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PRCB HITS HIGH MARKS TO BE AMONGST FIRST TO EARN DESTINATION MARKETING ACCREDITATION BY TOP INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

-- Accreditation Recognizes Exemplary Service to Meeting Planners and Partners -

SAN JUAN, August 1, 2007 – Ana María Viscasillas, president and CEO, Puerto Rico Convention Bureau (PRCB), announced today that the organization has earned accreditation from the Destination Marketing Accreditation Program (DMAP). DMAP is an industry-wide program launched this past year by Destination Marketing Association International (DMAI) to establish a consistent standard for destination marketing operations. With thousands of DMOs operating around the world, DMAP distinguishes those official destination marketing organizations that are committed to industry excellence.

By earning this accreditation, the PRCB has been recognized as one of an elite group of destination marketing organizations (DMOs) that have met the rigorous standards of providing exemplary service to meeting planners and congress organizers, as well as serving members, employees and other tourism partners in an outstanding fashion.

“Competition in the meetings marketplace is fierce, with enormous economic opportunities at stake,” stated Ana María Viscasillas, president and CEO, Puerto Rico Convention Bureau. “We know clients have a countless number of choices about where to host their meetings. Yet in doing business with an accredited organization, meeting planners are given an added assurance that they can expect the highest level of quality, service and attention to their programs. This helps Puerto Rico stand out above the rest as a group and meetings destination.”

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In working towards and achieving the accreditation, the Bureau attained a significant “*Series of Firsts*,” that includes:

- Being one of the first organizations to receive the recognition since the accreditation program rolled out in January 2007 (Only 27 DMOs out of more than 600 members have earned accreditation);
- Becoming the first offshore, U.S. destination located outside of the Continental United States to earn the recognition;
- First DMO in the Caribbean to receive the DMAP accreditation.

In earning this industry recognition, Puerto Rico, through the efforts of the Puerto Rico Convention Bureau has demonstrated that it is a preferred meetings destination committed to serving the meetings market. “When planners and exhibition managers select a site for their conventions, they want to know that the services they need will be available and that their standards for everything from accommodations to catering, business services to transportation will be met,” continued Viscasillas. “Most importantly, planners need to know they can trust the Bureau and our member-suppliers to work with them in helping create an outstanding meeting that will attract attendees and result in building attendance in years to come.”

To become accredited, a DMO must successfully complete a rigorous application process and provide evidence of compliance with 54 mandatory standards and 33 voluntary standards. DMAP accreditation standards cover a wide variety of topics including governance, finance, management, human resources, technology, visitor services, group services, sales, communications, membership, brand management, destination development, research/market intelligence, innovation and stakeholder relationships.

The Puerto Rico Convention Bureau applied for accreditation earlier this year. In looking to Puerto Rico’s direct competition for group business, there are only four other DMOs which have earned accreditation, including several Florida destinations

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(Naples, St. Petersburg, and Ft. Walton) as well as the international meeting destination of Montreal. “We see this as raising the bar among our direct competitors in destinations that we regularly compete with for group business,” summarized Viscasillas. The accreditation credential is valid for four years with the option for renewal in 2011.

“By applying for and receiving DMAP accreditation, the Puerto Rico Convention Bureau has demonstrated a commitment to quality programs and services, said Barry Biggar, CDME, DMAP Board Chair. “Earning DMAP accreditation tells the community of Puerto Rico and potential visitors that your DMO has attained a measure of excellence assuring that their trust is well placed and their business in good hands.”

DMAP is an international accreditation program developed by the Destination Marketing Association International (DMAI), formerly known as the International Association of Convention & Visitors Bureaus. DMAP is an independent international accreditation body and a leader in defining quality and performance issues in destination marketing.

DMAP is part of DMAI, the world’s largest association of convention and visitor bureaus with more than 1,300 members from 600+ destination marketing organizations in more than 25 countries. As the world’s largest and most reliable resource for official DMOs, Destination Marketing Association International is dedicated to enhancing the professionalism, effectiveness and image of destination marketing organizations worldwide.

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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 \$125 million to the local economy. 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, 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. The Puerto Rico Convention Bureau has also been awarded accreditation from the Destination Marketing Association International as an elite destination marketing organization. DMAI is the world’s largest association of CVBs, representing more than 600 destination management organizations in more than 25 countries. The Bureau can be reached electronically through the Internet at info@prcb.org or at its website www.meetpuertorico.com.

