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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Navy Pier Announces Celebration of National Maritime Day on May 23rd *To kick off Safe Boating Week, Navy Pier will host the century-old tradition: Blessing of the Fleet*

CHICAGO -- Navy Pier, Inc. today announced Chicago's marine community will join the International Shipmasters Association Lodge #3 in the commemoration of National Maritime Day with the Blessing of the Fleet ceremony on Monday, May 23.

The 100 year old tradition will commence at 11 a.m. at the Pier's newly added Wave Wall, located on the South Dock. The public is invited to attend the ceremony to view the honorary wreath laying and playing of "taps," which can be seen from the dock or the water.

A joint congressional resolution was passed on May 20, 1933 declaring May 22nd to be National Maritime Day to commemorate "the first successful transoceanic voyage under steam propulsion, thus making a material contribution to the advancement of ocean transportation." Since that time, the U.S. Armed Forces, U.S. Merchant Marine, and American shipyards have been instrumental in the safety and security of our country and the growth of the maritime industry.

"The Chicago chapter of the International Shipmasters Lodge #3 is pleased to participate in this special day," said Bob Lund, Grand Lodge President. "It is especially timely and appropriate to be here during Navy Pier's 100th anniversary year."

The U.S. Coast Guard today also provided a list of five boating safety tips: Boat sober; file a float plan that lets someone know where you're going and when you'll be back; wear a life jacket at all times; make sure you

have good communications like a VHF-FM radio (cell phones are not always reliable out on the water); and make sure to get a Vessel Safety Check for your boat.

Blessing of the Fleet Sequence of Events:

- 10:45 a.m. Recreational boats invited to form a line and hold at Dime Pier and monitor VHF Ch. 68 for communications
- 11 a.m. National Maritime Ceremony at the new Wave Wall, below the Navy Pier Centennial Wheel, South Dock, Navy Pier.
- 11 a.m. Ceremony line-up:
- National Anthem by the Navy Band Great Lakes
 - Presidential Proclamation read by Floyd Miras, U.S. Maritime Administration
 - Commentary by U.S. Coast Guard Commander Ryan Manning and closing comments by International Ship Masters' Association's Grand Lodge President Robert Lund.
- 11:20 a.m. Shoreline's *Cap Streeter*, escorted by participating U.S. Coast Guard and Chicago Marine Units proceed to Inner Basin.
- 11:30 a.m. Wreath laying by *Cap Streeter*, followed by "Taps." An order will be given for a simultaneous single long sounding of whistles and horns from all vessels as a salute.
- 11:35 a.m. All vessels in the queue will be led by the Coast Guard and Chicago Marine Unit Patrol Boats to pass on the port side of the *Cap Streeter* and will receive the blessing. The blessing will be conducted by Father David Dillon of the Order of Carmelites.
- 11:45 a.m. *Cap Streeter* returns to its berth at Navy Pier.

About International Shipmasters Association Lodge #3

As part of the International Shipmasters Association, Chicago Lodge #3's mission is to give back to their fellow mariners, and to use their resources to help others as well. Key projects supported by Chicago Lodge #3 include the International Seaman's Center at Burns Harbor. It was established in 1972 as a holistic chaplaincy for men and women who crew the ships of the waters of the Great Lakes. Their efforts now encompass crews visiting ports around northern Indiana and southern Wisconsin.

Additionally, Chicago Lodge #3 hosts Chicago's Christmas Ship, the USCG Cutter *Mackinaw* every December when she comes to Navy Pier to distribute Christmas trees to needy families.

In conjunction with the U.S. Coast Guard and Marine Safety Unit Chicago, Chicago Lodge #3 produces Chicago Maritime Industry Day annually. The purpose of the conference is to share maritime discussions and expertise by the local marine community.

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, retail shops, sightseeing and dining cruise boats, exposition facilities and more. In 2016, Navy Pier celebrates its 100th anniversary with a series of special events and programming, the grand opening of its new Centennial Wheel and ongoing pier-wide redevelopment efforts as part of the Centennial Vision. Navy Pier, Inc., a 501(c)(3) not for profit 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.

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