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New Lancaster County Convention Center and Lancaster Marriott at Penn Square Crowns City Emergence

LANCASTER, Pa. – July 18, 2008 – **The Lancaster County Convention Center (LCCC) and Lancaster Marriott at Penn Square**, the \$170 million cornerstone to the revitalization of downtown Lancaster, Pa., are the most important regional economic development undertaking in decades. The new, integrated facility of both the convention center and adjoining 300-room hotel, representing a combined 90,000 square feet of meeting space, are currently being built within the façade of the historic Watt & Shand department store site. Unique from traditional northeast meeting locations, Lancaster blends the convenience of being centrally located to the metropolitan cities of Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Baltimore, Washington, D.C., and New York, with quiet sophistication. Both the convention center and hotel are scheduled to open in March 2009 (<http://www.lancasterconventioncenter.com>).

“Lancaster County has a wide variety of entertainment, historic sites and a reputation for value. The local community is preparing to welcome new visitors with a special touch of Lancaster hospitality. Several great meeting and convention prospects are already in the works,” says Chris Barrett, president and ceo, Pennsylvania Dutch Convention and Visitors Bureau.

With more than 48,000 square feet of unobstructed meeting and exhibit space and two ballrooms of more than 9,000 square feet each, The Lancaster County Convention Center offers meeting planners abundant, flexible space for groups of a wide variety of sizes. The convention center and hotel provide savvy travelers with the latest state-of-the-future, high-tech amenities.

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Crowning the downtown district, the convention center and hotel are built in the historical context of the charming city of Lancaster by incorporating the façade of the nearly 110-year-old Watt & Shand department store. The luxurious interiors of both the hotel and convention center exude a modern, cosmopolitan look -- reflecting rich hues of olive, gold and burnt orange accented with cherry wood.

In addition, a neighboring interactive museum project of the Historic Preservation Trust of Lancaster County further incorporates historic fabric of early Lancaster. The homes and other buildings of American patriots, Thaddeus Stevens and Lydia Hamilton Smith have been physically integrated with the convention center facility and form a central point of the regional “Quest for Freedom Trail” under development by the Commonwealth. Among a variety of themed exhibits, this multi-level, 20,000 square-foot historic site highlights the Underground Railroad and features a recently unearthed, converted water cistern that scholars strongly believe functioned as a safe house for escaping slaves.

At the Lancaster Marriott, meeting attendees can expect all the amenities the Marriott name commands. Marriott’s latest technology includes 32-inch LCD high-definition televisions and the industry's only digital “Plug & Play” system connecting a laptop to the TV. New “Revive” bedding flaunts 300 thread-count sheets, pillow top mattresses and plush duvets. The Marriott Rewards program offers exclusive privileges to its participants. Members earn points toward free hotel stays, airline miles and more by staying at any of Marriott's hotels worldwide.

The Lancaster County Convention Center and Lancaster Marriott at Penn Square are managed by Interstate Hotels & Resorts (IHR), the nation’s largest independent hotel management company, with 220 properties in 36 states, the District of Columbia, Belgium, Canada, Ireland, Mexico and Russia. Interstate showcases its demonstrated industry expertise with this project, which is the 13th managed Pennsylvania property in the IHR portfolio.

The city of Lancaster is the oldest inland city in the United States. Known for its rich Amish history, Lancaster has many “must see” historic attractions, dating back as early as the 1700s. The city has recently begun to revitalize its downtown and has grown to be known for its burgeoning arts community and top-notch restaurant scene.

Because all work and no play makes for a dull stay, the Lancaster “dynamic duo” insure quality “free time” with a wide variety of sites within walking distance including Central Market (the largest open air farmers market in the country), Fulton Theatre (the nation’s oldest continuously operating theater and one of only three theaters named a National Historic Landmark), People’s Place Quilt Museum and numerous restaurants, bars, shops and art galleries. Within a short drive are upscale shopping outlets, Clipper Stadium -- home of the Atlantic League Champions, the Barnstormers -- Sight & Sound Millennium Theatre, American Music Theatre, HERSHEY PARK and Dutch Wonderland Family Amusement Park.

During construction, the convention center and hotel are projected to inject nearly \$150 million into the local economy and generate approximately 550 jobs. Upon completion, an additional \$42 million in economic impact is forecasted annually and an estimated 200-300 full-time staffers.

The Lancaster County Convention Center and Lancaster Marriott at Penn Square provide meeting planners and attendees with a new, entertaining and versatile experience within less than a four-hour drive of several large metropolitan areas. Both are also easily accessible by air through Harrisburg International Airport just 35 miles from Lancaster.

To book a meeting, convention or event at the new Lancaster County Convention Center, visit www.lancasterconventioncenter.com or call Josh Nowak at 866-503-3786 or 717-239-1601.

The Lancaster County Convention Center and Lancaster Marriott at Penn Square is operated by Interstate Hotels & Resorts, the nation’s largest independent hotel management company. For more information about Interstate Hotels & Resorts, visit the company’s Web site: www.ihrco.com.

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For a virtual tour, visit <http://www.lancasterconventioncenter.com/vrtour.asp>.