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Washington State's First Conference Center, Talaris, Turns 40 in Style

40th Anniversary Event Highlights Creative Meetings and Event Planning

SEATTLE – May 31, 2007 – Talaris Conference Center, Washington state's first conference center, celebrated its 40th anniversary on Wednesday, May 23, with a colorful, '60s-style gala intended to educate meeting planners on how to host creative meetings and events.

More than 100 professionals gathered in Talaris' Pacific Dining room to celebrate 40 years of success. Sixties tunes played throughout the room as guests dined on sixties-themed hors d'oeuvres served by Talaris staff members in tie-dyed T-shirts. Appetizers prepared by Talaris Executive Chef William Taylor included Ho Chi Minh Chicken Teriyaki and Cold War Fish Sticks.

"Talaris turning 40 is a huge landmark for this unique meetings-and-events facility," said Greg Werry, general manager of Talaris Conference Center. "This event was a great way to celebrate our anniversary with our clients. We wanted to give them something they could take away, not just prizes from our partners, but a real case study in creative meeting and event planning."

Tarena Ruehle, sales manager for Talaris Conference Center, conceived the idea of hosting a '60s event to showcase the creativity of the Talaris team. By transforming a standard networking luncheon into a smashing '60s gala, she and the Talaris team showed guests that business meetings can be both productive and fun.

"We are always willing to go the extra mile to create unforgettable experiences for all our guests," said Ruehle.

At the event, Mindy Bomonti of Viva Connections delivered a keynote presentation that highlighted tips to successful meeting planning. The former director of sponsorship for the World Trade Center Seattle, Bomonti gave event planners money-saving ideas, venue suggestions and creative tips on how to keep event attendees happy and entertained.

"It never hurts to get a refresher course in planning unique and creative events," said Bomonti. "In this business, you must look at what others have done to ensure your own success."

“Meeting planners are always looking for new and creative ways to spice up their events,” said Shelley Tomberg, director of marketing for Seattle-based Columbia Hospitality, which manages and operates Talaris. “I thought it was a great idea to show them what could be done.”

EDITOR’S NOTE: High resolution photos available on request.

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About Talaris Conference Center

Talaris Conference Center, set on 18 wooded acres just minutes from downtown Seattle, features more than 5,000 square feet of meeting space. Talaris boasts 31 well-appointed overnight guestrooms, excellent full-service catering and ample complimentary parking available on site.

Talaris Conference Center is owned by 4000 LLC and managed by Seattle-based Columbia Hospitality, Inc. More information is at www.TalarisConferenceCenter.com.

About Columbia Hospitality, Inc.

Columbia Hospitality, Inc., a leading hospitality management and consulting firm, was founded in 1995 by John Oppenheimer. Columbia Hospitality creates exceptional experiences for guests and employees while achieving phenomenal results for its property owners. Specializing in luxury hotel and resort management, Columbia Hospitality expertly transforms each vision for a unique property into an enduring and profitable business. Columbia Hospitality’s premier properties include boutique hotels and secluded resorts such as the following:

- Kenwood Inn and Spa in Sonoma’s Valley of the Moon in Kenwood, Calif.
- The Inn at Langley on Whidbey Island, Wash.
- Friday Harbor House on San Juan Island, Wash.
- Lakedale Resort at Three Lakes, also on San Juan Island
- Darnell’s Lake Resort on Lake Chelan, Wash.
- The Resort at Deer Harbor, also on Lake Chelan
- Holmes Harbor Golf & Beach Club on Whidbey Island, Wash.

The company also manages a portfolio of conference centers and event venues in Washington state, including the following:

- Bell Harbor International Conference Center in Seattle
- Kitsap Conference Center at Bremerton Harborside in Bremerton, Wash.
- Talaris Conference Center in Seattle
- Washington Mutual Leadership Center at Cedarbrook in SeaTac, Wash.

Columbia Hospitality represents unique venues as well, including:

- World Trade Center Seattle
- Holmes Harbor Golf & Beach Club on Whidbey Island, Wash.
- WaMu Center in Seattle

- Odyssey Maritime Discovery Center in Seattle
- Pier 30 Event Center in Seattle

The company additionally supports an active consulting division that has worked on more than 80 hospitality development projects in five Western U.S. states and Canada. More information is at www.columbiahospitality.com.