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**PUERTO RICO CONVENTION CENTER DISTRICT  
REACHES MAJOR MILESTONES FOR DEVELOPMENT**

**-- Groundbreaking on Center’s Headquarter Hotel, Inauguration of Urban Park and Fountains Demonstrate Aggressive District Development --**

**SAN JUAN, September 26, 2006** – Following the groundbreaking last month of a headquarter hotel to accommodate delegates of the new Puerto Rico Convention Center, the Puerto Rico Convention Center District Authority inaugurated the District’s urban park and fountain with a public celebration that took place on September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2006.

A major element of the Puerto Rico Convention Center District, the new District Park includes promenades and walkways, fountains, play areas and other elements that aim to provide a gathering place for conventioners, visitors and the community within the 113-acre waterfront development. The project, which is expected to be completed in 2012 with a public and private investment of more than \$1.3 billion, is considered the most ambitious project of its kind in the U.S. and its territories.

“With the addition of this new urban park and fountain systems, the Puerto Rico Convention Center District now serves as a place for rest and relaxation for tourists and local families alike,” stated Manuel Sánchez Biscombe, executive director, Puerto Rico Convention Center District. “The District is an excellent example of how land that has fallen to disuse can be transformed to serve visitors and the community. What began with the opening of the new Convention Center last November will conclude once the construction of residences, businesses, hotels and other points of interest are completed.”

**Elements of the Urban Park**

With the Puerto Rico Convention Center District’s main design point focusing on water and light, the elements which combine to form the urban park within the District is comprised of a system of lagoons, reflecting pools and fountains interspersed with walkways and promenades. Together, the park is called “Paseo de las Fuentes.”

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The focal point of the park is located directly across from the front of the new Puerto Rico Convention Center, where a half-moon shaped reflecting pool is set off by a dramatic fountain, complete with highly-specialized lighting capabilities to welcome visitors from near and far. The freshwater fountain has a system that synchronizes both water and light with music. Other fountain systems in the District are covered in mosaic tile with ocean themes that use salt water extracted from the nearby San Antonio Channel, some of which is circulated and returned to the channel.

Another focal point of the new “Paseo de las Fuentes” is two large fichus trees located in front of the Puerto Rico Convention Center. These majestic old trees are next to the site of the soon to open Fichus Coffee shop, an outdoor café for visitors to the tropical urban plaza.

**Features of the Headquarter Hotel**

Groundbreaking on a 500-room headquarter hotel to serve the Puerto Rico Convention Center took place on August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2006. The \$209-million facility, scheduled to open in 2009, will be managed by Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, under its Sheraton banner.

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 new Puerto Rico Convention Center opened in November 2005 and is the largest in the Caribbean and the most technologically-advanced facility of its kind in the Caribbean and Latin America. The Center is the centerpiece of the Puerto Rico Convention Center District, conceived as a dynamic, multi-use urban center, combining business and entertainment in a sophisticated urban complex that will also include retail shops, restaurants, office space, and movie theaters as well as commercial and residential units.

“We’re extremely excited about the latest developments within the District and we’re proud of the speed at which this ambitious project continues to move along,” stated Ana María Viscasillas, president and CEO, Puerto Rico Convention Bureau, the official sales and

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marketing agent of the Center. “As the District grows, we are able to provide a widening range of additional services, amenities and attractions to meeting delegates. Offering an exceptional experience to visitors and attendees is one of the primary goals of the Center and Puerto Rico as a whole.”

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](http://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. The Puerto Rico Convention Center opened in November 2005 and is the largest facility of its kind in the Caribbean and the most technologically-advanced in the Caribbean and Latin America. For more information, visit [www.prconvention.com](http://www.prconvention.com). The Puerto Rico Convention Bureau is a non-profit organization 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 \$93 million annually to the Island's economy. For more information, visit the Bureau's Internet page at [www.meetpuertorico.com](http://www.meetpuertorico.com) or send a message at [info@prcb.org](mailto: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](http://www.bestcities.net).

**High resolution images of the Puerto Rico Convention Center are available upon request.**

