



**Contact:** Christine Hinz  
 Phone: 212.315.2812  
 Email: [christine@chcommunications.biz](mailto:christine@chcommunications.biz)

Tere Martinez  
 Phone: 787-725-2110  
 Email: [tmartinez@prcb.org](mailto:tmartinez@prcb.org)

**SOPHISTICATED BUSINESS INFRASTRUCTURE, LUXURY HOTEL DEVELOPMENT, AND MORE AIR-LIFT CONTRIBUTE TO PUERTO RICO’S MEETINGS GROWTH**

**SAN JUAN, February 2, 2012** – Puerto Rico is already known as one of the world’s most sought-after travel destinations offering stunning beaches, first-class hotels, championship golf, elegant resort spas, as well as exciting shopping, entertainment and cuisine. But beyond the Island’s beauty and dazzle lies a destination that also leads the global marketplace in product manufacturing, financial services, pharmaceutical development and biotech research. It is this unique paradox that has helped propel the continuation of Puerto Rico’s business infrastructure to the benefit of the Island’s meetings and conventions market.

“Puerto Rico is a world-class convention destination with a modern infrastructure, business-focused culture, and offers a sophisticated range of amenities that appeal to international audiences,” stated Neil J. Mullanaphy, senior vice president of sales, Puerto Rico Convention Bureau. “With a diverse and expanding folio of accommodation offerings and increased airlift from Europe, Puerto Rico is an easy choice when looking to bring together delegates from North America, Latin America and Europe.”

Puerto Rico offers more than 1.3 million square feet of meeting and function space and nearly 15,000 hotel rooms for an outstanding range of top-name accommodation choices in a variety of price ranges. Puerto Rico boasts some of the largest state-of-the-art conference and convention facilities in the regions, and the island is wired for business, with the same telecommunications services as the U.S. Mainland, offering high-speed connectivity. Further, new airlift means Puerto Rico is tapping into new markets – a boon for meeting planners looking to increase their international delegations with conventioners from Europe and Latin America.

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**Hotel Development in the Luxury Sector**

Puerto Rico continues to develop accommodations of particular appeal to corporate groups and the incentive travel market. Recent property additions emphasize the Island’s move toward high-end luxury accommodations.

Following a comprehensive renovation project, this month the 450-room **Condado Vanderbilt Hotel** opened its doors for meetings and special functions. Currently the property features 15,000 sq. ft. of distinctive event space, including a ballroom with ocean views, glass pavilions for private dining and events, a dedicated boardroom and other unique function spaces. Once guest rooms are open, amenities will include a full-service space, five-star fitness center, butler and concierge service, a fully-staffed business center and four on-site dining options.

Another recent addition to Puerto Rico’s folio of high-end properties is the 139-suite **St. Regis Bahia Beach** featuring 5,000 sq. ft. of meeting space and a 10,000 sq. ft. Rémede Spa. The property is home to a Robert Trent Jones Jr. championship golf course as well as *Jean Georges*, one of the top ten restaurants in the world. Another luxury addition is the 157-room **W Retreat & Spa, Vieques Island**. This beachside resort features 3,500 sq. ft. of meeting space, a dedicated welcome lounge at the nearby airport, infinity pools, tennis, a fitness center and spa and is also the home of Alain Ducasse’s newest fusion restaurant, *MiX on the Beach*.

In late 2012, Puerto Rico will be home to **Ritz-Carlton Reserve Dorado Beach Resort & Spa** in the former setting of the renowned Laurance Rockefeller resort property in Dorado Beach. The 130-room resort will include 100 guestrooms and 14 one-bedroom suites, including six with rooftop pools. In addition, **Su Casa**, a colonial-style hacienda located on the property, will be restored as a five-bedroom villa for weddings and private events. In 2013, **Fairmont Hotels & Resorts** will roll-out its brand in Puerto Rico when it opens a 500-room property on the site of the former Hyatt Regency Cerromar, also in Dorado.

