



News Release

February 10, 2009

Contacts: David Blandford,
(206) 461-5806
dblandford@visitseattle.org

TOURISM TAKES ADVANTAGE OF EMPTY STOREFRONTS Community Outreach Campaign Asks Seattleites to Become "Tourism Ambassadors"

SEATTLE –Seattle’s Convention and Visitors Bureau (SCVB) today unveiled advertisements in a recently vacated retail space in the heart of the downtown shopping district to tell passersby *Why Tourism Matters*.

When the Adidas store at Fifth Avenue and Pike Street closed last month, SCVB negotiated with the building’s owner, Pine Street Group LLC, for use of all vacated window space to display advertisements for its *Why Tourism Matters* public advocacy campaign. The campaign, launched last May during National Tourism Week, promotes the importance of the tourism industry by way of advertising, a web site, public relations and cooperative communications. SCVB cooperatively promotes the local tourism industry with hotels, airlines, cruise lines, cultural institutions, professional sports organizations and other private and public sector organizations which benefit from the nearly \$5 billion that tourists spend in the county each year.

The campaign asks Seattleites to consider themselves “Tourism Ambassadors,” providing inspiration via the stories of locals who work on tourism’s frontlines. The campaign features tourism ambassadors ranging from fish market vendors to hotel turndown attendants, banquet captains, tour boat captains, arts performers and presidents of popular visitor attractions.

“We have one message but many messengers,” said Tom Norwalk, SCVB President & CEO. “Tourism matters to us all – every citizen, every business, every industry. Tourism contributes ten percent of all retail sales in the county, which adds up to nearly \$5 billion in expenditures. Tourism generates \$468 million in state and local taxes and supports 63,000 jobs.”

To learn more about the local tourism industry, its impact on the local economy and its growing legion of tourism ambassadors, visit www.whytourismmatters.com.

-more-

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. As a membership-based organization, SCVB connects more than 800 local businesses with the lucrative visitor market. Direct visitor spending benefits hotels, retailers, restaurants, attractions, transportation services and other businesses, and supports jobs for more than 63,000 people in the Seattle region.

###