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## **NEW STUDY CONFIRMS MEETING/CONVENTION BUSINESS WORTH MILLIONS TO BRANSON ECONOMY**

**Branson, Mo. – (February 9, 2011)** – Meeting and convention attendees contribute nearly \$16 million annually to the Branson/Tri-Lakes area economy, according to a survey released today by the Branson Convention Center. That figure, according to the survey is equal to or larger than the amount spent by veterans, reunion groups, travelers on church trips, those with school groups, and even larger than the total amount spent by professional tour groups.

“This survey confirms that by building the Branson Convention Center, Branson has steadily built a reputation as a first-class meeting and convention destination,” said Bill Derbins, General Manager, Branson Convention Center. “The economic by-product of augmenting Branson’s popularity as a seasonal tourist destination, is that we’ve created a year-round economy by booking events during the winter months.”

Even though the Branson Convention Center opened just three and a half years ago, convention and meeting groups now represent the third-largest segment of group visitors to the area.

Other highlights of the survey, commissioned by the Branson Convention Center and conducted by Jerry Henry & Associates of Springfield, MO, include:

- Convention attendees spend 24% more than the average Branson traveler, as they shop, attend live shows, or visit Silver Dollar City theme park and other attractions
- 25% of convention attendee spending is done outside of the immediate downtown area
- More than half of Branson’s convention attendees traveled more than 300 miles

- Convention attendees are more likely to be visiting Branson for the first time
- Nearly 1/3 of convention attendees have children in their party—helping to boost Branson’s reputation as a “family-friendly” meeting destination

Despite a difficult economy, the Branson/Tri-Lakes area remains an attractive meeting and convention destination and is considered a bargain compared to other convention cities. In 2010, the Branson Convention Center booked 261 event days, up 10 days from 2009. And from all indications, 2011 looks to be a great year as well, with more than 200 event days already booked.

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