



NEWS RELEASE

900 Convention Center Blvd. • New Orleans, LA 70130
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Contact: Rosalie Mortillaro, Communications Manager
Phone: 504.582.3027, E-mail: rmortillaro@mccno.com

Rally Planned for American Heart Association

New Orleans Tourism Industry Invited to Rally Enthusiasm at "Pre-Op"

All sectors of New Orleans tourism are invited to an October 16th "Pre-Op" event to kick off an exciting awareness campaign for the American Heart Association's upcoming convention. The convention is expected to generate an estimated \$33.95 million in economic impact and bring 27,000 visitors to town. AHA last met in the city in 2004. "Rallying all businesses to provide 'service with a heart' will show the local service industry's appreciation of the Association's loyalty to New Orleans," said Bob Johnson, president and general manager of the Convention Center.

The October 16th rally is set for 10:00 a.m. at the New Orleans Theater at the Convention Center, located above Hall I. The rally will feature E.J. Smith, a dynamic speaker presenting an "Rx for Success," plus a special performance by New Orleans actor/comedian Ricky Graham, with Yvette Hargis and Jefferson Turner.

"The American Heart Association Convention is our largest single piece of convention business in 2008," said Melvin Rodrigue, president of the New Orleans Exhibition Hall Authority, chief operating officer of Galatoire's Restaurant in New Orleans and managing partner of Galatoire's Bistro. "From a restaurateur's perspective, our relationship with AHA is one of our most valuable. The city's success in hosting their event will encourage them, as well as other related groups, to return in the future. This is our chance to rally our enthusiasm as a group, so we leave every attendee with the feeling of 'I can't wait to return to New Orleans.'"

This is American Heart Association's fourth meeting in the Crescent City. Underscoring their confidence in New Orleans, AHA took the unusual step of holding two major meetings in one city in the same year. In addition to the AHA conference scheduled for November 9-12, 2008, AHA brought their 4,376-person International Stroke Conference and State-of-the-Art Stroke Nursing Symposium to the Center in February of this year.

The combined economic impact to the city for AHA's events since 2000 is estimated at nearly \$100 million.

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ERNEST N. MORIAL CONVENTION CENTER

About the New Orleans Morial Convention Center

With 1.1 million square feet of contiguous exhibit space, an award winning staff and first class amenities, the New Orleans Morial Convention Center (NOMCC) is the sixth largest convention center in the nation and a consistent Top 10 host of the largest number of conventions and tradeshow annually. A leading rainmaker of the city's hospitality industry, NOMCC event activity has produced \$37.86 billion in economic impact since its 1985 opening, including \$2.09 billion in new tax revenue.

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