

Media Contact:

Marc Stiles or Michael Graubard, Nyhus Communications LLC, for Bell Harbor, (206) 323-3733, marc@nyhus.com or michael@nyhus.com.

Bell Harbor International Conference Center Celebrates 10 Years of Pioneering Success

SEATTLE – Aug. 7, 2006 – Bell Harbor International Conference Center, one of the West Coast’s premier waterfront meetings-and-events venues, is celebrating its 10th anniversary.

Nearly 1 million visitors, including former President Clinton, former Secretary of State Madeline Albright, John F. Kennedy Jr., Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen, Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer and Amazon.com founder and CEO Jeff Bezos, have attended meetings at the Port of Seattle’s high-tech center located on Pier 66 at 2211 Alaskan Way.

Having hosted guests from 90 countries, Bell Harbor is a truly international destination. Trade and other groups are attracted by Bell Harbor’s state-of-the-art communications systems and its Bay Auditorium, which is modeled after the United Nations. Bell Harbor is one of only a few conference centers in the country to offer simultaneous interpretation booths and equipment.

In 1996, 200 Olympic gymnastic judges from around the world gathered for a training meeting at Bell Harbor. The next year, Sens. Slade Gorton and Patty Murray hosted an International Trade and Environment Forum at Bell Harbor.

Last month, Bell Harbor hosted a group of 4,000 people from Washington state’s largest software technology company. Attendees from 87 countries strolled along the large pier apron normally used for cruise ships. Food stations lined the pier, and two bands performed at either end of the dock.

In addition to its international role, the 100,000-square-foot Bell Harbor has helped spur redevelopment of Seattle’s waterfront. The center, located on what was once the Port of Seattle’s headquarters, has helped attract hundreds of millions of dollars in private investment to the neighborhood that is Seattle’s front door to the world.

Twenty years ago, Port officials embarked on a revitalization project to encourage trade as well as community and private investment on the central waterfront. Eventually, Bell Harbor International Conference Center was developed as the centerpiece of the plan. The Port retained Columbia Hospitality to manage and operate the facility. Adopting a long-range outlook, the Port did not expect an immediate return on its investment. Yet Bell Harbor made money during its first full year of operation and every year since.

“Bell Harbor has surpassed all original projections for revenue and economic impact,” says Port of Seattle CEO Mic Dinsmore. “We are proud to have been part of such an important waterfront redevelopment for Seattle, and we are confident Pier 66 and Bell Harbor will continue to be a fabulous venue for guests from all over the world.”

Bell Harbor offers views of the Olympic Mountains, the city skyline and Mount Rainier. Attracted by these views and Bell Harbor’s excellent guest services, many couples have their weddings at Bell Harbor. In addition, the venue has hosted unique parties. In 1997, a client had five truckloads of sand brought to Bell Harbor to create a beach for his wife’s birthday bash. The party included Beach Boy Mike Love singing “California Girls” to the guest of honor.

One of Bell Harbor’s most memorable events occurred on Aug. 1, 1996, when a bomb scare prompted an evacuation during a Microsoft conference in which Bill Gates was to deliver an address. The staff of Bell Harbor responded quickly and arranged for Gates to make his speech aboard the Navy’s USS Constellation, which was docked in the harbor. Gates later thanked the carrier’s crew for its hospitality by providing the ship with a software library.

“Bell Harbor has played a huge role in Seattle’s rich history,” says John Oppenheimer, president and CEO of Columbia Hospitality. “It is exciting to reflect on how much Bell Harbor has done to put Seattle on the world map and how important the center has been in the revitalization of the city’s magnificent waterfront.”

Bell Harbor is a pioneer among conference centers. It is among the most technologically advanced centers on the West Coast and is known for its global appeal. Bell Harbor has become a model for the developers of conference centers across the nation.

Bell Harbor can host events for groups of up to 6,000 people. In 2005, Bell Harbor hosted more than 500 groups and 97,205 people. More information about Bell Harbor is available at www.bellharbor.org.

Columbia Hospitality and the Port will host an anniversary party at Bell Harbor on Aug. 9. The event is not open to the public but members of the media are invited. Members of the media should RSVP by contacting Columbia Hospitality Vice President Shelley Tomberg at (206) 239-1800, or shelley@columbiahospitality.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 in Washington state, including:

- The Inn at Langley on Whidbey Island
- Friday Harbor House on San Juan Island
- Lakedale Resort at Three Lakes, also on San Juan Island
- Darnell's Lake Resort on Lake Chelan

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

- Bell Harbor International Conference Center in Seattle
- World Trade Center Seattle
- Odyssey Maritime Discovery Center in Seattle (catering and events only)
- Pier 30 Event Center in Seattle
- Talaris Conference Center in Seattle
- Kitsap Conference Center at Bremerton Harborside in Bremerton
- Washington Mutual Leadership Center at Cedarbrook in SeaTac

The company additionally supports an active consulting division that has worked on more than 50 hospitality development projects in five western U.S. states and Canada. Columbia Hospitality was named to the *Puget Sound Business Journal*'s list of the "Fastest Growing Private Companies in Washington State" three times in the past six years.