



Conference and Visitors Bureau of Montgomery County, Maryland, Inc

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND TOURISM INDUSTRY AWARDS

Rockville, MD- The Conference and Visitors Bureau of Montgomery County, MD, Inc (CVB), acknowledged members of the tourism community at its Annual Meeting on November 8, 2004 at the new Bethesda North Conference Center.

The award winners were The Heritage Tourism Alliance of Montgomery County for Best New Tourism Promotion or Marketing Collateral; Ken Rucker with the National Capital Trolley Museum for Volunteer of the Year; Raul Berrios with Hyatt Regency Bethesda, Richard Gerhold with Comfort Inn Shady Grove, and Jason Bhargava with Summerfield Suites Hotel by Wyndham for Outstanding Hospitality Employees of the Year; and, Eliot Pfanstiehl with Strathmore, Ted Seale with THEO Consultants, and Sara Torrence with Sara Torrence and Associates accepted on behalf of all the winners of the CVB Members of the Year.

The Best New Tourism Promotion or Marketing Collateral honors a CVB member whose promotional campaign or package has generated results in attracting visitors to Montgomery County or whose most recent marketing brochure or web site has attracted and generated a significant number of inquiries and booked business. "The Heritage Tourism Alliance of Montgomery County has raised the profile of Montgomery County's Heritage and brought alive the County's history by concentrating on two themes, Farming History and the Underground Railroad," says Kelly Groff, Executive Director of the CVB.

Ken Rucker took home the Volunteer of the Year award, which honors a volunteer whose contributions to an organization, business or committee significantly

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impacted the tourism industry or created a positive impression of Montgomery County.

Under Rucker's leadership, the National Capital Trolley Museum recovered in less than four weeks and reopened to the public after suffering a major fire that destroyed eight historic street cars and the buildings that contained them. Rucker continues to serve tirelessly as a volunteer to maintain the museum's 35 year tradition as a cultural resource for Montgomery County and the State of Maryland.

Three individuals, Raul Berrios, Richard Gerhold, and Jason Bhargava took home The Outstanding Hospitality Employees of the Year. This award recognizes the front line employees who best exemplify hospitality in Montgomery County. The employees were chosen on their actions to accommodate a visitor, guest or customer by providing exceptional, consistent service. All winners have gone above and beyond their call of duty.

The CVB Members of the year recognized an individual, business or organization member that has partnered with the CVB to provide new promotional opportunities and increased awareness of Montgomery County Tourism. The winners also contributed significant time and effort to the mission and goals of the CVB. The CVB honored all the individuals who had a vision for Montgomery County as a destination. "They were able to identify the County's future need for a meeting facility that would accommodate the needs of the existing and future business community," Groff says. "Without the efforts of a core group of hospitality industry professionals and supporters of the CVB beginning back in 1992, we would not have the Bethesda North Conference Center, a wonderful new facility that is sure to bring new economic impact for the local business community," added Groff. Some of the CVB members who were recognized included: Councilmember William Hanna, Jr., Councilmember Marilyn Praisner, Neal Potter, Connie New, Tina Benjamin, David Edgerley, Sara Torrence, Ted Seale, Eliot Pfanstiehl, Ralph Deckelbaum, Susan Feibus, and The High Technology Council of Maryland.

"These awards help us recognize those in our tourism community who have shared their experiences, contributed time and effort, and expressed their enthusiasm and talent towards the impact of tourism on our economy," says Phil Tufano, General Manager, Hyatt Regency Bethesda and CVB President.

About the Conference and Visitors Bureau of Montgomery County, Maryland, Inc.

The mission of the CVB is to enthusiastically promote, market and sell Montgomery County, Maryland as a destination for meetings, conventions and individual travelers, fostering economic development and benefiting and supporting members and the overall business community.

In addition, it is the CVB's goal to show leadership and be regarded as a quality organization of experts and advocates of its members, partnering with local, county and state organizations and government officials in an effort to further these goals.