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CHICAGO LOOP ALLIANCE NAMES NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EXPERT MICHAEL EDWARDS

CHICAGO (November 26, 2012)—Martin Stern, board chairman of **Chicago Loop Alliance** (CLA), announced today the appointment of **Michael Edwards** as the organization's new executive director. Edwards, 53, is currently an economic development consultant, most recently for the Mayor's Office of the City of Spokane, Washington. His nearly three decades of economic development experience includes six years as President and CEO of the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership and seven years as President and CEO of the Downtown Spokane Partnership. He is expected to start at Chicago Loop Alliance on Wednesday, Nov. 28, 2012. Edwards replaces Ty Tabing, who left CLA's head position in June; Laura Jones has served as interim executive director since his departure.

"Chicago Loop Alliance is delighted to welcome Michael as its executive director and the Loop's newest downtown champion," said Stern. "His extensive experience leading business improvement districts and strategic economic planning will be a great asset to us. In the past decade, the Loop has reemerged as an exciting mixed-use area, with a thriving retail and theatrical district, robust tourism to Millennium Park and other iconic attractions, the largest educational campus in the state, a workforce over 300,000 strong and a rapidly growing residential population. Michael's leadership will launch us into the next successful phase of the Loop's growth."

Edwards' distinguished record of professional accomplishments in economic development includes downtown management and revitalization, organizational strategic planning, recruitment and retention, transportation, land development, historic preservation and urban design. As executive director of Chicago Loop Alliance, Edwards will be responsible for the operation and execution of all programs and internal operations at CLA, providing strategic leadership and advancing CLA's mission to make the Loop Chicago's top destination for business, retail, tourism, entertainment and education. He will oversee CLA's annual budget of \$2.7 million and a staff of seven.

"I am pleased and honored to become the new executive director of Chicago Loop Alliance," said Edwards. "Chicago is a great city and the Loop is an iconic American downtown. I have long been impressed with the work of Chicago Loop Alliance and the positive changes that have occurred in the Loop over the last decade. The CLA Board is passionate and committed to the continuation of the organization's forward momentum. In our recovering national economy, I believe Chicago Loop Alliance is well-positioned to take advantage of new trends and opportunities to grow the Loop's full-service, 24/7, mixed-use environment into the future. I am eager to get started."

Edwards served recently as an economic development consultant for the Mayor's Office of the City of Spokane, where he has led the creation of a new economic prosperity strategy, including analysis of the local economy and City's financial position, a review of global trends, and the development of a revised mission, goals and strategies for the future. During his six-year tenure as President and CEO of the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership—a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization providing downtown management and planning services—\$4.2 billion was invested in public and private development in downtown Pittsburgh. Edwards led an aggressive campaign of business and office retention and recruitment, overseeing the reconstruction of historic Market Square, construction of 2,500 new residential units, completion of a five-year strategic plan and two City Council renewals of the 100-block business improvement district. He was previously

President and CEO of the Downtown Spokane Partnership for seven years, overseeing advocacy and comprehensive service programs for the city's central 80-block business improvement district. Edwards is a member of the International Downtown Association and National Parks and Recreation Association, and holds a Master of Public Administration from the University of Pittsburgh. He has family in the Chicago area and will be joined by his wife Mary Jordan Edwards, who is a public finance attorney, and his daughters Holly and Leah.

About Chicago Loop Alliance

Chicago Loop Alliance (CLA) is a 501(c)(6) not-for-profit member-based civic organization and Sole Service Provider for Special Service Area #1. The organization represents Chicago's most dynamic mixed-use district—the Loop—and advocates for the rapidly growing central business area. CLA is focused on promoting and uniting Loop businesses and organizations to support one another in creating a vibrant, flourishing Loop where people live, work and play. In recognition of its leadership in bringing public art to the Loop, CLA received the prestigious 2011 Pinnacle Award from the International Downtown Association.

For more information on Chicago Loop Alliance, please visit www.chicagoloopalliance.com.

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