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CIC Member Organizations Meet to Create Action Plan to Counter Negative Media Regarding Legitimate Meetings and Events

Washington, D.C. – Leaders from several Convention Industry Council (CIC) member organizations from the meeting, exhibition and events sector including ASAE, PCMA MPI, IAEE, CEIR, DMAI, NCBMP and SITE, met yesterday in Washington, DC to continue the conversation begun earlier this year to plot a strategy to promote the positive impact of face-to-face events to doing business, employing workers and sustaining communities.

Media reports of perceived excesses by corporations receiving TARP funds, have painted all conferences, business meetings and events as wasteful. “What is missing from the current debate is the value that conferences, and events bring to business. Conferences provide necessary business education and exhibitions provide industry information and support the sales efforts critical to driving revenue to companies,” said Deborah Sexton, President of Professional Convention Management Association, and a participant at the meeting. “That story does not make for good nightly news sound bites.”

“Corporations, whether receiving TARP money or not, are cancelling conferences and events,” added Steven Hacker, President of International Association for Exhibitions and Events. “It’s the perception. Hundreds of organizations are cancelling millions of dollars worth of legitimate meetings. Who loses? Not just the associations or corporations sponsoring the events, but the hotel and restaurant employees who lose their jobs, and municipalities who depend on tax revenues from these enterprises to fund critical infrastructure.”

The Convention Industry Council will engage its member organizations to promote the positive economic value of the meetings and events industry with one voice. We will continue to support the advocacy efforts of the industry through the U.S. Travel Association, and develop and disseminate economic impact research over the next year, to demonstrate the value of the meetings industry to the public and our elected officials. “We need validated data that enables us to directly compare our value vs other industries. Right now, that doesn’t exist,” said Karen Kotowski, CIC’s COO.

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The Convention Industry Council’s 34 member organizations represent more than 103,500 individuals and 19,500 firms and properties involved in the meetings, conventions and exhibitions industry. CIC facilitates the exchange of information develops programs to promote professionalism within the industry and educates the public on its profound economic impact.

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