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For Immediate Release

AND THE WINNERS ARE...

48th Annual Calgary White Hat Awards Salute the Hospitality Industry's Best

(Calgary, Alberta – May 19, 2010) – In a night filled with excitement, celebration, mystery, and spectacular entertainment, upwards of 2000 hospitality hopefuls and their guests came together at the Southern Alberta Jubilee Auditorium for the 48th Annual Calgary White Hat Awards – the annual tribute to the 'best of the best' in the tourism and hospitality industries.

"Calgary's brand of hospitality is legendary and nothing represents Calgary hospitality like the white cowboy hat," said Randy Williams, President & CEO of Tourism Calgary, presenter of the awards gala along with industry partners, and platinum sponsor Sysco. "Hospitality is all about customer care, quality of service, and creating memorable experiences – and it's the people – the front-line workers, behind-the-scenes employees, and visionary leaders that make it all happen. This is a very big – and important – industry in Calgary, generating \$1.1 billion in economic impact and roughly one in ten jobs."

Through the course of the evening, four honorary awards were presented, along with individual awards in 24 categories. WestJet employees took home awards in five separate categories.

The high-energy awards gala was hosted by Gord Gillies, Global Television news anchor, with entertainment provided by dancer Manuel Correia, DJ ZACK! Hewitt, and aerialist Annie Dugan of Firefly Theatre.

In addition to the traditional Smithbilt white cowboy hat, winners receive a trophy, commemorative plaque and a sterling silver pin.

Honorary Awards Winners

White Hat of the Year Award – Heritage Park Historical Village

- Recognized for creating a sensational year-round attraction with the 'Heritage Town Square' \$65 million expansion that includes the world-class Gasoline Alley Museum, Haskayne Mercantile Block, and the 1893 Canadian Pacific Railway. In a challenging economic year, the Park's expansion saw substantial increases in visitors, and created a new community legacy for Calgarians to enjoy.

Mayor's White Hat Award – Carmela Russo

- Recognized for her high standards, commitment to service quality, and her passion for her work, her customers, and her company over many at Calgary Co-op, and her love of and extraordinary promotion of Calgary. Carmela volunteers for Big Brothers & Sisters, is creating a host program for Italian students, and promotes Calgary in Italian, French and Spanish while travelling abroad!

Media Recognition Award – Nirmala Naidoo, News Anchor, CBC Television

- Recognized for her personal and professional commitment to the community, including her work with organizations such as Wings of Hope, the Calgary Immigrant Women's Association, Juvenile Diabetes Association, and the Aventa Addictions Treatment Foundation for Women. Nirmala has twice been named one of Calgary Magazine's Top 40 Under 40.

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Doug Johnson Service Award – Hans Jansen

Recognized for more than 35 years of service with a smile, passion and dedication to his company and to his city, Hans is one of Calgary's finest working ambassadors. He has over 130 letters of commendation on his file, including one from a former Prime Minister. A senior event manager with the Marriott Hotel, he's played a key role in hosting some of the city's most prestigious events from the G8 Summit to the JUNOs and the Grey Cup.

Individual Category Winners

Sophia Victor, Glenmore Inn & Convention Centre
Best Server: Fast Food/Baristas/In-Room Dining

Chrissy Begus, Calgary Zoo, Botanical Garden & Prehistoric Park
Best Visitor Service: Tour Guide/Interpretive/Step-on Guides

Steve Louwe, Sheraton Suites Calgary Eau Claire
Best Server: Restaurant (Downtown)

Kristie Davies, Calgary Co-op
Best Customer Service: Retail Services

Diann Vergeer, Greenwood Inn & Suites Calgary
Best Customer Service: Information Desk/Attractions

Danielle Radke, Calgary Flames Hockey Club
Best Server: Banquets/Catering

Andrew Hobin, Sheraton Suites Calgary Eau Claire
Best Guest Services: Valet/Doorperson

Laura Mitchell, WestJet
Best Customer Service: Airlines/In-Flight Services

Thomas Nicholson, Deerfoot Inn & Casino
Best Customer Service: Casino/Gaming Services

Andréa Paquin, Ça Va Bien Hair Studio & Day Spa
Best Customer Service: Spa/Esthetics/Wellness Providers

Dan Hawkins, WestJet
Best Operational Support

Nicole Netelenbos, Cactus Club Café
Best Server: Restaurant (South)

Sakina Sawari, Calgary Marriott Hotel
Best Cleaning Services

Ross Debnam, WestJet
Best Driver: Ground Transportation

Douglas Johnson, Moxie's Classic Grill
Best Culinary Services

Filomena Spaziani-Nicoletti, WestJet
Best Guest Service: Reservations/Travel Agents

Wilfred Gendron, Fort Calgary
Best Bartender/Wine Steward

Stacey Mitchell, The Fairmont Palliser
Best Administration Services

Frankie Lau, The Westin Calgary
Best Guest Service: Accommodation/Front Desk Agent

Enzo Ianniello, Heritage Park Historical Village
Best Server: Fine Dining

Colleen Chouinard, Calgary Flames Hockey Club
Best Host(ess)/Maitre'd

Rachel Taylor, The Westin Calgary
Best Concierge/Bellperson

Lyne Tieu, Coast Plaza Hotel & Conference Centre
Best Server: Restaurant (North)

Janet Norman, WestJet
Best Customer Service: Transportation/Counter Check-In Agent

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About Tourism Calgary

Tourism Calgary is Calgary's Destination Marketing Organization. Representing the tourism industry and almost 500 members, Tourism Calgary brings Calgary to the world and the world to Calgary for meetings and conventions, leisure travel, and sport, culture and major events. Tourism in Calgary annually contributes over \$1 billion in economic impact to the local community.