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ICCA And IMEX Success For Canada And Toronto

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Canada has enjoyed a busy and successful IMEX with 'back to back' meetings for all partners and has also scooped the top three awards in the ICCA 2009 rankings for the top host city in North America. (Number of international associative events) 1. Montréal (57) 2. Vancouver (46) 3. Toronto (36)

"It's hugely impressive that ICCA has recognized Canada in the top three places for the North America for international events," says Susan Frei, CTC International Meetings and Incentives director.

"This will help the Canada brand—"Canada. Keep Exploring"—become more top of mind and get Canadian cities on the international buyers' radar as prime destinations for their future meetings"

Tourism Toronto and the Toronto Convention & Visitors Association were also the recipients of the 2010 IMEX 'Commitment To The Community' Award' The Award pays tribute to meetings, incentive programmes, conferences, associations or business projects that demonstrate innovative efforts to benefit a charitable initiative.

They are judged on four criteria: suitability, creativity, sustainability and 'the power of one'.

This year the award was made in recognition of Tourism Toronto's Relax, Recharge & Renew programme which provides the parents of children with special needs much-needed luxury weekend getaways, including limousine pick-up, two nights in a hotel, tickets to shows, museums and other attractions, meals at local restaurants and a gift, benefiting two families a week, every single week.

"We are extremely proud of this unique program and the support we have received from nearly 200 Tourism Toronto member organizations since we began nearly two years ago," said David Whitaker, President and CEO of Tourism Toronto.

"We are thrilled that our international meetings colleagues have also recognized its merit with this prestigious award and are mindful that together we can make a real difference in our community."

Toronto's convention industry got another shot in the arm as meeting planners from across North America rated Toronto tops in several categories in this survey conducted by Watkins Research Group Inc..

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.

The survey canvassed more than 600 meeting planners across North America. Toronto topped the charts in six out of eight categories in Canada, and was in the top five for six of the eight categories in North America as a whole.

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