

## **BLACK MEETINGS & TOURISM MAGAZINE RECOGNIZES TOURISM TORONTO WITH DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD**

**TORONTO (March 24, 2011)** – For the first time in its 11-year history, the Apex Distinguished Service Award is being presented to the leader of a Canadian organization. David Whitaker, President and CEO of Tourism Toronto, has been recognized by *Black Meetings & Tourism* magazine for outstanding contributions that have had a positive impact on travel and tourism.

“I am genuinely honoured to have been chosen for such a distinction,” said Mr. Whitaker. “I have long admired the magazine and the mission of this important element of our industry, so it’s a real thrill to have been recognized.”

Under David Whitaker’s leadership, Tourism Toronto has increased its focus on developing new business opportunities for the Toronto region as organizations such as the National Society of Black Engineers, National Coalition of Black Meeting Planners and the National Association of Black Journalists all held key meetings in Toronto in 2010. And in July 2013 the National Medical Association will bring 6,500 attendees and an estimated visitor spending of over \$10 million on things like hotels, restaurants, entertainment and taxis.

“David has done a tremendous job of broadening Toronto’s tourism reach and penetrating new markets,” said Toronto City Councillor Michael Thompson, Chair of the City’s Economic Development Committee. “The Apex award acknowledges what those of us who work with him already know: David is a passionate and effective advocate for our City, who knows how to deliver results.”

Past recipients of the Apex Distinguished Service award include William Norman, former President and CEO of the Travel Industry Association of America, George Aguel, Senior Vice-President of Walt Disney Parks and Resorts, and Pamela Richards, former Commissioner of Tourism, United States Virgin Islands.

*Black Meetings & Tourism* has been publishing since 1994 and is an award-winning, African-American-owned trade publication for and about the African-American meetings, incentives, leisure and group travel market, which is valued at approximately \$45 billion in spending worldwide. Criteria for determining the award recipient include providing long-term benefits for the travel industry and the African-American market segment; representing a national level of prominence; and demonstrating a track record of a minimum of two years.

The 2011 BM&T APEX Distinguished Service Awards will be presented at The Travel Professionals of Color 9th Annual Conference on May 13, 2011, in Louisville, Kentucky.

### **About Tourism Toronto**

Tourism Toronto, Toronto’s Convention and Visitors Association, is an industry association of more than 1,200 members established to sell and market the greater Toronto region as a remarkable destination for tourists, convention delegates and business travellers around the globe. Tourism Toronto operates in partnership with the Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Culture as Regional Tourism Organization 5. For more information please visit [www.seetorontonow.com](http://www.seetorontonow.com).

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