

**** MEDIA ADVISORY ** CONVENTION NOTICE **
PHOTO OPPORTUNITY **
** MEDIA ALERT ****

**New Orleans Tourism Industry Thrives:
An international city-wide meeting, a major convention and an annual festival
generate nearly \$40 million in economic impact for the city of New Orleans in
just one week**

May 19, 2011 - Kicking off this weekend, New Orleans welcomes the American Society of Microbiology's (ASM) 111th General Meeting and the Rotary International Convention, as well as the New Orleans Wine and Food Experience (NOWFE). Between Saturday and May 29, more than 36,000 convention and leisure visitors will convene in the city of New Orleans, utilizing 48 hotels around the city and generating nearly \$40 million in economic impact.

Just this week, ASM has an expected attendance of 9,000; Rotary is bringing in more than 19,000 attendees from more than 160 countries; and historically, NOWFE welcomes nearly 8,000 festival-goers every year. This week's events not only support tourism, and the 70,000 hospitality workers employed in the city, but also contribute to the overall economic impact responsible for generating \$5 billion in direct visitor spending every year, funding nearly 30 percent of the city's annual operating budget maintaining the public school system, streetcar system and other city services, and financially backs the New Orleans Saints, Hornets, Superdome and Morial Convention Center.

New Orleans is a perfect backdrop to join together two large conventions and a well-known festival, combining leisure travelers and convention attendees in a city known for its internationality, hospitality and culture of giving. Rotary focuses on humanitarian and educational projects worldwide, including ongoing recovery efforts in the Gulf Region. Microbiologists contribute expertise of nature and generosity as they work with Bayou Rebirth on the cultivation of Neighborhood Nurseries. And, NOWFE gathers the finest wine and food connoisseurs around and educates a Creole city already known for its exceptional cuisine and specialized spirits.

Here are just some of the events going on next week:

American Society for Microbiology - May 21-24: ASM's 111th General Meeting, with an expected attendance of 9,000 attendees, will feature more than 3,000 individual scientific presentations spanning the breadth of microbiology. ASM has teamed up with Bayou Rebirth, a local non-profit organization whose mission is to restore and preserve ecological communities in Southern Louisiana, and will build Neighborhood Nurseries. ASM will sponsor their very own nursery, or rain water harvesting system, and will explain and display the progress and future of the Neighborhood Nurseries at the Community booth in Exhibit hall A-C at the Morial Convention Center.

WEBSITE: <http://gm.asm.org/>

Rotary International - May 21-25: The 2011 RI Convention, with more than 19,000 attendees from 160+ countries, is expected to inject \$22 million into the local economy and many Rotarians will participate in local community service projects with groups such as Habitat for Humanity and the United Saints Recovery Project. Also, in an effort to raise money and awareness for Rotary's effort to eradicate polio, more than 100 motorcyclists from across the country will ride into New Orleans arriving at the Morial Convention Center for a photo opportunity at approximately 11:30 a.m. Also supporting Rotary's ongoing effort to raise \$200

million for polio eradication is this year's keynote speaker Microsoft Founder, Bill Gates, co-chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, who will speak at the Plenary Session on Tuesday, May 24, at 4:30 p.m. in Halls E-F at the Morial Convention Center.

WEBSITE: <http://www.rotary.org/en/Members/Events/Convention/Pages/ridefault.aspx>

New Orleans Wine and Food Experience - May 24-29: NOWFE is a five day event in New Orleans that is nationally recognized as one of the most prestigious festivals of its kind and brings in more than 8,000 attendees. Started in 1991, NOWFE spotlights New Orleans' legendary restaurants and features more than 175 wineries, 1,000 wines, dozens of international wine and food experts and continually raises more than \$100,000 annually for local charities. The event is packed with extraordinary wine and food seminars, wine dinners at some of the city's most celebrated restaurants and one-of-a-kind wine tasting events. On Tuesday, May 24, the Ella Brennan Award Dinner honoring Chef Paul Prudhomme takes place at the JW Marriott ile de France Grand Ballroom. On Thursday, May 26, the Vinola Tasting featuring 40 wineries will take place at the Theatre at Harrah's Casino from 2-5 p.m., and the Fourth Annual Louisiana Seafood Cook-off will take place on Saturday, May 28 from 5-8:45 p.m. at the Foundry.

WEBSITE: <http://www.nowfe.com/>

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Rotary International: Wayne Hearn, cell: 714.412.4388, Wayne.Hearn@rotary.org; Vivian Fiore, cell: 714.240.0482, Vivian.Fiore@rotary.org; Ann Christian, 504.232.6361, christian39@cox.net; RI Convention press center, 504-670-7010

ASM: Jim Sliwa, 301-873-3129, jsliwa@asmusa.org; Garth Hogan, 301-814-0984, ghogan@asmusa.org

NOWFE: Liz Goliwas, 504-583-5550, egoliwas@bellsouth.net

New Orleans CVB: Tara Letort, 504-566-5019, tletort@neworleanscvb.com; Jennifer Day, 773-909-2514, jday@neworleanscvb.com; Kelly Schulz, 504-421-0962, kschulz@neworleanscvb.com

###