



## **News Release**

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### **SEATTLE'S MOST IMPORTANT CONVENTION KICKS OFF City's Moment in the Sun Attracts National Celebrities, Marching Bands, Civic Leaders, Record Attendance, Positioning Seattle for Millions of Dollars in Future Business**

SEATTLE – For the first time in its 54-year history, the Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) will hold its annual meeting in Seattle, January 13-16. Record attendance is expected as a broad coalition of city, county and state tourism industry organizations work around the clock to ensure a strong showing for the destination.

Seattle is hoping for more than \$50 million in future convention business bookings as a direct result of hosting the convention industry's most prestigious group. More than 3,500 meeting professionals, CEOs and convention industry suppliers will attend. An estimated 30 percent will be visiting Seattle for the first time.

"These are the decision makers," said Don Welsh, President & CEO of Seattle's Convention and Visitors Bureau. "The average professional attending the PCMA Annual Meeting plans 34 meetings yearly with an average economic value of \$4 million. The combined buying power of PCMA members is more than \$18 billion annually in potential meetings. Every major city in the U.S. is vying for their business."

While Seattle's Convention and Visitors Bureau booked the convention and invested \$250,000 seed money, an unprecedented community investment of \$1.6 million was made by the Washington State Convention & Trade Center, the City of Seattle, King County, Washington State, several Seattle area hotels, visitor attractions, meeting venues, transportation companies and many other organizations. Several hundred thousand dollars worth of In-kind contributions have also been made by the community.

The immediate economic impact from the Seattle convention alone will generate \$4.5 million. PCMA attendees will use seven downtown Seattle hotels, buy-out 80-100 restaurants for private parties and functions, fill the Washington State Convention & Trade Center and other meeting venues and run site inspections and sightseeing tours throughout the city, state and to Vancouver, B.C., Portland and Spokane.

The convention opens Sunday evening with a Northwest-themed reception at the convention center. Attendees will then be escorted by the University of Washington Marching Band to Nordstrom for an “after party” featuring desert and shopping. Streets will be closed briefly to allow the procession, with assistance from the City of Seattle and Seattle Police Department.

Monday morning’s opening general session at the convention center will feature an appearance by Governor Christine Gregoire, actor Tom Skerritt and other celebrities. Seattle’s convention marketing team will also get ten minutes at the podium to pitch the planners.

Other conference speakers will include Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., actor Jason Alexander, Mich Mathews, Senior Vice President of Marketing at Microsoft and Joseph Pine, II, and James H. Gilmore, authors of *Authenticity: What Consumers Really Want* and *The Experience Economy*.

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### **About PCMA**

*PCMA, which is headquartered in Chicago and has 16 chapters throughout the United States and Canada, is recognized throughout the meetings and convention industry as a premier professional resource and educational body. Founded in 1957, PCMA represents the interests of meeting management executives from associations, non-profit organizations, corporations, independent meeting planning companies, and multi-management firms who recognize the importance of meetings to their organization.*

### **About Seattle’s Convention and Visitors Bureau**

*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. Some 9.4 million visitors spend \$4.75 billion in Seattle and King County annually, contributing \$419 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.*