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BIG TEN CELEBRATION TRANSFORMS STATE STREET

CHICAGO LOOP ALLIANCE PARTNERS WITH CHICAGO SPORTS COMMISSION TO WELCOME 2013 BIG TEN MEN'S BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT IN CHICAGO AND ENCOURAGE FANS TO "TAILGATE ON STATE!"

CHICAGO (February 27, 2013)—State Street transforms into the ultimate destination for college basketball fans next month, when **Chicago Loop Alliance** (CLA) partners with the **Chicago Sports Commission** to celebrate the **2013 Big Ten Men's Basketball Tournament** in Chicago at the United Center, March 14-17, 2013. Fans can get into the spirit of the games beginning March 4, with CLA's *Lightscape: a Multisensory Experience on State Street* broadcasting each rival university's fight songs along State Street from Wacker Drive to Congress Parkway throughout the month, along with the familiar courtside sounds of basketballs dribbling and swishing, referees whistling, sneakers squeaking and crowds cheering. Big Ten-themed banners, planter signs and CTA subway entrances along State Street will also delight passersby, including the 300,000 Big Ten alumni who call Chicago home. The Loop celebration is part of CLA's ongoing partnership with **Choose Chicago** to promote Chicago tourism.

"We're pumped to welcome local and visiting Big Ten fans during the tournament," said **CLA Executive Director Michael M. Edwards**. "State Street offers many unique dining, shopping and hotel options, and the United Center is easily accessible from the Loop via public transportation. Game on!"

The Big Ten Men's Basketball Tournament has been held in only two cities—Chicago and Indianapolis—in its first 14 years of existence, including the first four years in Chicago from 1998-2001 and again in 2003, 2005 and 2007. Chicago will again host the tournament in 2015.

"I am excited that Chicago is hosting the Big Ten tournament in 2013 and 2015 and I'm looking forward to the strong economic impact that this event will have on the entire city," said Mayor Rahm Emanuel. "This is the type of event Chicago should host on a regular basis. I am glad the Big Ten, a partner in our backyard, is coming back to Chicago and I look forward to welcoming them in the future."

Commissioned by CLA and unveiled in November 2011, *Lightscape: a Multisensory Experience on State Street* is comprised of 18 "prairie grass" landscapes of varying heights up to 9-feet-tall, "planted" along sidewalks on State Street from Lake to Van Buren Streets. The decorative clusters feature 50-100 energy-efficient LED lights each, along with embedded speakers which broadcast musical selections and special announcements, as the lights change patterns in synchronization with songs. CLA's continued plans for *Lightscape* include updates to enhance visitors' physical experience, generate public attention and engagement and provide a platform for creative partnerships with Chicago businesses and cultural organizations. *Lightscape* is funded by State Street property owners.

Chicago Loop Alliance (CLA) is a member-based nonprofit organization that 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. For more information please visit www.chicagoloopalliance.com.

The Chicago Sports Commission recruits, attracts and supports major sports events in Chicago. Its goal is to fill hotel rooms through sports events and position Chicago as the premier sports tourism destination in the world. For more information visit www.chicagosportscommission.com.

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