



PUERTO RICO CONVENTION BUREAU ANNOUNCES YEAR-END RESULTS DURING ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

SAN JUAN, September 8, 2010 – The Puerto Rico Convention Bureau, an organization dedicated to promoting and booking group meetings for the Island, announced its Fiscal Year 2009-2010 results during its Annual Membership Meeting on September 8, 2010. The meeting, attended by more than 200 member-suppliers and local industry leaders, was held at the Caribe Hilton in San Juan.

During the past Fiscal Year 2009-2010 which ended on June 30, 2010, the Puerto Rico Convention Bureau confirmed a total of 407 definite group bookings for a total of 202,017 room nights compared with a total of 519 definite bookings and 264,156 room nights during the prior fiscal year. During FY 09-10, the Bureau also generated 851 group booking leads, representing a total of 607,639 potential future room night bookings for the Island compared to 1,023 leads representing a total of 812,185 in FY 08-09. Other results include 1,048 service referrals distributed to non-hotel member-suppliers, representing more than \$4.6 million in potential revenue for local businesses serving the meetings market. These overall results represent an estimated infusion of \$97 million into the Island’s economy.

During the presentation, Ana María Viscasillas, president and CEO, Puerto Rico Convention Bureau stated, “We’ve weathered the worst economic storm of our time. Beyond the numbers, we need to look at current economic challenges and how it affect how companies do business, and how organizations conduct meetings and conventions. It’s a redefined marketplace, and Puerto Rico needs to demonstrate its resilience and ability to

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respond to the needs of our clients and our members.”

Despite a heavily-challenged marketplace, in FY 09-10, 431 groups booked by the Bureau hosted their group meeting or convention in Puerto Rico, representing a total of 100,952 delegates. In addition, the PRCB’s Destination Services department provided service to 1,355 groups, coordinating between member-suppliers and meeting planners to provide destination information, promotional materials, professional services, products, and more. Groups that the Bureau worked closely with in hosting their programs on the Island include the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC); The World Bonsai Congress; the Federación de Entidades Organizadora de Congresos y Afines de América Latina (COCAL); and, La Cumbre 2009. In addition, the Bureau worked with organizers of future conventions including the American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA), the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA), the International Union of Pure & Applied Chemistry, Ironman™, National Lieutenant Governor’s Association and the American Water Works Association. Over the course of the year, the Bureau worked directly with 308 meeting planners to conduct 150 site inspections. As a result, 515 individual hotel visits were conducted and coordinated by the Bureau.

With the goal to maintain Puerto Rico’s high-profile within the global meetings market, during the past fiscal year Ana María Viscasillas began serving as the Chairwoman of the Board of Directors for the BestCities Global Alliance, while Ramón Sánchez served as the Chair for the Management Committee Group during 2009 for the organization. Through its membership with the Best Cities global alliance, the Puerto Rico Convention Bureau continues to be the only Bureau to have accreditation by both Lloyd’s Register Quality Assurance (LRQA) through the BestCities Global Alliance and the Destination Marketing Association International (DMAI) as an elite destination marketing organization.

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Ambassador Program

The Bureau’s high-profile Ambassador Program also reached new heights, with 387 Ambassadors to-date, generating a potential economic impact of over \$18 million for Puerto Rico’s local economy this year. As part of the annual recognition of its Ambassadors, the Bureau recently awarded the Distinguished Ambassador Award to Engineer Pedro Lorenzo for his support in securing definite group business for the Island and his ten years of commitment to the Ambassador Program. The award was given to Lorenzo during a special evening event at the Ritz-Carlton San Juan Hotel, Spa & Casino.

Membership and Membership Relations

In FY 09-10, the Bureau welcomed 34 new members to the organization, while maintaining a 90 percent membership retention rate. Part of serving the needs of its members, the Bureau hosted four educational seminars, attended by more than 600 member-suppliers on topics that included *Medical Meetings: Trends & Opportunities* and the *Meetings Industry from a Global Perspective*. Other events held by the Bureau for its members included nine *Meet & Deal* networking events, regularly drawing more than 100 member-suppliers each month; *President’s Luncheons*; *Marketplace* and *Meet the Members* events.

