



**NAVY PIER ANNOUNCES \$20 MILLION LEGACY GIFT FROM POLK FAMILY  
Single Largest Private Gift Ever Made to Navy Pier, Will Support the Pier's Redevelopment**

CHICAGO – July 17, 2014 – The Polk family, legendary Chicago retailers and longstanding benefactors to the city and its neighborhoods, today announced a \$20 million legacy gift to Navy Pier – a lead gift that will contribute to the dramatic transformation of the City's most iconic and highly popular leisure destination. The donation marks the single largest private gift ever made to Navy Pier in its nearly 100-year history.

In anticipation of Navy Pier's 100th anniversary in 2016, the Pier is undergoing a dramatic redevelopment to update its features and amenities. The multi-year effort, which began in fall 2013, will transform Navy Pier's 50 acres of premier urban waterfront into a spectacular, global destination and treasure for the people of Chicago and its visitors.

The Polk family legacy gift will support the redevelopment of Navy Pier's 13-acre entrance – currently known as Gateway Park – and its new multi-stage performance lawns, public fountain and promenade. The Polk family's generosity will be recognized through the naming of several elements in the new Polk Bros Park.

"Polk Bros Park will serve as Navy Pier's green front door, inviting the public into the revitalized Pier," said Marilynn K. Gardner, President and CEO, Navy Pier, Inc., at a public announcement at Navy Pier, 600 E. Grand Ave. "On behalf of all of us at Navy Pier, and our millions of visitors past, present and future, we thank the Polk family for this very generous gift. We're confident that Polk Bros Park will become a highly sought-after destination for enjoying arts and culture in Chicago."

Polk Bros Park also includes two magnificent new performance spaces at its southern end to host live arts and culture events against the backdrop of Lake Michigan and the spectacular Chicago skyline.

A dramatic signature fountain will anchor Polk Bros Park's newly expanded plaza. More than 250 programmable jets will mimic the movements of waves, schools of fish, or flocks of birds providing variety and richness and evoking interest and wonder. In the winter months, the fountain will convert to an ice rink. This highly interactive 12,500-square-foot feature will delight visitors and encourage family fun.

As part of Polk Bros Park, the main promenade connecting the city with Navy Pier will be widened and enhanced with a Welcome Pavilion housing Park amenities such as bicycle and skate rental, among other features.

As part of its redevelopment plans, Navy Pier will also be developing an arts and culture plan that will engage Chicago's arts organizations in creating programming designed to appeal to the city's economically, racially and culturally diverse residents, including Chicago Public Schools students and their families.

"We are delighted to see the Polk Bros legacy continue ... one of hard work and commitment to the neighborhoods and families of Chicago. Today in honor of the family and Polk Bros, we make a legacy gift to the city and to the communities throughout Chicago who helped make the Polk Bros retail stores so successful," said Howard Polk, director, Polk Bros. Foundation Board of Directors and son of one of the original Polk brothers, Morris Polk. "We truly believe that Navy Pier, the 'people's pier' – a welcoming landmark that is iconically Chicago and accessible to all – has provided us with the perfect venue for the Polk Bros name to live on for future generations."

Founded in 1935 by Sol Polk, Polk Bros grew to have 17 neighborhood-based stores, and became synonymous with innovative merchandising, creative marketing, and discount pricing. The family's commitment was not only demonstrated on the showroom floor, but also cultivated through a rich tradition of giving back to the people and communities their stores served. Polk Bros was the most successful Chicago retailer that never opened a store downtown, being committed to serving all Chicagoans throughout the city. The last of the stores closed in 1992 and the Polk Bros assets were transferred to the Polk Bros. Foundation.

Municipal Pier No. 2 opened in 1916 and was later named Navy Pier in tribute to Navy personnel who served in World War I. It stretches more than six city blocks and attracts about 9 million guests annually, making it the most frequented spot in the Midwest and a destination for national and international travelers alike.

The Pier was last renovated in 1995, when a mix of year-round features was added, from entertainment and shops, to restaurants and exhibition facilities. The revitalized Pier will include updated water features, public gathering spaces with bold contemporary designs, enhanced sightlines, reimagined plazas and brand new performance spaces, all designed to encourage Chicagoans and visitors to explore Navy Pier in a fresh way.

The Polk family's gift, which includes the naming of Polk Bros Park and its three main attractions are substantial steps toward the completion of a reimagined Navy Pier, and marks the first of several partnership relationships that will make the Navy Pier redevelopment a reality.

"This is another example of the Polk family's ongoing commitment to Chicago's array of cultural treasures along our shoreline," said Mayor Rahm Emanuel. "As Navy Pier nears its 100th anniversary, this generous investment will help transform what is already the Midwest's premier leisure attraction to a world class destination for Chicagoans and millions of visitors, while creating jobs and increasing local economic development."

Construction on Phase I of the Pier's redevelopment began in fall 2013 and is projected to be completed in time for the Pier's 100th anniversary in 2016. The cost of reimagining Phase I is estimated at \$115 million with additional dollars needed to fully implement the Centennial Vision, and the Polk family's gift is a substantial launch of the project.

Implementation of Navy Pier's redevelopment will contribute significantly to the local economy by adding 1,565 permanent jobs throughout the city, generating \$165 million in additional spending and \$13 million in additional city, county and state taxes on an annual basis, making it a cultural destination that continues to also deliver positive economic impact.

For Polk Bros Park renderings and Polk Bros Family images please visit: [www.navypiervision.com](http://www.navypiervision.com).

**About Navy Pier:**

A Chicago landmark since 1916, Navy Pier has evolved from a freight passenger ship docking facility to the #1 leisure destination in the Midwest, drawing nearly nine million visitors annually. Navy Pier currently encompasses more than fifty acres of parks, gardens, shops, restaurants, family attractions and exhibit facilities, making it a visitor and tourist hub. For more information: [www.navypier.com](http://www.navypier.com).

**About The Polk Bros. Foundation:**

The Polk Bros. Foundation works to improve the quality of life for Chicago families and to make Chicago a place where all people have the opportunity to reach their full potential. The Foundation partners with nonprofits that work to build strong communities and strong families and provide quality education, workforce development, housing, preventive and primary health care, and access to the arts. Over the past 25 years, the Foundation has grown to become the third largest funder of Chicago nonprofits, supporting nearly 3,000 organizations with close to \$300 million in grants. In 2013, the Foundation provided in excess of \$20 million to 350 Chicago nonprofits. For more information, visit [www.polkbrosfdn.org](http://www.polkbrosfdn.org) and [www.polkbrosfdn.org/polkbrosark](http://www.polkbrosfdn.org/polkbrosark).

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