

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, June 10, 2004

CONTACT:

Bridget Perry
(617) 954-2276

BOSTON CONVENTION & EXHIBITION CENTER OPENS FOR BUSINESS
1.7 Million Square Foot Facility Puts Boston in Top Tier of Convention Cities

Governor Mitt Romney and Mayor Thomas M. Menino, joined by convention center authority officials, today opened the new Boston Convention & Exhibition Center (BCEC) for business, catapulting Boston into the top tier of convention cities and transforming the convention and meetings industry in the Northeast.

At 1.7 million square feet, the BCEC is New England's largest enclosed man-made space and is big enough to hold 16 NFL games consecutively. The facility fills a critical need in Boston, which has been unable to compete for large trade shows and conventions due to a lack of space.

"The BCEC is head and shoulders over other convention centers around the country and I believe that Boston will have a real advantage over other cities with this new facility," said Governor Romney. "Thanks to all those who worked on it - the construction workers, the designers, the engineers, the architects. Thanks also must go to the taxpayers statewide who contributed the resources to make this project a reality. They deserve the majority of thanks today."

"This project has been one of my top priorities and I am thrilled that it is open for business," said Mayor Menino. "Boston has always been one of the top visitor destinations in the country but we did not have the space to accommodate big conventions and trade shows. This building makes it possible to compete with cities across the country. It has the added bonus of being the flagship of the South Boston Waterfront development and with its opening, I know we will begin to see the 24-hour mixed use development that I have always envisioned for this area."

The BCEC was designed with expertise and input from a variety of worldwide convention, meeting and conference planners. It has 516,000 square feet of contiguous exhibit space - the 9th largest exhibit hall in the country - and 160,000 square feet of meeting space in 82 meeting rooms. The ballroom, which overlooks Boston Harbor, has 40,000 square feet of space, making it the largest ballroom in New England. All areas in the new convention center have the latest technology, including WiFi, state-of-the-art audio-visual capabilities, and interruption-free cellular phone coverage.

"There is no doubt that the BCEC will be a resounding success for Boston. Twenty years from today, the citizens of Boston will look back on the development of the BCEC as a milestone in the city's continued growth and prosperity," said Gloria C. Larson, Chairman of the MCCA. "We knew when we set out to build this facility that in order for

it to attract the types of shows we wanted, it had to be innovative, unique and user-friendly. The building you see today is the result of true collaboration by the city, the state, our project team and advisory groups. It is truly the most exciting convention center in the country.”

“The BCEC’s completion will allow Boston to take its place among a handful of elite venues that can attract premier large-scale events that were previously beyond our capacity,” said James E. Rooney, MCCA Executive Director. “Operating in a very challenging economic environment, we have already attracted nearly 50 events and with the building’s opening and a renewed focus on sales and marketing and customer service, I know that Boston will be one of the most successful convention centers in the country. More than 20 years ago, San Francisco took an area not unlike the South Boston waterfront and transformed it into one of the most successful convention destinations in the country. There is no doubt that Boston is headed in that direction.”

Construction on the building took just over four years and the project has been hailed as one of the best-run public works projects in the country. It was designed by world-renowned New York architect Rafael Viñoly in a joint venture with HNTB Corporation, which is based in Kansas City. The construction manager on the project, which oversaw 178 subcontractors and 30 trade unions, was a joint venture of Clark Construction from Bethesda, MD, Hunt Construction Corporation of Indianapolis and William A. Berry & Son, Inc. of Danvers, MA. The owner’s representative on the project was Tishman Construction Corporation of New York.

The BCEC currently has 48 definite events, ten contracts pending and 88 tentative events scheduled through 2010. Among those events are MacWorld CreativePro 2004, the 2004 Democratic National Committee’s Media Opening Party, Microsoft TechEd 2006 and Biotechnology Technology Industry Organization 2007.

The BCEC will be open to the public on Sunday, June 13th from noon to 5:00 p.m. The Open House will feature tours of the facility, live arts performances and entertainment, food and refreshments and interactive activities and games for kids.

###