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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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It Takes a Fleet: Working Boats of the Chicago River

CHICAGO— From June 19 through June 29, 2008, Friends of the Chicago River is hosting “Working Boats of the Chicago River” outside its McCormick Tribune Bridgehouse & Chicago River Museum to showcase the boats and crews that keep the river safe, clean, and vibrant. Visitors will be able to get a close look at Chicago’s working boats from the shore, learn about their activities on the river, and meet the crews. The series of events is a partnership with the Chicago Police Marine & Helicopter Unit, Chicago River Rowing & Paddling Center (CRRPC), City of Chicago Department of Streets and Sanitation, Chicago Fire Department and the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD). The Bridgehouse Museum is located at 376 N. Michigan Avenue, Chicago. For more detailed schedules of which boat will be present each day call (312) 977-0227.

“Every boat in this event is different, and its work on the river is unique and essential,” noted Margaret Frisbie, Friends’ executive director. “Not only will it be fun to learn about the boats – we think visitors will walk away with a heightened appreciation and a deeper understanding of how we collectively affect the river and what efforts are underway to improve it aesthetically and physically while we maintain balanced use between the canoes, kayaks, rowing shells, water taxis, tour boats and barges that ply its waters.”

The boats of Working Boats include: Streets & Sanitation’s new state-of-the-art river cleaning boat and their graffiti removal boat; MWRD’s pollution control and scientific research boat; the Chicago Fire Department’s classic fireboat; and Chicago Marine Police’s newest patrol and rescue boat. CRRPC and Friends’ own canoe program will showcase the human-powered craft these organizations use to raise awareness for the river and help people discover the joys and thrills of paddling and rowing on our urban waters.

During each event, visitors will receive discounted \$2 admission to the Bridgehouse Museum, where visitors can discover the fascinating story of how the Chicago River changed with the growth of the city it inspired.

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Working boats – ad one

Event participants and dates

Thursday, June 19
11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Chicago Police Marine and Helicopter Unit

Boat Details: *Marine 5*, the department's newest boat, was received in 2007. This 31-foot Defender Class Safe Boat has a crew of two to five marine officers, depending on the mission.

Friday, June 20
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

City of Chicago Department of Streets and Sanitation

Boat Details: *DSS Two*, a 41-foot Debris Collecting Boat with Oxygenation vessel, was launched in May 2008 and is the Department's newest addition. *DSS One*, a 33-foot refurbished police boat built in 1976, can be used to clean but is now primarily used to combat graffiti near the river banks. Both boats are operated by a crew of two people.

Monday, June 23
11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Chicago Fire Department

Boat Details: The *Victor L. Schlaeger* – otherwise known as *Engine Company No. 58* – was commissioned in 1949 and is Chicago's last operating fireboat. This 92-foot floating firehouse has sleeping quarters and a kitchen below, and is on duty 24 hours a day. Each of its 4 deck guns can pump 1,200 gallons of water per minute to extinguish boat fires as well as building fires along the Chicago River. The fireboat is an integral member of the water rescue response team.

Friday, June 27
11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Pollution Control Boat 100 is one of the fleet the District uses for monitoring of illegal or accidental toxic waste discharges, conducts research and continuously screens water quality for aquatic life, dissolved oxygen, temperature and ph, and observes commodity movements, recreational use and the surrounding property.

Sunday, June 29
11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

HUMAN POWERED CRAFT!!

Chicago River Rowing & Paddling Center will showcase a quadruple sculls rowing shell (known as a "4x") and different types of kayaks. Visitors will also have an opportunity to see a "1x" single sculling rowing shell on land and see up close how the seat slides back and forth and how beautiful and delicately built it is.

Friends of the Chicago River's own River Guides will demonstrate canoe skills and talk about experiencing both rich wildlife and urban adventures on the Chicago River.

Friends of the Chicago River is a nonprofit organization with 2,000 members that works to foster the vitality of Chicago River for the plants, animals, and people that share its watershed. The McCormick Tribune Bridgehouse & Chicago River Museum boosts Friends' education and outreach efforts. For information on how to become a Friend visit our website at www.chicagoriver.org or call Friends of the Chicago River at (312) 939-0490. For more information about the Bridgehouse Museum, visit www.bridgehousemuseum.org.