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***MEDIA ALERT***
GREAT PHOTO OPPORTUNITY

CHICAGO BOATING SEASON OPENS WITH
“BLESSING OF THE FLEET”

Chicago’s Celebration of Maritime Day and the “Blessing of the Fleet”
Ceremony Set for Friday, May 20, 2011 at Navy Pier®

WHAT: The Propeller Club, the International Ship Master’s Association, Chicago Lodge #3 and Navy Pier join forces to mark the beginning of boating season with a heartfelt maritime tradition: Blessing of the Fleet. The Blessing of the Fleet is a centuries-old observance that inaugurates the boating season, and is taking place as part of Maritime Day 2011.

WHEN: 11 a.m., Friday, March 20, 2011

WHERE: Navy Pier
600 E. Grand Avenue
Ceremony takes place by the “Captain on the Helm” statue, just south of Dock Street.

DETAILS: This year, about a dozen boats will gather for the traditional blessing, including law enforcement and United States Coast Guard boats, as well as vessels from Chicago’s tour boat community. Guests will include a number of Navy veterans of the Vietnam War, the Korean War and World War II, some of whom trained at Navy Pier or on the Great Lakes.

Event Schedule:
11 a.m.: Prayer and Blessing of the Wreath at “Captain on the Helm” Statue at Navy Pier
11:15 a.m.: Board Shoreline Sightseeing’s “Cap Streeter” boat for Blessing of the Fleet ceremony
11:30 a.m.: Blessing of the Fleet, including a water display from Chicago Fire Dept. Fireboat

The Propeller Club of the United States was founded in 1927 to promote a strong American Merchant Marine on the Oceans, the Great Lakes and the Inland Waterways.

The International Ship Master’s Association, Chicago Lodge #3 functions as the representative of all Great Lakes mariners in many important ways, informing and educating on issues of vital concern to mariners. The Association plays a cooperative role with Transport Canada, the U.S. Coast Guard and various other maritime organizations and associations.

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