



Seattle's Convention and Visitors Bureau

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News Release

July 25, 2006

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Seattle Enjoying Banner Summer Tourism Season
Hotel Occupancy, Cruise Travel and Tourism Industry Spirits Are Up

SEATTLE – As locals bask in July sunshine, attend festivals, get out on the water and play tourist in their own city, Seattle's tourism industry leaders announce that travelers are doing the same – and in record numbers.

Seattle hotel occupancy percentages are up with a string of new hotels just opening or about to open, the Port of Seattle enjoying another record cruise season, airport passenger volumes remaining strong following a record year in 2005 and readers of one of the country's premier travel magazines have just voted Seattle a top-10 visitor destination for the first time this decade.

Hitting newsstands today, Travel + Leisure magazine's August issue contains the World's Best Awards, in which Seattle is listed among the top-10 favorite cities to visit in the United States. Seattle last achieved the highly-coveted accolade in the late 1990s.

Seattle's Convention and Visitors Bureau today confirmed the city's growing popularity as a travel destination by releasing its most recent annual visitor report which tracked an all-time-record 9.1 million overnight visitors who spent \$4.3 billion in 2005.

“While its too early to project 2006 hotel statistics, we're very encouraged by year-to-date results in both occupancy percentage and average rate growth,” said Don Welsh, President and CEO of Seattle's Convention and Visitors Bureau. “Plus, we have an excellent number of citywide conventions scheduled for the fall and winter of this year and next.”

Downtown Seattle hotel occupancy year-to-date is ahead of 2005 by nearly three points and room rates are up more than twelve percent over last year. Downtown hoteliers had a strong start to the summer with an average June occupancy of 88.7 percent, 3.6 percent higher than 2005. Average room rates in June were more than 14 percent higher than last June.

For the seventh year in a row, the Port of Seattle projects a record cruise season this summer with 198 sailings and passenger volumes of 385,000. From just six port calls in 1999, the port has positioned itself as one of the busiest in the United States, drawing major large-ship cruise lines such as Holland America Line, Norwegian Cruise Line, Princess Cruises, Royal Caribbean Cruise Line and Celebrity Cruises to its two busy cruise terminals.

Seattle's Convention and Visitors Bureau is a non-profit economic development agency responsible for competitively marketing Seattle as a destination for meeting and convention groups and leisure travelers. Visitors spend \$4.3 billion in Seattle and King County annually, contributing more than \$300 million in state and local tax revenues. Direct visitor spending benefits hotels, retailers, restaurants, attractions, transportation services and other businesses, and supports jobs for nearly 60,000 people in the Seattle region.