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Chicago City 'Navigaytor' Aims to Help GLBT Tourists

By Matt Simonette
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Philadelphia-based Aldus Group, a marketing communications agency focusing on GLBT consumers, last week announced that seven tourism and business organizations are supporting the company's "Chicago City Navigaytor" guidebook and website.

In its fourth year, the guide, currently in production for a new edition to be released in January 2008, provides information on restaurants, hotels, historical attractions, regional sites and nightlife.

Among the organizations supporting Navigaytor are the Chicago Area Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, Chicago Convention and Tourism Bureau, Chicago Office of Tourism, Center on Halsted, Lakeview East Chamber of Commerce, North Shore Convention and Visitors Bureau and Oak Park Convention and Visitors Bureau.

David Jefferys, president of the Altus Group, said his organization is aiming for a mainstream format that ensures the guide gets a relatively wide distribution.

"We're trying to keep the sexual temperature low," said Jefferys. "We need to be displayed alongside books in airports and information centers."

He added that Navigaytor was concerned with promoting "the quality of the tourism experience, not the titillation. It's designed to be a comfortable product that a hotel concierge can easily give to guest who asks what there is to do."

Jefferys said the Navigaytor is "an orientation tool more than anything else" that steers Chicago GLBT visitors towards gay-friendly venues and attractions. He added that about 30,000 guides would be printed and distributed in about 100 Chicago locations.

The City of Chicago's support has come in the form of advertising dollars, which Jefferys said totaled around \$15,000, and a link from the city's website.

"The City is thrilled with this," he added. "When (the City) added a link, the number of hits to our site doubled."

The guide is also being distributed next year at the HX Gay Life Travel Expo, a traveling road show highlighting gay-friendly travel destinations. The expo travels to San Francisco, San Diego, New York and Fort Lauderdale, among other locations, according to Jefferys.

For more information on Navigaytor, visit <http://www.citynavigaytor.com/download.html>

