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H&M, Jericho launch blitz for Chicago store opening

By John N. Frank

CHICAGO: Swedish retailer Hennes & Mauritz (H&M) has launched a Chicago PR blitz with its longtime agency Jericho Communications as the chain opens a new store in Chicago's State Street retailing district.

Jericho is inviting local opinion leaders and media to a 1950s-themed pre-opening party for the new store the night before it opens on February 27.

"The '50s is a really hot trend for H&M," said Tara McNally, account manager at Jericho.

Opening day will feature t-shirt giveaways and special discounts for the first 100 customers.

Jericho also has been pitching Chicago media, already scoring coverage in the *Chicago Sun-Times* and the online version of *Crain's Chicago Business*, McNally said.

The State Street store will be positioned for younger women buyers, ages 15 to 30, said Neil Baron, H&M's real estate manager.

H&M already has a larger store on Chicago's trendy Michigan Avenue and another in the suburbs.



H&M... will open new retail store on State Street in Chicago

State Street, once the center of Chicago retailing, is now considered more mainstream than the tony Michigan Avenue area.

But H&M was attracted to State Street by the range of new developments in the area, both the retail and residential projects that have increased the population of downtown Chicago in recent years.

"It's the second best shopping street in the Chicago market,"

Baron said of State Street.

The State Street store will feature women's and children's clothes, and a limited assortment of men's clothes.

After the opening, Jericho plans to continue to approach Chicago media to include H&M in fashion stories and seasonal trend pieces, McNally said. It also will use PR to spotlight H&M advertising campaigns in the area.