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For Immediate Release
 Contact: Mayor's Press Office
 Phone: 312-744-3334
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 Saturday, September 9, 2006

Mayor Daley Dedicates Cultural Center Green Roof

Announces New Grants and Financial Incentives

Plans to Introduce Stormwater Management Ordinance

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Mayor Richard M. Daley today unveiled the City of Chicago's newest green roof atop the Cultural Center, 77 E. Randolph St.

"Chicago has become nationally known for its leadership in the environment," Daley said at the Cultural Center. "We're a leader when it comes to conserving energy, protecting the Green, reducing water use, redeveloping brownfields and planting trees – to name just a few of our

"We do this not because it's fashionable, but because it makes sense. It improves public health, beautifies the city; it enhances the quality of life; it saves money; and it leaves a legacy for generations.

"We're especially well-known for green roofs. When we planted our first rooftop garden on the Cultural Center, it started a movement that is still going strong, six years later."

The Cultural Center rooftop garden covers 20,370 square feet and contains more than 950 species of plants, 12,000 plants.

Designated a Chicago Landmark and listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Cultural Center is the ninth City building to get a green roof. The green roofs cover 62,472 square feet.

More than 250 green roofs, covering more than 2.5 million square feet, have been constructed or planned – on public and private buildings throughout the city.

Green roofs improve air quality, conserve energy, reduce storm water runoff and cut down on the urban heat island effect.

"Plants and trees act like air conditioners and air filters," Daley said. "The City will save money on air conditioning because we'll no longer have a dark roof absorbing the sun's rays and raising the temperature."

The Cultural Center roof also contains 18 solar thermal panels, which use the sun's rays to heat the building's water. Eight City buildings currently have 144 solar thermal panels. By the end of 2006, another 210 panels will be installed on 12 more City facilities.

Four beehives, similar to those on top of City Hall, have been installed on the roof of the Cultural Center. The honey will be sold to benefit the Gallery 37 Center for the Arts.

The Mayor also announced the City Department of Environment will offer \$200,000 in grants, as last year, to help residents and small business owners build green roofs.

Application forms for the green roof grants are available online at www.cityofchicago.org/environment or by contacting the Department of Environment, 30 North LaSalle St., 25th Floor.

Last June, the Chicago City Council approved Mayor Daley's ordinance establishing the Green Roof Improvement Fund (GRIF) to encourage owners of downtown structures to install green roofs.

The pilot program is being funded with \$500,000 from the Central Loop Tax Increment Financing. The City will provide matching grants of up to \$100,000 to install the system.

On Wednesday, Daley will introduce the Stormwater Management Ordinance in the City Court. The ordinance will require new developments of over 15,000 square feet to manage stormwater on site. The performance-based ordinance will provide developers with a variety of design choices for stormwater management, including permeable pavement and filter strips.

The Mayor also announced a new Web site – www.chicagogreenroofs.org -- an on-line guide to green roofs in Chicago. The Web site is the first in a series of collaborations between the City and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago to promote public awareness of sustainable activities.

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