



## **TWO PREMIER COLUMBIA HOSPITALITY VENUES “GO GREEN” IN PARTNERSHIP WITH WASHINGTON LODGING ASSOCIATION**

*Iconic Pacific Northwest retreat and Seattle conference center announce findings from Greening Washington’s Lodging Industry state-wide pilot program*

**SEATTLE (March 2, 2011)** – Two Columbia Hospitality managed properties — Salish Lodge & Spa and Bell Harbor International Conference Center — announce the results of each property’s participation in the Greening Washington’s Lodging Industry pilot program. Spearheaded by the Washington Lodging Association (WLA) and Cascadia Consulting Group, Inc. (Cascadia), results of the program are intended to provide a roadmap to industry peers, guests and the public for adopting positive environmental practices throughout Washington state.

The Greening Washington’s Lodging Industry program was funded by a \$53,000 Public Participation Grant from the Washington State Department of Ecology, one of only 13 such grants funded in 2009. In January 2010, WLA and Cascadia selected Columbia Hospitality and the Spokane-based Best Western Peppertree Inns of Washington for the pilot program, in which participating properties from each of the hospitality firms received complimentary consulting assistance to implement new environmental practices and then measure and market their successes.

“Columbia Hospitality exemplified a strong commitment to our Greening Program from day one,” said Jan Simon, president and CEO of the Washington Lodging Association. “They’ve demonstrated creativity, a willingness to embrace new ideas and practices, and true dedication to serving as a model environmental steward. We’re proud to partner with true innovators in the hospitality industry.”

Highlights of the results from Salish Lodge & Spa’s participation in the program include:

- A nearly \$6,100 and 75,000 kilowatt hour (kWh) annual savings from switching to energy efficient LED and fluorescent lighting
- An average savings of more than \$450 per month in waste costs from implementation of an increased recycling program
- An effort to grow a green culture through team member engagement with the Salish Green Team, which meets regularly to discuss new greening opportunities and progress

A few of the findings from Bell Harbor International Conference Center’s participation in the program include:

- A \$15,000 savings from June-December 2010 by offering water stations to guests rather than bottled water, eliminating waste from over 40,000 bottles in six months
- A 70 percent recycling rate of total waste, exceeding the City of Seattle's 60 percent recycling goal for 2012
- 65 tons of organic material have been diverted from landfills toward food donations and composting efforts since March 2010

Another Columbia Hospitality property, Talaris Conference Center, is included in the pilot program. Since enhanced green practices were implemented in early 2011, increased efforts to encourage recycling in the venue's overnight accommodations has resulted in the collection of approximately 200 bins of recyclable material per month. A newly formed Talaris Green Team meets regularly to discuss new greening opportunities and progress, and encourages team member participation and awareness.

"Being chosen to participate in this hugely important and exciting program has been an honor for our company," said Lenny Zilz, vice president of operations for Columbia Hospitality. "Not only have we made large strides in our own greening practices and procedures across the board, but we are thrilled to be in a position to share our findings with our industry peers to promote continued environmental awareness and stewardship."

These findings will be presented to members of the Washington Lodging Association at a private luncheon hosted by the WLA Board of Directors on Monday, March 7, 2011 at Bell Harbor International Conference Center on Pier 66 in downtown Seattle. The event is not open to the public but case studies of the project will be released in spring 2011, in order to share results and lessons learned with industry peers, guests and the public.

#### **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).

#### **About WLA**

The Washington Lodging Association (WLA), incorporated in 1920, is the state's only non-profit trade and professional association dedicated to the interests and improvements of Washington's lodging industry. From its offices in Seattle, WLA serves 500 lodging members, representing 40,000 rooms from across Washington State and more than 125 allied members that provide the industry with the products and services it needs to run effective operations. Among the benefits WLA offers members are legislative and regulatory representation, an Internet presence to travel consumers, discounts on

services and supplies, legal advice and assistance and an Association-sponsored health and dental insurance program.

While working toward a favorable legislative and regulatory environment for the lodging and tourism industry in Washington State, WLA develops and delivers programs, resources and benefits to its members. The Association is actively engaged in promoting Washington as a tourism destination as the publisher of the *Washington State Visitors' Guide*, the premier source for travel and accommodations information for more than a decade. WLA sponsors a retro program that helps members decrease on-the-job accidents and injuries, and presents an annual convention and trade show that, along with ongoing workplace safety programs, provides the industry with cutting-edge information and education.

#### **About Cascadia Consulting Group**

Since 1993, Cascadia has served hundreds of public and private sector clients across the U.S, including corporate clients such as Starbucks Coffee Company, Kimpton Hotels, and Adobe Systems, and some of the country's leading cities such as Seattle, Los Angeles, New York, and San Francisco. Cascadia's expertise spans the fields of waste reduction and recycling; climate, energy and sustainability; and water and natural resources. Cascadia's mission is to make a positive difference for the environment and for its clients.

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#### **MEDIA CONTACTS:**

Hamilton McCulloh / Erin Petrie

GreenRubino

206-447-4747

[hamiltonm@greenrubino.com](mailto:hamiltonm@greenrubino.com) / [erinp@greenrubino.com](mailto:erinp@greenrubino.com)