Sales and Marketing Activities

During FY 09-10, the Bureau hosted a sales blitz event in the Northeast Region, with meeting planner activities in New York City, New Jersey and Philadelphia. In addition, the Bureau hosted five Destination Reviews, welcoming planners from the U.S. Mainland to Puerto Rico and showcasing the destination for group meetings and conventions, exhibited --

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at 33 industry tradeshows and hosted 67 special events and activities for groups, including one-on-one sales presentations. Further, as the official sales agent for the Puerto Rico Convention Center, the Bureau participated in nine specialized tradeshows and hosted 12 special events and activities for groups.

On the Marketing front, during FY 09-10 the Bureau launched its ‘Not A Boondoggle’ campaign to widespread industry applause and continued with the SMOOTH campaign and messaging. In addition to a redesign of collateral materials, the Bureau conducted several direct mail and email campaigns targeted to the financial, sports, medical and Hispanic markets.

Ongoing publicity efforts of the Communications Team resulted in 394 articles appearing in Puerto Rico, North and Latin America, as well as Europe, generating \$1.7 million in equivalent advertising value and \$17 million in equivalent PR value for the destination. Other activities geared towards the media included hosted luncheons in New York City and Washington, DC for the meetings, conventions, travel, travel trade, business and Hispanic press. In addition, locally, six media roundtables were held during the program year to announce the opening of major conferences such as the Latin American Federation of Congress Organizing Entities (COCAL); and to announce groups coming to the Island such as the American Society of ‘Travel Agents’ (ASTA) International Destination Expo to be held in San Juan in April 2011 and the 46th General Assembly of the International Union of Pure & Applied Chemistry (IUPAC) in conjunction with the client.

During the past fiscal year, the Bureau launched its redesigned web site featuring a new look and feel and more interactive tools to assist meeting planners with RFPs, research and promotional efforts. The site received 444,268 visitor sessions with over 3,819,621 million page views. In addition, the Bureau has increased its presence through social media,

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actively joining in the online dialogue through a dedicated Facebook and Twitter feeds.

“As we look to redefine Puerto Rico’s meetings market we have to conclude that even in an exotic location as the Caribbean, we have the infrastructure – the expertise, capability and facilities to offer sophisticated, serious meetings and conferences as well as wonderful surroundings, amenities and appeal that make travel for all of us, special. In the global market place, Puerto Rico has the capacity to redefine our meetings marketplace and appeal to global audiences to increase our reach,” concluded Viscasillas.

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Editor’s Note:

The **Puerto Rico Convention Bureau (PRCB)** is a non-profit organization established in 1962 to drive meetings, conventions, trade shows and incentive groups to Puerto Rico. With offices in San Juan, Chicago, New York, Miami, and Washington DC, the Bureau strengthens Puerto Rico’s competitive position in the Americas and abroad by increasing awareness of the Island’s outstanding meeting facilities and services, and produces approximately \$97million to the local economy. The Bureau can be reached electronically through the Internet at info@meetpuertorico.com or at its website www.meetpuertorico.com. The PRCB is the official marketing and sales agent for the new Puerto Rico Convention Center (PRCC) opened November 2005. For more information on the new Convention Center visit www.prconvention.com. The Puerto Rico Convention Bureau is the **only** Bureau to have certification by both Lloyds Registered Quality Assurance through the BestCities Global Alliance and accreditation by the Destination Marketing Association International (DMAI) as an elite destination marketing organization. The Puerto Rico Convention Bureau, representing the capital city of San Juan, is a proud member of Best Cities Global Alliance, the first convention bureau alliance that represents the highest standards of service in the meetings and convention industry. For more information, visit www.bestcities.net. DMAI is the world’s largest association of CVBs, representing more than 600 destination management organizations in more than 25 countries.



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