



## **NEW CARMEL HOSPITALITY DISTRICT POISED TO ATTRACT AND WELCOME SMALL GROUP MEETINGS**

CARMEL-BY-THE-SEA, Calif., June 13, 2013 – A new hospitality organization in Carmel-by-the-Sea has launched an initiative to attract small conference groups to the village.

The Carmel Hospitality Improvement District – a joint organization of the City of Carmel, the Carmel Chamber of Commerce and the Carmel Innkeepers Association – is promoting the town’s abundant attractions and events, as well as its unique array of lodging properties and meeting venues, in groups ranging in size from 10 to 250.

As part of the initiative, the Carmel Hospitality District this week unveiled a new website, <http://www.meetingincarmel.com>, that specifically illustrates how Carmel-by-the-Sea can offer small groups a getaway experience unlike most any other destination and provides the on-line tools to make this a reality.

“We have long thought Carmel-by-the-Sea would be immensely attractive for small groups, but until now we didn’t have an organization like the Hospitality Improvement District specifically charged with that mission,” said Monta Potter, CEO, Carmel Chamber of Commerce. “With our weekend business typically strong, our efforts will be focused on the Sunday-through-Thursday group market.”

Potter also pointed to the recent remodel of the Sunset Cultural Center’s North Wing as a key aspect of the new district’s initiative. In the wake of the renovation effort, she said Sunset Cultural Center – with its historic and architecturally significant 700-seat performing arts venue – now features general meeting rooms, executive space and other facilities that make it ideal for small conferences.

Plus, a handful of lodging properties in downtown Carmel provide boutique meeting and event spaces, while the village’s 46 hotels and inns offer unique and desirable overnight accommodations for groups, which in the past may have had to settle for larger, more generic facilities.

Additionally, Potter said Safarina Maluki has been hired as the destination marketing manager to expressly identify and serve incoming meeting groups and conferences for the Hospitality Improvement District. Maluki possesses nearly 20 years of experience working in sales for Monterey Peninsula-based lodging properties.

Monterey Regional Airport (MRY), a 10-minute drive from downtown Carmel, has recently added direct flights from San Diego and remains competitively priced in comparisons with both the San Francisco and San Jose airports. In addition to San Diego, the Monterey airport now offers direct flights to and from San Francisco, Los Angeles, Las Vegas, Denver and Phoenix.

“With all the direct flights coming into Monterey from throughout the west, it’s easier than ever to get to Carmel,” Potter said. “And as far as cost is concerned, we’ve seen several airfare examples of late that show Monterey can be less expensive to fly into than either San Francisco or San Jose.”

For more information about the Carmel Hospitality Improvement District, or to inquire about booking a group in the town, call 831/704-6317, or visit the new website at <http://www.meetingincarmel.com>.

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