

**TORONTO JUMPS UP IN NORTH AMERICAN RANKINGS AS TOP CONVENTION CITY**

**TORONTO** (May 18, 2010) – Toronto’s convention industry got another shot in the arm as meeting planners from across North America rated Toronto tops in several categories.

Toronto was ranked number one among 46 cities in North America for "Superior Convention and Visitors Bureau / Destination Marketing Organization" and for "Superior Convention Centre Services" for Tourism Toronto and the Metro Toronto Convention Centre respectively.

“We love it when our customers speak,” said David Whitaker, President & CEO of Tourism Toronto. “Attaining the number one ranking is not only a great source of pride but also a tool we’ll use to aggressively invite others to see the benefits of a successful meeting in Toronto.”

“Our experienced staff and their expertise is *the* reason we are rated number one in Superior Convention Centre Services,” said Barry Smith, President & CEO of the Metro Toronto Convention Centre. “We consider ourselves an extension of the planner’s team, and together we make the event successful.”

Watkins Research Group Inc. surveyed over 600 meeting planners from across North America about a range of aspects pertaining to the meetings and conventions industry and this year, Toronto ranked in the top five in North America in six of the eight factors and number one in six of the eight in Canada.

The Watkins study is considered the most prominent, comprehensive and authoritative survey of its kind within the convention and meetings industry and Toronto has been steadily moving up in the rankings in the past several years.

“Toronto’s steady, positive progress to its now highly respected position indicates that its whole convention community *listens* to what meeting planners want and responds cohesively,” said Curt Watkins, Principal, Watkins Research Group Inc. “Research attunes destinations to changing needs. When the entire convention community in a city pays attention to where research points, the city inevitably is perceived as a highly desirable destination.”

	Rank in North America	
	2008	2010
<b>Superior CVB/DMO</b>	8	1
<b>Superior convention centre services</b>	16	1
<b>Hotels well suited for my largest meeting</b>	12	4

	Rank in North America	
	2008	2010
<b>Great all around convention city</b>	5	4
<b>Superior convention facilities</b>	21	5
<b>Safe and secure</b>	10	5
<b>Easy accessibility within the city</b>	9	7
<b>Easy to get to</b>	15	17

The meetings and conventions trade is a big business and a major component of the tourism and hospitality industry. In Toronto in 2009 it brought in over \$305 million in visitor spending to the region while tourism and hospitality overall generates \$4 billion in annual spending and employs 154,000 people.

“Our community’s commitment to customer service and the spirit of our “We’ve Been Expecting You” program is really paying dividends for Toronto and our clients,” said David Ogilvie, Regional V.P. of Starwood Hotels & Resorts and Chair of Tourism Toronto’s Board of Directors. “I’m gratified to see that all components of the experience – host hotels, convention centre and, of course, the number one Convention and Visitor Bureau in North America - receive this kind of recognition.”

**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. For more information please visit [www.SeeTorontoNow.com](http://www.SeeTorontoNow.com).

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