



For Immediate Release

City of Dallas Breaks Ground on Omni Dallas Convention Center Hotel

September 15, 2009 (DALLAS) – In a ceremony featuring Mayor Tom Leppert, the Dallas City Council and a broad spectrum of civic and community leaders, the City of Dallas broke ground today on the 23-story Omni Dallas Convention Center Hotel, endorsed by voters in May and backed by the sale of nearly \$500 million in revenue bonds in August. When the property opens in early 2012, Dallas will boast a luxurious, 1,000-room hotel with state-of-the-art features and convenient skybridge access into one of the nation’s largest convention centers.

During opening remarks and the groundbreaking ceremony that followed, Mayor Leppert was flanked by the Dallas City Council, city officials and project supporters from the Dallas Convention & Visitors Bureau; Downtown Dallas; Dallas Regional Chamber; Asian, Black, GLBT, Hispanic and Oak Cliff Chambers of Commerce and hospitality industry, as well as other community leaders who supported the year long effort to move forward with the hotel.

“This has never been about a building,” said Mayor Tom Leppert. “It has always been about positioning Dallas for the success and about keeping Dallas competitive. This hotel is a symbol of our city’s confidence and willingness to invest in its future.”

Owned by the City of Dallas, the hotel is located on eight acres in the heart of the nation’s eighth-largest city, which is now experiencing a renaissance from more than \$14 billion in new development underway in and near the urban core. Within its six-acre design are a signature restaurant, lounges, retail, a high-end Mokara Spa, pool deck and other features. The remaining two acres of the site are slated for dining, retail and other venues that will enhance entertainment opportunities for those who visit, work or live downtown.

Dallas City Manager Mary Suhm recognized the many years of work it took to get to this point. “For more than two decades, City Councils and our staff have known this is a critical step in keeping the Dallas Convention Center competitive and boosting our convention and hospitality industry,” said Ms. Suhm. “We are grateful for the many people who kept this dream alive. It just shows that vision and perseverance do pay off.”

Matthews Southwest President Jack Matthews, whose firm was selected as convention hotel developer, has developed commercial, industrial and residential projects throughout North America including the South Side on Lamar residential complex in Dallas. “We see the hotel as being a great economic engine for additional development around the convention center,” said Matthews. “It is our goal to continue to build a strong connection between downtown and South Dallas, and the hotel will be a true catalyst for helping achieve that vision.”

In addition to connecting 1,000 rooms via skybridge to the Dallas Convention Center, the new hotel will offer a minimum of 80,000 square feet of flexible meeting space, with a 33,500 square-foot Senior Ballroom; a 16,500 square-foot Junior Ballroom, 10,000 square feet of usable outdoor area and Internet access throughout the entire property.

Speaking on behalf of Omni Hotels, which operates 45 luxury hotels and resorts in North America and was selected by the city as the convention hotel operator, President Mike Deitemeyer said, “The Omni Hotel and the area that surrounds it will ultimately showcase Dallas’ burgeoning arts, our ever-developing culinary scene and our amazing sports and shopping heritage -- in a rich, diverse and dynamic manner. Our plans to make sure we are set up for success have already begun and there is tremendous interest in the project from customers already.”

The Dallas Convention & Visitors Bureau states that, to date, it has received commitments for meetings totaling 400,000 definite room nights for groups that have committed to Dallas for future years using the Omni Dallas Convention Center Hotel. Additional commitments are expected in the coming months now that the hotel’s construction has begun. These large citywide conventions will utilize the new Omni Dallas Convention Center Hotel as well as multiple hotels throughout the city.