

## Press Release

For Immediate Release

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### **SEATTLE HOSTS MEGA CITYWIDE CONVENTION THIS WEEK American Association of Orthodontists Will Draw Worldwide Attendance and Fill Hotels, Restaurants, Shops and Sidewalks**

SEATTLE – One of Seattle's largest and most lucrative conventions in more than a decade is sure to draw smiles from area business owners. The American Association of Orthodontists (AAO) 107th Annual Session, May 18-22, is projected to bring more than 16,000 delegates from 80 countries to Seattle and generate an estimated economic impact of more than \$30 million.

The citywide convention will use the Washington State Convention & Trade Center, 21 downtown Seattle hotels and numerous off-site venues. Hotels beyond downtown are expected to benefit as well, and many local restaurants, retail outlets and visitor attractions throughout the city will see strong business.

Additionally, pre- and post-convention stays in and around Seattle are expected to be strong as delegates affiliated with this association tend to bring family members to the annual convention.

Seattle's Convention and Visitors Bureau booked the meeting in 2002, beating out several competing cities to host the AAO 2007 annual meeting. The runner-up was Honolulu. Seattle's winning bid focused on the city's vibrant and easily-walkable downtown, strong overall hotel package, abundance of top-notch dining, shopping and culture, the quality of service and geographic location of the Washington State Convention & Trade Center and the wealth of appealing off-site meeting venues throughout the area.

The convention and meetings market is particularly important to Seattle's economy, accounting for more than 50 percent of Seattle's downtown hotel occupancy. Typically, convention delegates spend nearly twice as much while in town as leisure travelers.

Seattle is experiencing strong convention business in 2007. Convention groups generated combined hotel room nights of 127,963 during the first quarter, compared with first quarter totals of 56,458 in 2006 and 48,204 in 2005. During this period, Seattle hotel occupancies, rates and revenues were well above average.

In addition to the American Association of Orthodontists, Seattle has already hosted several citywide conventions this year, including the American Library Association, the American Astronomical Society, the Society of Interventional Radiology and the National Association of Elementary School Principals.

Travelers in need of a last-minute Seattle hotel reservation are advised to call or visit online the Seattle Super Saver program, which typically offers the last available rooms in the city during such peak periods. Operated by Seattle's Convention and Visitors Bureau, Seattle Super Saver offers the lowest available rates at more than 80 hotel properties throughout the Seattle area. Call (800) 535-7071 or visit [www.seattlesupersaver.com](http://www.seattlesupersaver.com).

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. More than nine million 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.