



For Immediate Release

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**DALLAS CITY COUNCIL APPROVES CONVENTION CENTER HOTEL OPERATING AGREEMENTS
WITH DEVELOPER MATTHEWS SOUTHWEST AND OPERATOR OMNI HOTELS**

DALLAS (Feb.18, 2009) – With an overwhelming show of support, the Dallas City Council today took two major steps toward building a convention center hotel in downtown Dallas by approving operating agreements with developer Matthews Southwest and hotel operator Omni Hotels.

“Today’s vote underscores the importance of the hospitality industry to the economic health of our city,” said Phillip Jones, President/CEO of the Dallas Convention & Visitors Bureau. “We are already receiving calls from convention trade publications that have been monitoring the planned hotel’s progress. In addition, our sales staff is spreading the good news to groups who booked conventions in future years contingent on the hotel announcement, as well as to the list of potential clients who will not consider Dallas without an attached hotel.

“Our colleagues in Fort Worth, who helped open an Omni convention center hotel just a month ago, booked 258,000 future room nights in 2008, double the 129,000 room nights booked in 2007. They attribute the increase in large part to their new convention center hotel, also operated by Omni,” said Jones. “Last year in Dallas, we booked a record-breaking 1.2 million future room nights, and 195,000 of those were contingent on the hotel announcement. We’re informing them now, and expect an increase in new business that will benefit all area hotels over the coming years.”

With the operator and developer agreements in place, the City of Dallas can undertake the process of selling revenue bonds and finalize construction plans for the hotel, which is slated for completion in 2011.

The convention center hotel will be built adjacent to the existing Dallas Convention Center at the southwest corner of Young St. and Lamar Blvd. In May, the Dallas City Council authorized purchasing the 8.34-acre tract and issued \$42 million worth of certificates of obligation to fund the purchase. Plans are to build a four-star convention headquarters hotel that offers 1,000 guestrooms; food and beverage facilities including restaurants, lounges and coffee kiosks; and 100,000 square feet of meeting space including grand and junior ballrooms. As part of its agreement, Matthews Southwest has committed to bring restaurants, entertainment and other venues to the surrounding area.

Don Freeman, chair-elect of the Dallas CVB and chairman of Freeman, a full-service company that has handled conventions, corporate events and exhibits for clients nationwide for more than 80 years, said, “Freeman regularly works with the largest organizations on their conventions and tradeshow throughout the country. In each case, Dallas’ lack of an attached convention center hotel has been a major drawback for them when selecting destinations for future years. These are ‘citywide’ conventions that fill multiple

hotels throughout the city and they have been choosing other locations for years. In my opinion, building an attached convention center hotel will put Dallas on the map again for many groups, and that's good news for our industry and for our city's bottom line."

Matthews Southwest is a full-service private real estate development company headquartered in Lewisville, Texas with additional offices in Dallas, Texas; Calgary, Alberta and Mississauga, Ontario. Since 1988, this dynamic and growth-driven company has acquired, built and managed the development of office, mixed-use retail, residential, hotel and industrial developments in the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

MSW currently is developing the Bow in Calgary, Alberta designed by Foster+Partners. The new headquarters for EnCana Corporation, North America's largest independent oil and gas company, the Bow is the largest single tenant office project in North America. Upon completion the project will exceed 2.0 million square feet of office and commercial development.

In Dallas, MSW is developing South Side, a 32-acre project just south of the Convention Center. Anchored by South Side on Lamar, a 1.2 million square foot mixed use development with over 1,000 residents, the area is being master planned by Foster+Partners.

Privately owned and headquartered in Irving, Tex., Omni Hotels operates 39 first-class and luxury hotels and resorts throughout the United States, Canada and Mexico. They also operate national sales offices in New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Dallas/Fort Worth, Denver, Washington, D.C. and Atlanta and convention center hotels in Chicago; Washington, D.C.; Atlanta; Indianapolis; Chicago and other cities.

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