

Contact: Christine Hinz, (212) 315-2812, christine@chcommunications.biz
Teresa Martinez, (787) 474-5091, tmartinez@prcb.org

**PUERTO RICO CONVENTION CENTER OPENS FOR BUSINESS –
MEETING IN PUERTO RICO WILL NEVER BE THE SAME**

-- Puerto Rico Convention Center is the Largest in the Caribbean & Most Technologically-Advanced Facility in the Caribbean & Latin America --

SAN JUAN, November 17, 2005 – The Puerto Rico Convention Center, a \$415 million facility located in San Juan, Puerto Rico opened its doors for business today. The opening was marked by a ribbon-cutting ceremony that will kick-off three days of activities and special events for invited guests and VIPs at the Center, in and around San Juan.

The all-new Puerto Rico Convention Center was conceived by the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico as a way of broadening the Island’s successful tourism industry with increased group and business travel. The 580,000 square foot (53,882 meters) Center is the largest facility of its kind in the Caribbean and the most technologically-advanced in the Caribbean and Latin America. With the ability to host groups of up to 10,000 delegates, the Puerto Rico Convention Center allows the Island to compete not only in the convention markets of the Americas, but also in the international market, creating a singular destination for conventions, trade shows, consumer shows and congresses that will place Puerto Rico at the forefront of world-class meeting destinations.

“Meeting in Puerto Rico will never be the same” stated Ana María Viscasillas, president & CEO, Puerto Rico Convention Bureau, the official sales and marketing agent for the Puerto Rico Convention Center. “The opening of the Puerto Rico Convention Center represents a new era in our tourism history, as we now have the capacity to host large scale meetings in one of the most modern and visually-splendid facilities in the world.”

Currently the new Puerto Rico Convention Center has more than 70 events scheduled to take place between November 2005 and 2008. It is anticipated that the Center will generate over \$300 million annually for Puerto Rico’s local economy.

-more-



PRCC Opens for Business.../2

Size & Technology Features

As the largest facility of its kind in the Caribbean, the new Puerto Rico Convention Center features a 152,700 sq. ft. (14,186 sq. m.) exhibition hall dividable into three individual exposition spaces, as well as a 39,500 sq. ft (3,670 sq. m.) Grand Ballroom, the largest in the Caribbean. The Center also offers 36,400 sq. ft. (3,363 sq. m.) of meeting space, including 15 separate meeting rooms on two levels, which can be divided into 28 breakout rooms.

As the most-technologically advanced convention center in the Caribbean and Latin America, full fiber optic broadband and wireless Internet access is available throughout the Center with additional services, including video-conferencing, satellite up-link and down-link; simultaneous language translation can also be arranged. Other technological highlights include controllable lighting, electrical and utility connections readily accessible through state-of-the-art floor boxes in the Exhibition Hall; a production control balcony with sound and lighting controls in the Ballroom, as well as an integrated audio system with the capability for remote recording of programs and programmable lighting controls in the Ballroom and meeting rooms.

Distinctive Design Elements

The Puerto Rico Convention Center’s distinctive design welcomes delegates with a dominant architectural expression of large sweeping roof forms recalling waves in their complex geometry, color and translucency. Materials used throughout the Center are reminiscent of locally-used materials including stone, concrete, stuccoes and glass in a modern composition.

The Center’s design considers many of Puerto Rico’s natural attributes incorporating water and ocean imagery throughout the facility while infusing the colors and textures of Puerto Rico’s flora and fauna in interior spaces to evoke a sense of place rooted in Puerto Rico’s heritage, culture and natural beauty.

“The design elements of the Convention Center give visitors a sense of the history, culture and natural beauty of Puerto Rico,” stated Ana María Viscasillas, president and CEO, Puerto Rico Convention Bureau. “The Center provides us with an opportunity to showcase our

-more-



PRCC Opens for Business.../3

beaches and rainforest, tropical climate, and brilliant sunshine typical of our Caribbean Island. Combined with the technology features of the facility, it's a prime example of why Puerto Rico is often referred to as the 'Techno-Tropics.'”

New Convention Center Web Site Unveiled

A newly updated web site for the Puerto Rico Convention Center is also being unveiled in conjunction with the opening of the Center, the web site, www.prconvention.com, includes comprehensive floor plans; details on services, service facilities and partners at the Center; as well as a live events calendar with links to show sites for event registration and other information. Other web site highlights include an online RFP, sales and management contact information, as well as a fully-downloadable Event Planning Guide, which includes details about the new Convention Center, complete facility specifications and guidelines, a rate schedule, service order forms and a subcontractor building manual. Downloadable promotional video and a photo gallery of images for use in custom brochures and other collateral materials are also available on the site.

Puerto Rico Convention Center District

The new Puerto Rico Convention Center is the centerpiece of the Puerto Rico Convention Center District, considered to be the largest waterfront development project in the history of the U.S. and its territories. The District was conceived as a dynamic, multi-use urban center, combining business and entertainment in a 113-acre (46 hectáres) complex that, upon completion in 2012, will include hotels, retail shops, restaurants, office space, movie theaters, as well as residential units.

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

-more-



PRCC Opens for Business.../4

A key element of the District will be a 500-room headquarter hotel to serve the Puerto Rico Convention Center. Groundbreaking of the \$175-million facility is scheduled to take place later this year, with a projected opening set for 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 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 1,300 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.

#

PUERTO RICO WELCOMES YOU. NO PASSPORTS REQUIRED.

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. 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.

