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## **PUERTO RICO CONVENTION CENTER DISTRICT CONTINUES PROGRESS AS MOST AMBITIOUS WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT IN THE AMERICAS**

*-- Puerto Rico Convention Center Shines as Cornerstone of the District --*

**SAN JUAN, November 14, 2007** -- With conventions and exhibitions drawing up to 14,000 visitors at the new Puerto Rico Convention Center, the construction of a 500-room headquarter hotel for meeting delegates on schedule for completion in 2009 and other key elements under construction on the 113-acres of former Naval and Coast Guard space, the Puerto Rico Convention Center District is quickly taking form to become one of the most ambitious, most dynamic, multi-use waterfront development projects in the Americas.

Committed to leading the development of the diverse multiple-use projects that comprise the Convention Center District, the Puerto Rico Convention Center District Authority (PRCCDA) has managed the construction and public-private partnership of the \$1.3 billion initiative that is on track for completion in 2012.

“The goal of the PRCCDA is to position Puerto Rico as a world-class business, tourism and entertainment destination and to develop the components of a strong economy for Puerto Rico through a planned urban redevelopment of San Juan,” stated Manuel Sanchez-Biscombe, executive director, Puerto Rico Convention Center District Authority. “As key elements of the District continue towards completion, we’re already seeing the economic benefits of the Center and its surrounding elements on the Puerto Rico local community.”

Following is a brief overview of the status of key elements currently in the completed, planning and/or construction phase at the Puerto Rico Convention Center District.

### **Puerto Rico Convention Center**

The Puerto Rico Convention Center is a \$415 million, state-of-the-art meeting facility conceived by the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico as a way of broadening the Island’s successful tourism industry with increased group and business travel.

Since its opening in November 2005, the Center has welcomed delegates from around the globe with groups of up to 10,000 attendees. By allowing Puerto Rico to compete not only in the convention markets of the Americas, but also in the international market, the new Center creates a singular destination for conventions, trade shows, consumer shows and

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congresses that places Puerto Rico at the forefront of world-class meeting destinations.

“The new Puerto Rico Convention Center has served as a catapult for Puerto Rico’s meetings and conventions market,” stated Ana María Viscasillas, president and CEO, Puerto Rico Convention Bureau, the official sales and marketing agent for the new Puerto Rico Convention Center. “Being able to host groups at the new Center puts us on a new and higher playing field as a meetings destination and as the District continues to develop, the addition of hotel accommodations and other attractions and amenities of interest to delegates will continue to have positive affect on the Island’s economic vitality.”

The 580,000 sq. ft. (53,882 sq. m.) Center is the largest facility of its kind in the Caribbean and includes a 152,700 sq. ft. (13,935 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 boasts 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.

**District Hotel Development**

Construction of the District’s first hotel, The Sheraton Puerto Rico Convention Center Hotel began in August 2006.

The 500-room, \$209 million property scheduled for completion in September 2009, will boast a contemporary “urban resort” design with a large, open lobby, casino and entertainment complex and 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.

With such high demand for additional hotel space, the bidding process for the development of a second, 300-room hotel property has begun, with a goal that the District will house 1,770 hotel rooms by 2012 to provide convention delegates and other visitors with ample and diverse accommodation options within the District. Construction of this property is slated to begin in December 2009.

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**Paseo de las Fuentes Park**

Inaugurated in late 2006, the *Paseo de las Fuentes* Park is a 13-acre area consisting of greenery, walkways, fountains and other park elements that connects the new Puerto Rico Convention Center with the San Juan Bay, as well as the surrounding Miramar, Condado and Puerta de Tierra communities. Part of a local environmental initiative to provide the San Juan metropolitan area with new green spaces, the design incorporates a water theme, complete with a system of lagoons and fountains with plans for the addition of restaurants, cafés, exhibit spaces for artisans, as well as additional open spaces.

Ficus Café, which opened in September 2006 as part of the *Paseo de las Fuentes*, has already proven to be a popular evening gathering space, serving an elegant tapas menu by one of the Island's top chefs in a casual, yet sophisticated al fresco atmosphere.

**Entertainment and Commercial Areas**

Upon completion, the PRCC District will have 245,000 sq. ft. (22,761 sq. m.) of commercial space and entertainment venues located along the *Paseo de las Fuentes*.

Located on the ground floors of the District's hotels, residential and office space, these commercial establishments will include cafés and restaurants, entertainment centers, cinemas, art galleries and stores that will complement and support the activities and events that take place at the Convention Center.

Construction has already begun on 167,000 sq. ft. (15,514 sq. m.) of commercial space that will open in conjunction with, and serve, the new Puerto Rico Convention Center headquarter hotel.

**Business Units, Office Space and Residential Units**

The Puerto Rico Convention Center District will become the new business center of San Juan. With a total of 718,000 sq. ft. (66,704 sq. m.) of office space planned, the construction of the first office project, consisting of 216,000 sq. ft. (20,067 sq. m.) of office and 32,000 sq. ft. (2,973 sq. m.) of commercial space will begin this year.

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The construction of the first phase of residential units to be part of the Puerto Rico Convention Center District began in August 2006 in conjunction with the groundbreaking of the headquarter convention center hotel.

Currently, more than 500 residential units are scheduled for completion in the summer of 2009, with an additional 563 residential units currently in the planning stages. Currently, the PRCCDA is in the permit process to begin construction on an additional 150 residential units.

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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](http://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](http://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](mailto:info@prcb.org) or at its website [www.meetpuertorico.com](http://www.meetpuertorico.com).

