

SEARS TOWER

Sears Tower Debuts Glass Walk Out and Skydeck Experience The Ledge at Skydeck Chicago Brings the City to Your Feet – Literally

CHICAGO – May 4, 2009 – Sears Tower announced that The Ledge, a series of glass bays that extend from the building, will debut to the public next month as part of an updated Skydeck Chicago experience. Reaching out 4.3 feet from the building's Skydeck on the 103rd floor, visitors will have unobstructed views of Chicago – 1,353 feet straight down.

“We’ve listened to our visitors and people just want to get closer,” said Randy Stancik, general manager, Skydeck Chicago. “You’d only need to see the forehead prints on the windows to know that visitors are constantly trying to catch a glimpse below. Now, they have an unobstructed view straight down and an exhilarating experience.”

The Chicago office of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill (SOM), the building’s original designers, provided an innovative plan for this architectural and engineering achievement. SOM designed The Ledge so that the fully enclosed glass boxes rest between conveyer belts. The boxes retract into the building, allowing easy access for cleaning and maintenance. Extending from the tower’s west side, each box can accommodate four to five people at a time, with unobstructed views of people, taxis and bridges over Wacker Drive and the Chicago River.

“The Sears Tower set architectural and engineering standards when it was first built and now we were able to carefully craft new elements that expand the capabilities of the original design while retaining its integrity,” said Ross Wimer, design partner, SOM.

“The Sears Tower has always been about innovation. For this new Skydeck experience, we have kept with that tradition. Cantilevering out from the side of America’s tallest building, the viewing platform will allow visitors to experience the incredible city of Chicago literally beneath their feet. This is a great addition to the Sears Tower and to Chicago,” added Bill Baker, structural engineer partner, SOM.

An unmatched view is not all that Skydeck Chicago offers. From the moment visitors arrive, they will enjoy new interactive and educational museum-quality exhibits. The exhibits highlight the iconic landmark, and celebrate Chicago’s sports, architecture, pop-culture, history, food, music and people. Interactive displays feature the city’s rich history, major Chicago attractions and fun facts.

The multi-media elevator gives visitors one of the fastest rides in the world up more than one hundred flights, while giving visitors points of reference for the heights they are ascending along their journey to the 103rd floor. Design and branding firm Hornall Anderson developed the visitor experience to showcase the tower’s story as both a Chicago and global icon. Combined with The Ledge, the Skydeck Chicago experience will provide visitors from all over the world an encompassing view of the building and the city.

“The Skydeck attracts more than 1.3 million visitors annually who enjoy views of up to 50 miles and four states,” Stancik said. “Now, visitors will be taken on a ‘one stop Chicago’ journey from the building’s inception and role in Chicago, to the daring experience that awaits them on The Ledge. In a single trip up to 103, visitors see and learn about the best that Windy City has to offer.”

MTH Industries, the Chicago-based 120-year-old glass and architectural metal contractor that installed Cloud Gate in Millennium Park, installed The Ledge’s glass panels. Each glass box is comprised of three layers of glass laminated into one seamless unit. The low-iron, clear glass is clear is fully tempered and heat-soaked for durability. In addition, the motorized system that projects and retracts the boxes from the building utilizes steel LinearBeams.

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About Sears Tower

Sears Tower is the premier corporate office building in Chicago, offering more than 3.8 million square feet of office and retail space. Located in Chicago's West Loop at 233 S. Wacker Drive, the skyscraper is easily accessible from the commuter rail stations, highways and all forms of public transportation. Standing 1,450 feet and 110 stories tall, Sears Tower is the tallest building in North America and an integral part of Chicago's culture. Originally opened in September 1973, it is now a multi-tenant office building, home to more than 100 different companies, including prominent financial services firms, law firms and insurance companies. Many Sears Tower offices boast spectacular vistas of Chicago, with views that can reach nearly 50 miles on a clear day. Sears Tower also boasts tremendous infrastructure, which includes enormous telecommunications capacity and unsurpassed electrical capacity and reliability. The Sears Tower Skydeck on the 103rd floor attracts more than 1.3 million visitors per year.

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