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**MAYOR EMANUEL AND CHOOSE CHICAGO ANNOUNCE RECORD TOURISM
IN FIRST QUARTER OF 2018**

Surge in Room Demand Pushes Occupancy to Record Highs; Builds on Record Job Growth Set in 2017

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and David Whitaker, President & CEO of Choose Chicago, today announced Chicago reached record tourism levels in the first quarter of 2018. The results build on Chicago's record performance of 55.2 million visitors in 2017 and reflect a the city's growing strength in attracting more leisure visitors and convention delegates.

"Tourism in Chicago means jobs throughout Chicago," Mayor Emanuel said. "By continuing to set new tourism records and bring millions more people to Chicago every year, we are creating jobs and generating economic opportunities that reach every Chicago neighborhood."

In the first quarter of 2018, total rooms occupied reached a record 2.33 million, an increase of 10.5 percent. The double-digit growth was fueled by both an increase in leisure rooms booked - up 7.1 percent, and a significant increase in group rooms booked - up 20.5 percent. The occupancy rate increased 5.7 percent, up to 61.2 percent, which ties for the highest level ever recorded, set over a decade ago.

"We're encouraged to see the momentum continue as Chicago experiences unparalleled growth, especially in winter visitation," Whitaker said, "A primary focus of Choose Chicago and our partners is to establish Chicago as a 12-month visitor destination for both vacationers and meetings delegates."

Chicago's tourism industry supported an estimated 146,500 jobs in 2017, a 17 percent increase since Mayor Emanuel took office. Prior to 2011, there were an estimated 124,400 tourism-related positions. The 55.2 million visitors to Chicago in 2017 generated an estimated 22,000 additional jobs. In 2010 Chicago saw approximately 39.25 million visitors. 2017's performance is an approximately 40 percent increase.

Choose Chicago continues to aggressively work to bring in meetings and conventions that have not previously met in Chicago, including six the city hosted in the first quarter. The growth in leisure rooms was also reflected in Expedia bookings data, which paced up 14 percent in the first quarter year over year. The positive trend looks to continue as Choose Chicago announced that current reports indicate advance room-nights booked on Expedia are currently pacing up 25 percent for the combined key summer travel months of June, July and August.

Six new hotels opened their doors in Chicago's Central Business District in 2017 with another eight new hotels scheduled to open in 2018, including the new 175-room Hotel Zachary, which opened last week adjacent to Wrigley Field. The continued hotel boom further demonstrates investor confidence in Chicago.

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