

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Friday, September 30, 2005

**CONTACT:**

Bridget Perry  
(617) 954-2276

**MASSMUTUAL CENTER OPENS FOR BUSINESS**

*New Facility Puts Pioneer Valley on the Convention and Meetings Map*

*Springfield, Mass.* - Governor Mitt Romney and Mayor Charles V. Ryan, joined by Massachusetts Convention Center Authority (MCCA) Executive Director James E. Rooney, today opened the new MassMutual Center for business, securing the Pioneer Valley's place in the convention marketplace and bringing the city of Springfield a first class arena and entertainment venue.

"The MassMutual Center will be a magnet within downtown Springfield, attracting new visitors and delivering a shot in the arm to the local economy," said Governor Romney. "This is the beginning of the renaissance of Springfield."

The \$71 million construction project expanded and improved the former Springfield Civic Center. The new facility includes approximately 147,000 square feet of new building for convention, exhibition and meeting space and approximately 215,000 square feet of renovated space. The facility now includes a 40,000 square foot exhibit hall, 9,000 square feet of meeting space, a 15,000 square foot ballroom, pre-function space, a kitchen, and corporate hospitality and support spaces.

"The MassMutual Center's completion will allow Springfield to take its place in the convention and meetings industry and now that we have this first-rate facility, we need to do everything we can to make it a success in a very competitive market," said James E. Rooney, Executive Director of the MCCA, which owns the facility. "With our new management team in place, we are already laying the groundwork to ensure that the Pioneer Valley gets its share of the convention industry as well as bigger, high profile entertainment events."

As part of the project, the facilities for the AHL Springfield Falcons were completely upgraded and the former ice system was replaced with a state-of-the-art system. Spectator seating, concessions, home and visiting team locker rooms, administration and support spaces were all replaced with new facilities. Additionally, club seating and a new, modern 28ft. long by 17 and ½ ft. high center-hung scoreboard have been added, making the 6,677 seat-arena competitive with professional sports facilities across the country.

“This is a great day for Springfield. The new MassMutual Center will be the foundation of all our economic development efforts and accomplishments as we move forward. Many people have worked tirelessly to make this day happen,” said Mayor Ryan. “A special word of thanks goes to the state government and MassMutual for providing the funds to construct this magnificent center.”

The Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company (MassMutual) signed a \$5 million naming rights agreement with the MCCA and those funds were directed toward the renovation.

“MassMutual has called Springfield home for the past 154 years, so it is fitting that we add our name to this landmark in our city,” said Elaine A. Sarsynski, Chief Administrative Officer, Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company (MassMutual). “We are proud of our strong support for the MassMutual Center, since it will bring tremendous economic and cultural benefits to the Springfield region for many years to come.”

Construction on the building took just over two years. It was designed by Sasaki of Watertown, MA in a joint venture with TVS, which is based in Atlanta. The general contractor on the project, which oversaw 32 subcontractors and 1200 trades people, was Fontaine Bros. of Springfield, MA. The owner’s representative on the project was a joint venture of Gilbane Building Co. of Providence, RI and DMJM Harris of Boston.

In August, the MCCA announced that it would contract with Global Spectrum of Philadelphia to manage the day-to-day operations of the MassMutual Center. Global Spectrum is the fastest growing firm in the public assembly facility management field with more than 45 facilities throughout the United States and Canada. Among the more than 45 facilities Global Spectrum operates are two of the country’s most active arenas - the Wachovia Center in Philadelphia and the Rose Garden in Portland, OR. The company also operates several convention centers, including the Greater Richmond Convention Center in Richmond, VA., and the recently opened St. Charles Convention Center in St. Charles, MO. The new general manager started in September.

In addition to this season’s 42 Falcons hockey games, the MMC currently has 31 definite events, ten contracts pending and 79 tentative events scheduled through 2010. Among those events are Daughters of the Nile in June 2007, the Boston Pops in December 2005 and the Western New England Bridal Show in November 2005 and the Northeast Campground Association convention in March 2006 and March 2007.

###