

For Immediate Release

August 1, 2002

Contact: Jennifer Ickes, Museum of Science and Industry, (773) 947-6003
Nettie Casarez, Public Communications Inc., (312) 558-1770

***The Great Train Story Rolls Into Museum of Science and Industry
Newest Permanent Exhibit to Highlight 61st Annual Christmas Around the World Celebration
Open November 22***

Images are available by contacting Jennifer Ickes or Nettie Casarez or on the Internet at:
www.msichicago.org/press;
ID: pr, Password: fun4all

CHICAGO—Just in time for the holidays, the Museum will celebrate the grand opening of its newest permanent exhibit, *The Great Train Story*, in conjunction with another Chicago holiday tradition as *Sears presents the 61st annual Christmas Around the World* and *Holidays of Light*.

The Great Train Story replaces the Museum's 60-year-old model railroad exhibit and boasts a 3,500 square foot layout, which depicts the railroad's winding journey between Chicago and Seattle, passing through the Midwest, the Plains States, the Rockies, the Cascades, and into the Pacific Northwest. Along the way, trains are involved in industries as diverse as grain commodities, raw materials for manufacturing, consumer goods for import and export, lumber, apples, and tourism.

With more than 1,400 feet of track and 34 operating trains, the new model train includes an excess of 500 scale structures; 192 custom-made buildings including a 14-foot Sears Tower; realistic terrain modeled from actual locations and dotted with thousands of trees and shrubs; 28 bridges over realistic waterways; as well as a number of interactive activities, including the opportunity to drive a Metra Train, open a drawbridge over the Chicago River, harvest timber in the Cascades Range and bore a tunnel through the Rocky Mountains! The old train exhibit was 2,340 square feet with 850 feet of track and only had one to 10 operating trains at a time.

Founded in 1942 as a salute to Allies during World War II, *Christmas Around the World* and *Holidays of Light* continues to enchant with holiday traditions, ornaments and customs from around the world. More than 60 years later, the forest of trees has grown to more than 40 and

three crèches, each one decorated by Chicago's ethnic groups and displayed in the Museum's West Court and Rotunda.

Holidays of Light is a multicultural display that features holiday traditions that celebrate light or enlightenment. This year's exhibition highlights the customs and traditions of the Chinese New Year, Diwali (a Hindu and Sikh festival), Kwanzaa (celebrated by African Americans), Ramadan (celebrated by Muslims), Hanukkah, Visakha Puja Day (a Buddhist holiday) and St. Lucia Day (a Swedish tradition). Each display includes traditional artifacts contributed by a variety of individuals and community groups, reflecting Chicago's rich cultural heritage.

Located at 57th Street and Lake Shore Drive, just minutes from downtown Chicago, the Museum is open every day of the year except December 25. Between Memorial Day and Labor Day, hours are 9:30 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. Between Labor Day and Memorial Day, the hours are 9:30 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and 9:30 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. on weekends and holiday. For more information, call (773) 684-1414 or visit our website at www.msichicago.org. Outside of the Chicago area, call (800) GO-TO MSI (1-800-468-6674).

###