FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contacts:
Delores Robinson, Navy Pier, (312) 559-5031
Timothy McGovern, The Propeller Club of the United States (312) 222-8549

A Chicago Maritime Tradition Continues:
“Blessing of the Fleet” Opens Chicago Boating Season

Chicago’s Maritime Day and “Blessing of the Fleet” Ceremony
Set for 11 a.m., Friday, May 20, 2011 at Navy Pier®

Chicago (May 17, 2011) - The Propeller Club, the International Ship Master’s Association, Chicago Lodge #3 and Navy Pier will join forces to mark “Maritime Day” and the beginning of Chicago’s boating season with a heartfelt maritime tradition: “The Blessing of the Fleet.” This year’s ceremony is set for 11 a.m., Friday, March 20, by the “Captain on the Helm” statue, just south of Dock Street, on Navy Pier.

The “Blessing of the Fleet” is a centuries-old observance that officially opens the boating season. This year, about a dozen boats will gather for the traditional blessing, including law enforcement boats, United States Coast Guard ships, and vessels representing Chicago’s popular tour boat community. Special V.I.P 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.

“Each year, Maritime Day allows us to recognize the often forgotten service and sacrifice provided by mariners to our city and our nation,” said Timothy McGovern, president of The Propeller Club of the United States. “It is a wonderful tradition that celebrates the past and provides encouragement for the future of the industry.”

May 20 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”
11:30 a.m.: “Blessing of the Fleet,” including water display by Chicago Fire Dept. Fireboat

About The Propeller Club of the United States:
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.

About the International Ship Master’s Association:
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.