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An Architectural Celebration, the Puerto Rico Convention Center is an Unparalleled, Stunning Salute to the Island's Natural History and Culture

San Juan, Puerto Rico, September 30, 2005 – On schedule to open in mid-November, the dramatic and sweeping 'wave-like' rooftop of the new Puerto Rico Convention Center (PRCC) stands facing the gateway to Old San Juan as if waiting and nearly-ready to welcome new delegates.

This state-of-the-art facility will not only serve as the largest and most technologically-advanced convention center in the Caribbean, but will embody design features which evoke a sense of place rooted in Puerto Rico's heritage, culture and natural beauty.

Considered an architectural celebration of Puerto Rico's many distinctive natural attributes, design architects for the PRCC have aimed to construct a facility that provides delegates with the distinctively "techno-tropic," yet natural feel of Puerto Rico. This has been largely achieved by incorporating water and ocean imagery throughout the Center and infusing the colors and textures of Puerto Rico's flora and fauna in the interior spaces. In addition, architects took full advantage of the Island's solar orientation by designing a grand outdoor pre-function space offering panoramic views extending from Old San Juan to the beaches and ocean beyond the Condado hotel and tourist district.

"The design elements of the new Puerto Rico Convention Center go beyond providing the latest and most advanced technology features for a modern convention business experience, to give visitors a sense of the history, beauty and culture of Puerto Rico," stated Ana María Viscasillas, president and CEO, Puerto Rico Convention Bureau, the official sales and marketing agent for the new Convention Center. "The Center will provide an opportunity to showcase Puerto Rico's many natural attributes, including our beaches and rainforest, our tropical climate, and brilliant sunshine as well as our wonderful historic buildings and forts in Old San Juan."

Entering the 580,000 square foot facility, meeting attendees will be enveloped by the roof's welcoming wave, and pass through the Center's 13-story glass wall, into the three-tiered structure. In the lobby, terrazzo carpeting will display the subtle hues of waves washing onto the shore. Through the Center's other public concourses, carpeting will change from light sea tones to the deeper hues of the rainforest.

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In the 39,500 square foot Ballroom, the focal point is the chandelier – the largest in the world. Inspired by the wave images of the roof and the 272 miles of beaches surrounding Puerto Rico, the chandelier is reminiscent of reflective colors on a swirling, rippling pool of water with colors that change from white to translucent turquoise to azure to black. Other finishes in the Ballroom include wood walls, brushed metals and acoustical panel fabric that sparkles – taking their inspiration from the dark moonlit nights in Puerto Rico.

In the 36,200 square feet of meeting space on two levels, the 15 rooms which break out into a total of 28 meeting rooms incorporate rich woods, stucco walls, artistic glass and meeting room doors that recall the architectural features of Old San Juan. Other design features of the new Puerto Rico Convention Center include art display panels that are integrated throughout the building's interior to create backdrops for permanent and revolving collections of local artwork.

The new Puerto Rico Convention Center will be the centerpiece of the Puerto Rico Convention Center District, a \$415-million (U.S. dollars) destination that is the largest waterfront development project in the history of the U.S. and its territories. The District, currently under construction, was conceived as a dynamic, multi-use urban center, combining business and entertainment in one 113-acre complex to include retail shops, restaurants, office space, and movie theaters, as well as residential units.

“The Convention Center District will be a world-class facility, intended to create a dynamic and visually appealing gathering place where tourists, conventioners, as well as the people of Puerto Rico can enjoy the district's mix of entertainment venues, office and residential space,” stated Manuel Sánchez Biscombe, executive director, Convention Center District Authority.

The principal theme for the District's design is water as a reflection of Puerto Rico as a Caribbean island. A system of lagoons and fountains with elements for recreation and entertainment will run alongside these water spaces. The entrance to the main Convention Center building will consist of a linear park on the west side, a pedestrian walkway on the east side, and a large area in front of the Center with a large fountain in the shape of a half moon offering light shows and the ability to display company logos of conventions taking place at the

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new PRCC, and other images. Various fountain and lighting systems will run throughout the District, which will spout water in the shape of fans throughout the lagoon. Alongside the lagoons will be seashell figures, covered in mosaics spouting water and light.

As part of the Puerto Rico Convention Center District, plans for the construction of a 500-room headquarter hotel are well underway. Construction of the \$175-million facility is set to start in November of 2005, with a projected opening in 2008. Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, under its Sheraton banner, will manage the new Convention Center's flagship property.

The hotel's contemporary "urban resort" design calls for a large, open lobby casino and entertainment complex with a music hall for live performances. Also included in the plan are two ballrooms, banquet and meeting rooms, a full-service spa, restaurants, shops and parking space. On the fourth floor, the design features a rooftop pool with cabanas, tropical gardens and views of Old San Juan and the harbor. Described as a "beach without sand," the area is designed to bring the Caribbean into the Convention Center District for conventioners.

The Puerto Rico Convention Center, near Old San Juan and the Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport is easily accessible from many major U.S. and international destinations with more than 600 non-stop flight arrivals each week. For more information or to inquire about booking the Puerto Rico Convention Center, call 1-800-875-4765 or visit: www.prconvention.com.

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Editor's Note:

The Puerto Rico Convention Bureau is the official marketing and sales agent for the Puerto Rico Convention Center at the Puerto Rico Convention Center District opening November 2005. The non-profit organization is responsible for promoting and developing group and convention business to Puerto Rico through an integrated marketing strategy for more than 40 years. Based in San Juan, with offices in Chicago, Miami, New York, and Washington D.C., the Puerto Rico Convention Bureau provides sales consultation services to meeting planners in the corporate, incentive and association markets. The Bureau contributes approximately \$92 million annually to the Island's economy. For more information, visit the Bureau's Internet page at www.meetpuertorico.com or send a message at info@prcb.org. The Puerto Rico Convention Bureau, representing the capital city of San Juan, is a member of BestCities, a global alliance of Bureaus that represent the highest standards of service in the meetings and convention industry. For more information, visit www.bestcities.net.

High resolution images of the Puerto Rico Convention Center construction and architectural renderings are available upon request.

