



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

March 21, 2017

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## **Big Bus Tours Partners with the Top-Visited Destination in the Midwest to Serve as the Official Bus Tour of Navy Pier**

**CHICAGO** – Big Bus Tours, the largest operator of open-top sightseeing tours in the world, today announced an exclusive partnership with Navy Pier, the top-visited destination in the Midwest. The London-based company will serve as the Pier's exclusive provider of public bus tours and preferred provider of private charters for events hosted at the iconic cultural landmark.

With nearly 9.3 million annual guests, Navy Pier is the most visited attraction for Big Bus Chicago. The Pier, currently in the midst of a physical and programmatic transformation, serves as the city's lakefront treasure welcoming guests from Chicago and around the world. Year-round events and programming include unique art installations and exhibits; free outdoor concerts and entertainment; an authentic Chicago Food Experience; the Aon Summer Fireworks series; and Navy Pier's iconic *Centennial Wheel*, which is part of Chicago's storied history.

"We are delighted to become the Official Bus Tour of Navy Pier, Chicago's most recognized landmark," said Alex Payne, CEO of Big Bus Tours. "At Big Bus Tours, we are focused on enhancing our offerings through partnerships that are in line with our global vision. With a strong overlap in target audience of customers, the new relationship marks a significant step forward in Big Bus Tour's journey to become the leading sightseeing force in the world's most famous cities."

Big Bus Chicago has seen continued and steady growth since its opening in June 2015. Innovative thinking, experimentation and significant support from local leadership and central offices has allowed Big Bus Chicago to become a prominent leader in Chicago's sightseeing industry. While Big Bus Chicago's tour route has included Navy Pier in the past, the new relationship will offer an increased presence on an exclusive level moving forward, benefitting both sides as the Pier also looks to enhance its programming and guest experience.

"Navy Pier is committed to elevating its overall guest experience through partnerships that support our mission and align with our values of providing dynamic experiences and exceptional service during each visit," said Marilyn Kelly Gardner, President and CEO of Navy Pier. "Big Bus Tours understands and shares that commitment, and we could not be more thrilled to work with their local team. Our goal is to offer guests a unique opportunity to discover and explore Chicago's lakefront treasure."

### **About Big Bus Tours**

Big Bus Tours is the largest operator of open-top sightseeing tours in the world, providing sightseeing tours in 20 cities across four continents. 2016 marked Big Bus Tours' Silver Jubilee milestone. The family-owned business commenced operations in London in June 1991 with a fleet of just three buses which have since been expanded to a fleet of 400 buses in cities such as Abu Dhabi, Budapest, Chicago, Dubai, Hong Kong, Istanbul, Muscat, Paris, Rome, Vienna, various destinations across the USA and now Sydney and Darwin in Australia. As Big Bus began its journey, *Les Cars Rouges* in Paris also started to build a strong business, with the two merging in 2011 to create a single unified company. In February 2015, private equity firm Exponent purchased Big Bus Tours, with a shared vision to develop the company into the most recognizable brand in sightseeing. This year Merlin Entertainments PLC became a shareholder, offering a natural synergy with Big Bus Tours and Merlin attractions and experiences globally. Big Bus Tours' sightseeing formula has been designed to provide a flexible approach to city discovery. Each open-top bus tour provides a hop-on, hop-off facility at a variety of interesting locations and, wherever possible, Big Bus Tours looks to enhance the visitor sightseeing experience by providing complementary experiences. For further information, log onto [www.bigbustours.com](http://www.bigbustours.com).

### **Navy Pier Mission Statement**

Navy Pier is the People's Pier, Chicago's lakefront treasure, welcoming all and offering dynamic and eclectic experiences through partnerships and programs that inspire discovery and wonder.

### **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 nine 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 2017, Navy Pier continues to celebrate its centennial with a series of special events and programming, year-round rides on the *Centennial Wheel* and ongoing pier-wide redevelopment efforts as part of the Centennial Vision. Navy Pier, as a non-profit organization, maintains and manages the 50-acre pier that is being redeveloped as a contemporary, environmentally responsible urban space. More information is available at [www.navypier.com](http://www.navypier.com).

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