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**Puerto Rico Convention Center– A Dynamic Business Hub**

Puerto Rico’s meetings and conventions landscape changed in 2005 with the opening of the Puerto Rico Convention Center. Creating a singular destination for conventions, trade shows, consumer events and congresses, in recent years the Center has been the host site for several large ‘citywide’ conventions for such organization as the *National Guard Association of the United States* (NGAUS), the *National Association of Hispanic Journalists* (NAHJ), the *International Federation of Library Associations* (IFLA) and the *International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry* (IUPAC).

The largest convention center in the Caribbean and the most technologically advanced facility in the Caribbean and Latin America, the Center offers 580,000 square feet/53,882 square meters of overall gross space, including 152,700 square feet/14,186 square meters of exhibition space; 39,000 square feet/3,670 square meters of ballroom, the largest in the Caribbean; and an additional 36,200 square feet/3,363 square meters of meeting rooms as well as 200,000 square feet/18,580 square meters of pre-function areas and support space.

The Center is part of an entire new urban waterfront development project located in San Juan and just minutes from the Luis Muñoz Marín (SJU), Old San Juan and is adjacent to the Condado tourist zone and Santurce, known as the Island’s financial/downtown business area. Once complete, this new “District” will enable visitors to experience the distinctiveness of Puerto Rico in what will become one of the Island’s most sought-after spots for business, shopping, recreation and entertainment to include hotels, restaurants, movie theaters, and other amenities.

Located within the District and directly across from the Center is the 503-room **Sheraton Puerto Rico Hotel & Casino**. Serving as the official headquarter hotel for the Center, this contemporary, urban resort features a 35,000 sq. ft. conference center, along with a rooftop pool and spa, retail shops, casino, on-site dining and flexible outdoor function areas. Other hotels are currently in the development stage with the goal to bring over 1,300 rooms to the District.

**Global Airlift to the Hub of the Americas**

Already known as the regional leader in airlift, Puerto Rico continues to spread its wings, expanding the number of destinations offering direct air service to the Island, not only with major U.S. cities, but with Europe and Latin American destinations as well.

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New York City, the main hub for Puerto Rico, recently added two daily flights with **American Airlines** and **Delta JetBlue**, which now offers the most air seats to San Juan, has also increased its flights to the Island, recently adding flights from Hartford, CT; with flights beginning from Palm Beach and Newark in coming months.

On the international front, new airlines serving Puerto Rico include **British Airways**, offering flights from London; **Condor Airlines**, offering flights from **Frankfurt**; and **WestJet**, serving the Canadian market from Toronto. Each of these international carriers serves Puerto Rico twice weekly. Currently seven airlines provide 51 weekly flights to and from San Juan in eight international markets, including Montreal, Toronto, Santo Domingo, St. Martin, Panama City, London and Madrid. Nonstop service to Mexico, Central America and Colombia are currently in development.

Major airlines currently serving Puerto Rico include **Air Canada, Air Sunshine, AirTran, American Airlines, American Eagle, British Airways, Cape Air, Continental, Copa, Delta, Iberia, Insel, JetBlue, LIAT, Spirit Airlines, Sunwind, United, US Airways** and **Virgin Atlantic**.

**The Puerto Rico Convention Bureau: Smooth Meeting Specialists**

Anyone connected with meetings knows the best phrase you can hear at the end of the day is: “The meeting went smoothly.” Nowhere else in the Caribbean is that phrase heard more often than in Puerto Rico.

The **Puerto Rico Convention Bureau** is committed to *Smooth* meetings. This award-winning organization serves as a liaison to more than 300 member-suppliers and assists planners with everything from hotel proposals, site selection and customized promotional materials as well as organizing special events, theme parties, provide on-site convention staff and more.

For more information and assistance in booking a program in Puerto Rico, contact the Puerto Rico Convention Bureau at 1-800-875-4765, email [info@meetpuertorico.com](mailto:info@meetpuertorico.com) or visit [www.meetpuertorico.com](http://www.meetpuertorico.com).

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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 \$122 million to the local economy. The Bureau can be reached electronically through the Internet at [info@meetpuertorico.com](mailto:info@meetpuertorico.com) or at its website [www.meetpuertorico.com](http://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](http://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](http://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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