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**NAVY PIER NAMES MICHELLE T. BOONE
AS CHIEF PROGRAM AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT OFFICER**

*Prominent Chicago arts and cultural leader to oversee cultural
and community programming at Navy Pier*

CHICAGO – Navy Pier, Inc. (NPI), the nonprofit organization that oversees the Midwest’s top leisure destination, is proud to announce the appointment of Michelle T. Boone to the newly-created position of Chief Program and Civic Engagement Officer, effective August 15, 2016. Boone has served as the Commissioner of the City of Chicago’s Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) since 2011, where she led the city’s efforts to successfully merge the Departments of Cultural Affairs and Special Events; and led the creation and implementation of the current Chicago Cultural Plan.

“Michelle is a highly-respected strategic leader who has a global reputation for her work in cultural arenas,” said Marilyn Gardner, President and Chief Executive Officer of Navy Pier Inc. “We welcome her talent, expertise and leadership as Navy Pier continues to evolve as an organization into its second century.”

Navy Pier has completed the first phase of its physical transformation with the opening of a breathtaking new Centennial wheel; the stunning Polk Bros Park Fountain and Plaza; the completely transformed South Dock; and the new Chicago-centric Food Experience.

“Navy Pier continues its bold re-imagination with the appointment of Michelle Boone. We are thrilled to see Navy Pier’s Centennial Vision take shape through expanded cultural, educational and community offerings, ” said Gillian Darlow, Chief Executive Officer, Polk Bros. Foundation. “Navy Pier is a great civic space for all to enjoy; and Michelle is the ideal leader to spearhead Navy Pier’s programmatic transformation.”

Under Boone’s leadership, DCASE presented and promoted some of the country’s finest festivals, exhibitions, performances and holiday celebrations. As an experienced manager, her team revitalized such marquee city events as Taste of Chicago, Gospel Music Festival, and Jazz Festival. Boone also led many fundraising efforts for arts and cultural programming, and she launched the inaugural Chicago Architecture Biennial, an international survey exhibition of contemporary architecture. The Chicago Tribune named her 2015 “Chicagoan of the Year” in architecture.

Prior to her role as Commissioner, Boone’s illustrious career included serving as the Senior Program Officer at the Joyce Foundation in Chicago, following her role as director of the award-winning youth arts program, Gallery 37. Michelle also has worked in the television, film and recording industries, and been a Peace Corps Volunteer in Chad, Africa.

Michelle has served on the national boards of Grantmakers in the Arts and Americans for the Arts. She was appointed as a member of the board of directors of the Arts Alliance Illinois, the Third Coast International Audio Festival, the South Chicago Arts Center, and Neighbor Space. In addition, Michelle served as a reviewer for the National Endowment for the Arts and the Illinois Arts Council.

Boone’s many awards and honors include the 2015 Chicago Loop Alliance Leadership Award, 2015 “Chicago Defender” Woman of Excellence Honoree, and the 2014 League of Chicago Theatres Tribute Award. She holds a bachelor’s degree in Telecommunications and a master’s degree in Public Affairs, in the field of nonprofit management, both from Indiana University.

Navy Pier cultural and community programming is supported by the Polk Bros. Foundation. Navy Pier has embarked on an 18-month Arts and Discovery Program strategic planning initiative to expand and enhance free arts and cultural programming, which to date has involved hundreds of community and cultural leaders in its development. The plan envisions new and eclectic arts, cultural, community, special events and entertainment programming. The planning effort has been led by Dickerson Global Advisors.

About Navy Pier:

Located on Lake Michigan, Navy Pier is the top-attended leisure destination in the Midwest, stretching more than six city blocks and welcoming more than 8 million guests annually. Originally opened in 1916 as a shipping and recreation facility, this Chicago landmark showcases more than 50 acres of parks, restaurants, attractions, sightseeing and dining cruise boats, exposition facilities and more. 2016 marks Navy Pier’s 100th anniversary with a series of special events and programming, and ongoing pier-wide redevelopment efforts. Navy Pier, Inc., a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, maintains and oversees Navy Pier and its redevelopment into a bolder, greener and more contemporary urban space. For more information, visit our website at www.navypier.com.

About The Polk Bros. Foundation:

The Polk Bros. Foundation works to improve the quality of life for Chicago families and to make Chicago a place where all people have the opportunity to reach their full potential. The Foundation partners with local nonprofit organizations that work to reduce the impact of poverty and provide area residents with better access to quality education, preventive health care and basic human services. The Polk Bros. Foundation is one of the largest funders of Chicago nonprofit organizations, with annual grants totaling roughly \$25 million and assets of more than \$400 million. Since its first grants in 1988, the Foundation has supported nearly 3,000 nonprofits with close to \$300 million.

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