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**MAYOR RAHM EMANUEL, CHICAGO PARK DISTRICT BREAK GROUND ON NEW YEAR-ROUND THEATER
ON THE LAKE CULTURAL FACILITY**

*New lakefront venue will feature a 330-seat performance space, two-adjacent spaces for special events,
and a restaurant with an outdoor patio area*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel, Superintendent Michael P. Kelly, Alderman Michele Smith, and members of the Lincoln Park and theater communities today broke ground on the new Theater on the Lake year-round cultural facility, located at Fullerton Avenue and Lake Shore Drive.

"Theater on the Lake is a community treasure that has entertained Chicago residents and visitors during the summer months for more than six decades," Mayor Emanuel said. "This new venue will provide access to Chicago's rich cultural scene at a fraction of the cost all year long."

The building, just steps from Lake Michigan, will undergo a \$6 million facelift to be funded by Lakefront Hospitality Group. The Group's proposal to remodel, renovate and operate the one-of-a-kind entertainment and cultural venue was in response to a concession Notice of Availability that was advertised in December of 2015.

Theater on the Lake's new redesign will preserve the historical aesthetics of the loft-like structure, while incorporating modern elements to transform it into a multi-use, year-round venue. The structure will be divided into three sections: a new 330-seat main theater with new lighting, sound system, green rooms and dressing rooms, two-adjacent event spaces with access to a lakefront terrace, and a public restaurant furnished with a kitchen and a semicircular outdoor patio with a breathtaking vista of the city skyline.

"Improvements to Theater on the Lake will dramatically heighten the amazing production quality of this unique performance space and expand our capacity to offer professional world-class theatre, as part of the yearlong Night Out in the Park initiative, to our patrons from a year-round location," said Chicago Park District Superintendent and CEO Michael P. Kelly. "The building's new amenities allow us to accommodate patrons who just want to relax, while

catering to guests celebrating a special occasion or enjoying a casual dining experience along the lake.”

The project is part of the Mayor’s commitment to elevate and expand cultural assets and reinvigorate arts programming in Chicago’s neighborhoods, as called for in the Chicago Cultural Plan; as well as his Building on Burnham vision of maintaining public access to green spaces along the lakefront for the purpose of promoting recreation and leisure activities.

The renovations come on the heels of the completion of the Fullerton Revetment project earlier this year. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' shoreline protection project at Fullerton Avenue Beach added approximately 5.8 acres of park space to the area neighboring the Theater on the Lake building.

Renovations are expected to be complete in summer 2017.

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Theater on the Lake was constructed in 1920. The building was originally a recuperation ward for babies suffering from tuberculosis and other diseases. During World War II, the structure was then used as a USO Center. After the war, the Chicago Park District used the venue for then-popular barn dances. In 1952, it was converted into the Theater on the Lake performance venue and showcased productions staged by the Park District's many community theater organizations. In 1996, the programming evolved into its current format, and the Chicago Park District began inviting professional theater companies to remount their best works.

The Chicago Park District is the 2014 Gold Medal Award winner, recognized for excellence in park and recreation management across the nation. For more information about the Chicago Park District’s more than 8,700 acres of parkland, more than 597 parks, 26 miles of lakefront, 11 museums, two world-class conservatories, 16 historic lagoons, nearly 50 nature areas, thousands of special events, sports and entertaining programs, please visit www.chicagoparkdistrict.com or contact the Chicago Park District at 312/742.PLAY or 312/747.2001 (TTY). Want to share your talent? Volunteer in the parks by calling, 312/742.PLAY.