

Milwaukee Mayor Barrett: City and Potawatomi strike 12-year, \$10 million streetcar sponsorship agreement

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MILWAUKEE (Oct. 6, 2017) – Mayor Tom Barrett and Rodney Ferguson, CEO of Potawatomi Hotel & Casino, today announced that the City of Milwaukee and the Forest County Potawatomi Community have come to an agreement whereby Potawatomi Hotel & Casino will be the presenting sponsor of the city’s streetcar system. The name will be “The Hop, presented by Potawatomi Hotel & Casino.”

The deal is for \$10 million payable over 12 years. The parties intend to sign a letter of intent in the coming weeks with a full contract to follow. The funds will be used to offset operating costs and will include free rides for all for the first 12 months of the streetcar’s operation. The streetcar system is currently under construction. The Phase 1 line is expected to begin service in fall 2018 and the Lakefront Line will follow in coordination with the construction of The Couture development.

“This is yet another important and exciting step for the City of Milwaukee and the streetcar. The momentum keeps building,” said Mayor Tom Barrett. “We’re thrilled to have Potawatomi Hotel & Casino as our partner in moving Milwaukee forward.”

“The Forest County Potawatomi have committed to investing in Milwaukee. Like our

recently announced hotel expansion, this is one more example of that commitment,” said Potawatomi Hotel & Casino Chief Operating Officer Rodney Ferguson. “We are all about ‘building the excitement.’ As Wisconsin’s most visited entertainment destination, we see the streetcar as just one more way to make Milwaukee an attractive place to live, work, play and do business. We are proud to have our brand aligned with The Hop streetcar brand.”

The name “The Hop” was developed as part of a branding process conducted in 2016 with the help of a community input panel. The panel included representatives of community and business groups, neighborhood associations, small businesses, corporations, transit riders, tourism and entertainment partners, and more. According to Ghassan Korban, Commissioner of the City of Milwaukee Department of Public Works, the city hopes the name “The Hop” will become part of the local vernacular. “Hop on. Hop off. It’s that simple. With The Hop, the city is easier to navigate, neighborhoods are more connected and your destination is just a quick hop away,” he said. “We liked that the name, like the streetcar, is easy, approachable and inviting to all.”

Brand elements, including vehicles, signage and website, will be developed and rolled out in early 2018. Until then, construction information will continue to be available at www.themilwaukeeestreetcar.com.

In the coming months, the city will develop and seek additional sponsorship and advertising partnerships.

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Background

The development of the streetcar is moving forward following city approval and additional funding in February 2015. Final design of the Phase 1 route is complete, with the October 2015 announcement of a \$14.2 million federal TIGER grant; further Lakefront Line final design is nearly complete. The Request for Proposals (RFP) for streetcar vehicles was issued and selection of a vehicle vendor, U.S.-based Brookville Equipment Corp., is complete. Utility relocation work started in fall 2015 and continues. In spring 2016, the RFP was issued for building the system’s main line, operations and maintenance facility and the city selected Kiewit Infrastructure. All of the rail for the Phase 1 route was delivered and welded in March 2017 and initial mainline/track and maintenance facility construction started in April 2017. The Milwaukee Streetcar’s Phase 1 route is slated to begin serving area residents,

workers and visitors in 2018 with the Lakefront Line extension launching service in coordination with the construction of the Couture development. (Factors that may influence this timeline include: modifications in final engineering, utility relocations, materials procurement schedules and Federal Transit Administration approvals.)

The capital costs for the \$128 million system are covered by federal funding, a TIGER VII grant and three downtown tax incremental finance districts. System operations will be funded through a combination of fare box revenue, advertising, sponsorships, federal funding opportunities, operating agreements with partners and/or the City's parking fund. A federal CMAQ grant has been secured that supports operating costs in the first 36 months.