unions was achieved through the intervention of Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Illinois Governor Pat Quinn—both of whom recognize the importance of the convention and trade show industry to Chicago's and Illinois' economy.

"The convention and trade show industry brings millions of dollars to the Illinois economy each year, keeping thousands of people employed," said Governor Pat Quinn. "By working together, we were able to resolve our differences for the sake of the many who depend on this industry for their livelihoods".

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“To keep Chicago a premier trade show and convention destination, we forged solutions that work for all parties,” said Mayor Emanuel. “What we all have at stake in this dispute is too important not to reach agreement.”

MPEA Trustee James 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.”

“Chicago is now the most customer-friendly convention and tradeshow destination in the world,” said Don Welsh, President and CEO, Chicago Convention & Tourism Bureau. “The restoration of exhibitor rights at McCormick Place, without any future threat, ensures that our customers will not only realize significant savings, but prosper as a result of exhibitors returning to their shows in full force. On behalf of Chicago’s entire visitor industry, I commend the core group of customers for their counsels and unwavering commitment throughout this process.”

“All parties now share the commitment to ensuring that Chicago’s McCormick Place is the number one destination for trade shows and conventions,” said David Causton, General Manager of McCormick Place. “It is a new day in Chicago and we look forward to sharing that good news with all our present and prospective customers.”

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