



Managing McCormick Place Complex and Navy Pier

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Contact:
Mary Kay Marquisos
312-791-6237

MPEA Welcomes New Board Member

Villanova combines labor background with business experience, professional accomplishments and a commitment to community

CHICAGO -- The Board of the Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority (MPEA), the owner and operator of McCormick Place® and historic Navy Pier®, has welcomed a trade union leader as its newest member. Thomas P. Villanova brings extensive professional skills and business experience as well as community-based service to his new role.

Governor Rod R. Blagojevich appointed Villanova, who serves as President of the Chicago & Cook County Building and Construction Trades Council. The Council represents 24 trade unions and 100,000 members. Villanova replaces Board member Virginia Ojeda, whose term has expired. The MPEA board of directors consists of 13 members: six, including the Chief Executive Officer, are appointed by the Governor of Illinois and seven, including the Board Chairman, are appointed by the Mayor of Chicago.

“We are very pleased to have Tom join the MPEA Board at such an exciting time, especially when new agreements with our labor partners are making it easier for our customers to conduct business in our convention halls,” said Ted Tetzlaff, Chairman of the MPEA Board. “His labor experience and his commitment to public service will prove invaluable to the Board in the coming years and the members of his Building and Construction trades were a vital force in helping us complete the new West Building eight months ahead of schedule and on budget.”

Juan A. Ochoa, Chief Executive Officer of the MPEA, said having a labor representative on the Board for the first time in years is a welcomed addition.

“Unions play an important role at McCormick Place and Navy Pier and Tom will provide valuable insight into how we can continue to work effectively with our labor partners to provide more flexible work rules and cost savings to show organizers and exhibitors. That will, ultimately, ensure the MPEA provides first-rate service to our customers and a great experience to our visitors,” said Ochoa.

Villanova, a lifelong resident of the Chicago area, started his Local 134 IBEW electrical apprenticeship in 1972. He was chosen “Apprentice of the Year” in his third year on the job. After graduating from his apprenticeship, he worked at various levels as Steward, Foreman and General Foreman. In 1994, Villanova was asked to join the Local 134 staff as Business Representative. He was later elected President of the Chicago & Cook County Building and Construction Trades Council in 2004.

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NEW MPEA BOARD MEMBER

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Villanova is a 1998 graduate of Antioch University with a Bachelor's Degree in Labor Law Studies. He serves on several Boards of Directors, including the Italian American Labor Council, the Chicago Southland Economic Development Board and the Metro Southwest Alliance.

Governor Blagojevich appointed Villanova to serve on the Governor's Commission on Opportunity in State Public Construction and the Governor's State Labor Advisory Board.

Mayor Richard M. Daley appointed Villanova to the 21st Century Commission to study where the City should be in 20 years. He was also appointed to Chicago's 2016 Olympics Committee.

The MPEA is a municipal corporation that owns and manages McCormick Place, regarded as the premier convention center in North America, and seeks to promote and operate conventions, fairs and expositions in Chicago, in an effort to strengthen the local economy. The Authority is also charged with carrying out the recreational, commercial and cultural redevelopment and operation of Navy Pier, which has become the Midwest's most popular tourist and leisure attraction.

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