



For Immediate Release

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**Providence Warwick CVB Touts Tourism Growth
At 2008 Annual Meeting**

*Hotel Developer Arthur Robbins, RI Convention Center Authority
Executive Director Jim McCarvill Inducted Into Hall of Fame*

Providence, R.I. – November 3, 2008 – Tourism leaders from across Rhode Island gathered to celebrate the 15th anniversary of the Rhode Island Convention Center and tout the industry's emergence as a top economic generator since that landmark event as part of the Providence Warwick Convention & Visitors Bureau's (PWCVB) Annual Meeting on Oct. 30 at the Center.

"Today is a celebration of the opening of the Rhode Island Convention Center and of the 15 years since then. It has been a time of explosive growth – with new hotels, a new mall, a refurbished arena, a bustling airport and a revitalized downtown. Tourism has changed this state's literal and figurative landscape," said Martha Sheridan, PWCVB president and CEO.

Many of the speakers at the event echoed Sheridan's sentiments, including PWCVB Board Chairman Angelo DePeri, who said, "Our industry should not be dismissed as one solely based on low paying jobs, but rather as a sector that provides opportunity for thousands of Rhode Islanders to enter the work force and progress towards a fruitful career."

Arthur Robbins, general partner in the Providence Marriott Hotel and a key figure in the creation of both the PWCVB and the Convention Center, was inducted into the Bureau's Hall of Fame, as was Jim McCarvill, the longtime executive director of the Rhode Island Convention Center Authority. David DePetrillo, who recently retired after more than three decades as the Director of the RI Tourism Division, was honored with a special presentation by the leaders of the state's tourism organizations. Bill Pinelli and Steve Marra of the Pinelli Marra Restaurant Group received the Member of the Year award, for their outstanding philanthropic efforts.

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The event also presented seven tourism professionals with ROSE (Recognition of Service Excellence) Awards, which honor front-line or behind-the-scenes employees for outstanding service. They are:

- Joseph Agny – banquet manager, RI Convention Center;
- Tonie Lapierre – head of the Cheese Department, Venda Ravioli;
- Mary McDermott – group housing coordinator, Renaissance Providence Hotel;
- Lauren Norcross – associate sale and event coordinator, Pinelli Marra Fine Caterers;
- Franck Payen – steward, Radisson Hotel Providence Airport
- Janine Schwartz – special events coordinator, City of Providence Department of art, Culture & Tourism;
- Bernadette Vaughn – Delighted to Serve specialist, Renaissance Providence Hotel.

Each of the winners was recognized by RI Governor Donald Carcieri, Providence Mayor David Cicilline and Warwick Mayor Scott Avedisian, all of whom attended the event.

The Providence Warwick Convention & Visitors Bureau is a 501(c)(6) nonprofit organization whose mission is to create vibrant growth for the local hospitality economy by promoting, developing, and expanding a united visitor industry. For more information, contact 401-456-0200 or visit www.goprovidence.com.

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