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FOLLOWING FIRST YEAR OF OPERATIONS, NEW PUERTO RICO CONVENTION CENTER BOASTS HEALTHY CONVENTION BOOKINGS

SAN JUAN, February 15, 2007 -- Following the celebration of the first anniversary of the new Puerto Rico Convention Center, the Puerto Rico Convention Bureau, the official sales and marketing organization representing the Center, is pleased to announce a significant number of convention group bookings at the facility. The Puerto Rico Convention Center, which opened in November 2005, is the largest convention center in the Caribbean and is the most technologically-advanced facility of its kind in the Caribbean and Latin America.

Since opening, the Puerto Rico Convention Center has hosted 15 major convention groups, including such high-profile groups as, the Society of American Archaeology's Annual Meeting, the Caribbean Hotel Association's Annual Caribbean Marketplace, and Reed Exhibition's INTERPHEX, a medical device trade and education show. The year's events represented a total of 14,050 delegates at the Center and 12,953 room nights hosted in area hotels, infusing the local economy with nearly \$4.4 million in convention spending. In addition to these conventions, the Center is frequently used for other tradeshow and events which draw and appeal to local attendees.

"We're very happy with our first year figures for the new Convention Center," stated Ana María Viscasillas, president and CEO, Puerto Rico Convention Bureau. "In addition, the area surrounding the Convention Center is taking on the form of a true gathering place for convention delegates. With construction of a 500-room headquarter hotel along with the completion of parks, cafes and other attractions, we look forward to welcoming more conventioners from around the globe."

Currently, the Puerto Rico Convention Bureau has booked 33 groups for conventions to take place between 2007 and 2011, for a total of 63,149 room nights representing an economic impact of more than \$24 million.

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Several key upcoming groups for the Center this year include the 2007 American Association of Retired Persons' *'Feria de la Segunda Juventud,'* an informational tradeshow hosted by the organization tailored especially to the needs of the Hispanic market which is expected to draw 5,000 attendees; the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce's Annual Meeting, which is expected to draw 6,000 attendees and infuse more than \$5 million into Puerto Rico's local economy; as well as the National Guard Association of the United States, which will bring in nearly 5,000 attendees with an estimated economic impact of more than \$3.2 million.

Other big conventions booked at the Puerto Rico Convention Center beyond 2007 include the Shoppers Drug Mart Annual National Conference and the SEIU Quadrennial North American Convention in 2008, the *Asociación Latinoamericana de Pediatría (ALAPE)* in 2009 and the International Society of Physical Rehabilitation in 2011.

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.

Groundbreaking on a 500-room headquarter hotel to serve the Puerto Rico Convention Center took place in August 2006. The \$209-million facility is scheduled to open in 2009. Set to be managed by Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide under the 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

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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.

In September 2006, the “Paseo de las Fuentes” opened to the public. The urban park, complete with a system of fountains, lagoons and reflecting pools interspersed with walkways, promenades as well as recreation areas ties the Districts many elements together.

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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. 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 \$125 million annually to the Island's economy. For more information, visit the Bureau's Internet page at www.meetpuertorico.com or send a message at 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.

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

