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Hosts the Chicago Auto Show, NBA Draft Combine, ASI, & Nike Tournament of Champions

North America's Largest Convention Center Busy for the Foreseeable Future; Over 1000 FTEs Back to Work on Campus

CHICAGO—Just two months ago, McCormick Place, North America's largest convention center, announced that the facility would be reopening with a robust schedule of events. After sitting closed for nearly one and a half years due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the campus hosted four major events in just the last month and a half.

In June, the campus hosted the NBA's most promising prospects at the NBA Draft Combine. The Marriott Marquis Chicago and the Wintrust Arena were bustling with the next generation of NBA stars. The event featured five-on-five games, drills, measurements and medical exams, and team and player interviews. The event was designed for promising players to go out and make the best possible impression upon teams before the draft.

During July, the campus was busy, just like it usually would be before the pandemic. McCormick Place hosted the Chicago Auto Show, Advertising Specialty Institute (ASI), and the Nike Tournament of Champions, all within a few days of each other. The Chicago Auto Show, a special edition, showed off the flexibility of the campus as it was an indoor and outdoor event with cars to test drive and a festival-like atmosphere. In addition, Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot made an appearance, as did Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker. These events, in total, brought in over 150,000 guests to the campus over just a few days.

While many convention centers and other event venues have had challenges bringing back workers, McCormick Place has already brought back approximately 1000 FTEs along with hundreds of contractors who all play a vital part in ensuring each show runs smoothly. Having these experienced workers back on campus meant successfully moving in the ASI event and the Auto Show while the Nike Tournament of Champions was still happening. All of this was occurring while hospitality workers at the convention center and the hotels were ensuring that thousands of guests were also being fed on campus.

David Causton, McCormick Place, General Manager, said, "McCormick Place had been closed since March of 2020. I'm really proud of our team; they handled three major events within a week flawlessly. It is no small feat to set up a major trade show, ASI, and the Chicago Auto Show with hundreds of vehicles while also hosting the Nike Tournament of Champions, which had 80 regulation-sized basketball courts. There are very few places in the world that could pull off what McCormick Place just did this month. Our staff and the flexibility of our campus is what brings our customers back year after year."

Dave Sloan, Chicago Auto Show General Manager, said, "We were ecstatic to be able to open our doors to fans this summer for a special edition of the Chicago Auto Show, which turned out to be a great success. We've enjoyed a strong partnership with McCormick Place, a relationship that dates back 60 years and value each member of the staff that helps make McCormick Place the ideal home of the Chicago Auto Show. This year's event really showed off McCormick Place's versatility. To be able to move from one hall to another and give the show a totally new look and personality was eye-opening. We're already looking forward to and planning next year's show which will return to its traditional February timeframe (Feb. 12-21)."

Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority (MPEA) owns and operates McCormick Place, the Wintrust Arena, the Hyatt Regency McCormick Place, and the Marriott Marquis Chicago. Once opened to the public, both on-campus hotels began to fill with eventgoers and tourists. McCormick Place has a robust schedule of events as the campus looks over the second half of 2021 and beyond. In just the next 18 months, the campus will host over 119 events, with an attendance of nearly 2 million, and the economic impact to the region is estimated at \$2.35 billion.

Looking toward the future, McCormick Place is excited to host countless major events, including some that have long awaited their return. Coming up next month McCormick Place will host the Black Women's Expo with 30,000 guests. In September, FABTECH, a metal fabricating convention, already reports near pre-pandemic attendance and expects 35,000 guests. And later this winter, McCormick Place will host the Radiological Society of North America for its annual meeting with over 55,000 guests.

Larita Clark, MPEA CEO, said, "We are so pleased to have made it through our most challenging time at McCormick Place, ever. I am thrilled that over 1000 FTEs are back on our campus, along with countless contractors as well. Our employees are our family, and together we are finally returning to our core mission which is to attract trade shows, conventions, meetings, expositions, and public events to strengthen the economy of Illinois and the region at large. As we look ahead, I am pleased to see that clients that had events canceled due to the pandemic are returning, and our short and long-term outlooks are excellent. So let there be no doubt, events, large, mid-sized, and intimate, are back at McCormick Place, and we are ready."

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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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