



## **COLUMBIA HOSPITALITY ANNOUNCES JOHN CHRISTISON AS VICE PRESIDENT**

*Industry veteran and former president and CEO of the Washington State Convention & Trade Center joins forces with Seattle-based hospitality management and consulting firm*



**SEATTLE (November 15, 2011)** – Seattle-based hospitality management and consulting firm, Columbia Hospitality, Inc. announces that John Christison has joined the company in the role of vice president. Christison, the former president and CEO of the Washington State Convention & Trade Center (WSCTC), will focus on consulting projects, as well as the expansion of Columbia’s conference center management and operations.

Christison announced his retirement from the WSCTC in October 2011, following a 21-year tenure with the state-owned facility. Additionally, Christison has acted as the principal and managing member of a successful consulting company, Buckley-Christison International. He will bring the company’s clients with him to Columbia Hospitality.

“We have considered John a longtime leader, peer and friend in the industry and have the utmost respect for his distinguished career and many accomplishments,” said Columbia Hospitality CEO John Oppenheimer. “It is tremendously exciting that he will be sharing his expertise and talents with us, and we look forward to expanding our efforts in consulting and conference center operations.”

A well-known leader in the industry, John has served as president of the International Association of Assembly Managers (IAAM), is past chairman of the Asia Pacific Exhibition and Convention Council (APECC), and is the past and founding chairman of the World Council for Venue

Management (WCVM), an umbrella organization representing nine worldwide professional associations in the Public Assembly Facility Management Industry. He has also served as an adjunct professor and lecturer for Washington State University's Hotel and Restaurant Program, served as the chairman of the Board of Governors for the Cornell University Public Assembly Management Symposium, and is a frequent lecturer and trainer in the field of facility management, marketing and service delivery.

"I was attracted to the environment and corporate culture of Columbia Hospitality because it fosters creativity and collaboration. I am thoroughly impressed with the company's focus on quality and customers – values that are both very important to me," said Christison. "Columbia is the ideal place to expand my consulting practice and hopefully provide experience garnered through my many years in the industry."

Christison will join the team at Columbia Hospitality's Seattle headquarters on Wednesday, November 16, 2011. For more information on Columbia Hospitality, please visit

[www.columbiahospitality.com](http://www.columbiahospitality.com).

#### **About Columbia Hospitality**

Columbia Hospitality, Inc. (Columbia), a Seattle-based hospitality management and consulting firm specializing in luxury hotel and resort management, was founded in 1995 by John Oppenheimer. Columbia's growing portfolio of premier properties, including boutique hotels, award-winning resorts, event venues and conference centers, offer world-class service in exquisite settings. Columbia creates memorable experiences for guests and team members while achieving phenomenal results for owners. The company's continued success has led to an international expansion of the consulting division and more than 100 hospitality development projects worldwide. For more information about Columbia and a full list of properties visit [www.columbiahospitality.com](http://www.columbiahospitality.com).

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