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**U.S. SECRETARY OF COMMERCE PRITZKER RETURNS HOME TO CHICAGO FOR FIRST
OFFICIAL EVENT AS COMMERCE SECRETARY**

*Pritzker discusses Obama administration's efforts to strengthen the economy and create jobs, U.S.
business climate*

Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel and World Business Chicago (WBC) today welcomed U.S. Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker back to Chicago at her first official event in her hometown as Commerce Secretary. The event was held at Google's Chicago offices.

Pritzker discussed the U.S. business climate and the Obama Administration's efforts to strengthen the economy and create jobs. She highlighted three specific areas that are critical to economic growth: the need to invest in infrastructure (both physical and digital), the need for a skilled workforce, immigration reform and the need for federal support for R&D and innovation.

"During my first few months as Commerce Secretary I have traveled around the country and met with hundreds of CEOs and business leaders. I am very excited to be back in Chicago for this great event to talk about how we can help businesses create economic growth and jobs," said Secretary Pritzker. "The Obama Administration – and the Commerce Department – are working every day to help create the conditions for American businesses and their workers grow and succeed."

Mayor Emanuel provided the welcoming remarks, discussing the importance to Chicago of Secretary Pritzker's efforts, both in her current role and in her previous efforts as a business leader in Chicago.

"Penny Pritzker has been a leader in Chicago's business and philanthropic communities, and is now doing great things for the nation in her role as Secretary of Commerce," said Mayor Emanuel. "We are proud to welcome Secretary Pritzker home and hear directly from her about her goals and aspirations in her new position. She will be a driver of job growth and economic opportunity around the nation in this role, as she has been throughout her career."

Secretary Pritzker was interviewed by Chicago Tribune business columnist, Melissa Harris, about her first 100 days in office and her areas of focus moving forward. WBC vice chairman, Michael Sacks, welcomed the group and highlighted Chicago's Plan for Economic Growth and Jobs, a roadmap called for by Mayor Emanuel and a key driver for growth in the region. The Plan focuses on 10 key strategies that the City, private sector and non-profit sectors are aligning with for collective action to advance Chicago's economy.

"It is our great honor to welcome Secretary Pritzker back to Chicago for her first official visit," said Sacks. "Secretary Pritzker's efforts to grow our economy by increasing trade and investment, enhancing our advanced manufacturing capabilities and by focusing on workforce development are consistent with the Mayor's Plan for Economic Growth and Jobs. We look forward to working with this outstanding Chicagoan and good friend over the coming years."

One Plan strategy focuses on fostering innovation and entrepreneurship through ChicagoNEXT. Chicago is quickly becoming a technology hub, as a steady stream of tech companies locate and thrive in the city. The city is home to more than 1,500 digital technology companies, employing more than 40,000 people (up 21% in 2013), with a tech startup launched in Chicago every 24 hours, according to Built in Chicago.

Secretary Pritzker's talk was held at Google's River North office, which currently employs more than 500 people. As a part of Chicago's thriving tech community, Google recently announced it is rehabbing a 200,000-square-foot space in Chicago's West Loop for its continued expansion. In addition, approximately 2,000 employees of Google's Motorola Mobility are moving to the top four floors of Chicago's Merchandise Mart.

Becoming a leading manufacturing hub and creating demand-driven, targeted workforce development are also key components of the city's Plan. Chicago is home to a robust manufacturing sector and an extensive network of manufacturing workforce service providers. Manufacturing is among the region's largest and most prominent sectors, accounting for \$53.9 billion GRP, with a projected growth rate of 3.3 percent compared to 2.1 percent for the economy as a whole.

The shift toward advanced manufacturing brings the need for a skilled workforce and a focus on innovation and research in products and process that WBC is facilitating. WBC recently brought

together key manufacturing organizations, IMEC and ManufacturingWorks, to develop a scalable platform for manufacturing service coordination across the region, in conjunction with a multi-year reoccurring \$300-400,000 grant from the Workforce Funders Alliance. Additional services lines will be offered, such as export assistance for both large and small-and-medium manufacturers.

Penny Pritzker was sworn in as the 38th Secretary of Commerce in June. She is a civic and business leader with more than 25 years of experience in the real estate, hospitality, senior living, and financial services industries. Pritzker served as CEO of PSP Capital Partners, and has previously developed such diverse companies as Vi (formerly Classic Residence by Hyatt); The Parking Spot, a large U.S. network of off-site airport parking facilities; and Pritzker Realty Group.

Pritzker has been actively involved in the Chicago community, and helped launch Skills for Chicagoland's Future, the first city model of Skills for America's Future (on which she served as an advisory board chairman). Pritzker is past chair of the Chicago Public Education Fund, the first venture philanthropy to raise private equity to invest in public schools, and a former member of the Chicago Board of Education.

WBC's efforts closely align with the Department of Commerce's mission to promote job creation, economic growth, sustainable development and improved standards of living, and to compete in the global marketplace.

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***[The U.S. Department of Commerce](#)** promotes job creation, economic growth, sustainable development and improved standards of living for Americans by working in partnership with businesses, universities, communities and the nation's workers. To drive U.S. competitiveness in the global marketplace, the Commerce Department works to strengthen the international economic position of the United States and facilitates global trade by opening up new markets for U.S. goods and services. The Department also promotes progressive business policies that help America's businesses and entrepreneurs and their communities grow and succeed.*

***[World Business Chicago \(WBC\)](#)** leads Chicago's business retention, attraction and expansion efforts and raises the city's position as a premier global business destination. Chaired by Mayor Rahm Emanuel, WBC fosters private sector growth through the advancement of a business-friendly environment that attracts world class talent, and is responsible for the implementation of [Chicago's Plan for Economic Growth and Jobs](#).*