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CONTACT: Teresa Stephenson
(916) 443-9012
info@wacvb.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Western CVBs Take Top Honors Among Peers

Best Idea Program Achievement Awards

Four convention and visitors bureaus received achievement awards in a recent competition with their colleagues throughout the western United States and western Canada. Sponsored by the Western Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus (WACVB), the annual **Best Idea Program** showcases innovative projects and creative marketing strategies as submitted by WACVB members.

This year's Best Idea Program awards were presented during the 2009 WACVB Annual Meeting, October 14-17, in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Following receipt of the entry forms, a Board-appointed Task Force reviewed the submissions and selected several ideas for presentation. Representatives from four bureaus presented their best ideas during the conference.

WACVB congratulates the following member bureaus for receiving outstanding achievement awards for their organizations in the 2009 Best Idea Program.

- **Albuquerque (NM) Convention and Visitors Bureau**
Project Title: Holiday Viral Video - Life of a Brown Paper Bag
The objective of the project was to create a fun and informative holiday-themed video that showcased Albuquerque as a destination with a message from ACVB staff to ACVB's audiences (visitors, meeting planners, media, travel trade, national industry and local partners). The in-house video was produced with the intent that it would intrigue audiences to open and watch the online video and make the video content compelling enough to forward to others (viral marketing). The two-minute video conveys everything that happens in the life of a brown paper bag including the most beautiful example of a holiday luminaria in Albuquerque. The topic was selected to demonstrate the unique holiday tradition in New Mexico of lining rooftops and pathways with bags filled with sand and a candle called luminarias. The video brings this topic to life in a distinctive and humorous way.
- **Fresno (CA) Convention and Visitors Bureau**
Project Title: Family Fun Staycations
The Bureau enlisted the help of a class of sixth graders from Fancher Creek Elementary in their marketing efforts to sell Fresno to Fresno residents, as their vacation destination. The CVB decided that this class should become the Bureau's Family Fun Marketing Ambassadors as a result of the excited response to the many activities that their families could enjoy as outlined in the Fresno Destination Guide. Each student was asked to prepare weekend itineraries using the Guide as their reference. The class enjoyed a one-day field trip that included some of the most popular attractions from their prepared itineraries. The student presentations and the field trip were filmed and turned into a broadcast commercial.

- **Travel Portland (OR)**

Project Title: Portland's "Twisitor Center"

In January 2009, Travel Portland became the first U.S. city to launch an official Twisitor Center. This cyber-style cousin to the more traditional walk-in visitor information center uses Twitter technology to connect travelers with those who can answer their questions and help plan their trips. Twitter-users seeking information on Portland simply add #inpx to their questions. Tweets tagged with this code (also called a hash tag) are sought out by Twisitor Center staff members who then send back suggestions. But the beauty of Twitter is that other users who aren't affiliated with Travel Portland can also chime in with additional tips. In addition to responding to questions from visitors, Travel Portland's Twitter stream includes several proactive tweets per day, covering such pre-defined topics as dining, green travel, special deals and recreation.

- **Sonoma County (CA) Tourism Bureau**

Project Title: World's First Ever Sonoma County Wine and Food Tattoo Contest

The Second Annual Wine Bloggers Conference was returning to the Sonoma Wine Country, and the Sonoma County Tourism Bureau (SCTB) wanted to generate buzz about the SCTB and its blog, www.inside-sonoma.com, to the more than 250 influential bloggers attending the event. In order to do this, the Bureau created a tattoo contest on our blog, driven by our Twitter and Facebook pages, and promoted through traditional public relations. We asked people to submit their food and wine themed tattoos, the top five (5) of which would be voted on at the actual blogger conference by the bloggers. The winners would get a fabulous Sonoma County prize package, including a one year supply of artisan bacon, a hotel stay, and some great wine. For the voting, the 250 bloggers who voted received a temporary tattoo sticker, which featured three Sonoma County wine messages: Silky Pinot - Sonoma County; Sultry Chard - Sonoma County; and Spicy Zin - Sonoma County.

The Western Association of Convention & Visitors Bureaus is a regional professional association serving more than 130 member bureaus in the western United States and the western provinces of Canada.

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Western Association of Convention & Visitors Bureaus (WACVB)
950 Glenn Drive, Suite 150
Folsom, CA 95630
info@wacvb.com