

For Immediate Release

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Juan Ochoa Named Chief Executive Officer of the Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority

Governor Blagojevich Appoints President of the Illinois Hispanic Chamber of Commerce to Run the Agency that Owns and Operates McCormick Place and Navy Pier

CHICAGO (January 2, 2007) – The Board of Directors of the Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority (MPEA) welcomed Governor Rod R. Blagojevich’s appointment of Juan Ochoa to serve as Chief Executive Officer of the organization that owns and operates McCormick Place and historic Navy Pier. Ochoa assumes his new CEO position today, replacing Leticia Peralta Davis, who is leaving to pursue new opportunities.

“I’m very excited to have Juan join the Pier Authority,” said Governor Blagojevich. “His experience and success with growing the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce will be valuable as we work to make Chicago the convention destination it should be. I want to thank Leticia for her hard work and particularly for helping shepherd through McCormick Place’s major expansion efforts and overseeing critical labor negotiations.”

Ochoa, 36, brings years of business expertise and community involvement to his new post. For the past 10 years, he has served as President and CEO of the Illinois Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (IHCC). Under Ochoa’s leadership, IHCC has become one of the most active, respected and nationally recognized Hispanic business organizations in the country, growing from 52 members and a \$45,000 budget to over 1,200 members and a \$1.7 million budget.

“I’m grateful that the Governor has confidence in my ability to lead an organization that is so critical to the economic vitality of our state. This is an exciting opportunity and I look forward to serving,” said Juan Ochoa.

Throughout his career, Ochoa has played a key leadership role promoting the Hispanic business community to ensure its participation in important policy and economic issues. Ochoa’s many accomplishments include garnering business support for the historic \$900 million expansion project at the University of Illinois at Chicago and many other similar

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public projects, resulting in significant business opportunities for Hispanic firms. Ochoa is also the founder of the *Make the Connection! Hispanic Business Expo* held annually in Chicago, which has grown to become one the largest and most important Hispanic business events in the nation.

Ochoa is a strong advocate for increasing trade opportunities in Mexico and Latin America and has organized dozens of trade missions to Mexico. He is a regular economic and political commentator on local, national and international issues. In 2000, Ochoa served as an international observer for the Mexican Presidential elections.

“The Board of MPEA enthusiastically welcomes Juan Ochoa. His experience and commitment will serve MPEA well as it continues the advances that are vital to Illinois and the region,” said MPEA Chairman Theodore R. Tetzlaff.

Ochoa will replace Leticia Peralta Davis, who became the first woman to head the Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority when the Governor appointed her in March 2003.