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Photo Attached

ESPA Achieves Highest Annual Conference Attendance in the Last Four Years

New President Robert Desautels, Visit Indy, Takes Reign

Princeton Junction, NJ – February 7, 2013 – The Event Service Professionals Association (ESPA), an organization dedicated to providing education and networking to service managers working in hotels, convention centers, convention and visitors bureaus and other venues, kicked-off its 25th anniversary year by achieving the highest attendance for its Annual Conference in the last four years. Held in Orlando, Florida earlier this month, the Conference also marked the beginning of Robert Desautels, CMP, Senior Manager of Convention Services at Visit Indy's, reign as ESPA's new president.

Attendance from ESPA's 2013 Conference reached 268, showing a return to pre-Recession attendance trends. Themed "Perfecting the Art of Event Service," Conference topics covered the gamut of hot button issues facing CSMs today including technology, multi-generations, ethics, F&B, disaster preparedness, pre-cons and site visits, housing, CMP prep and CSR. The Conference concluded with a meeting planner session which gave members the opportunity to hear directly from planners on pressing questions. In addition, a Black & White Beach Ball celebrating ESPA's 25th anniversary was held at the Swan & Dolphin Resort, home to the 2013 Conference.

"Achieving this milestone is truly a testament to ESPA's innate ability to up the ante every year in terms of educational content and speakers," said Desautels. "We continue to enhance our membership offerings and structure, which has led to a 20% growth in membership in the last year. The association has accomplished a great deal in the past year and I look forward to working with the Board to further strengthen and grow the organization in the year ahead."

Desautels has worked for Visit Indy for the past 28 years in various roles including membership manager, tourism sales and publications. Having served as Senior Manager of Convention Services for 22 years, Bob provides his clients, meeting planners and executives with a variety of services that aid in the overall planning process.

In addition to naming a new president, ESPA also announced the following changes to its Executive Committee: Julie Pingston, CMP, Greater Lansing CVB will serve as President-Elect while former President David Dvorak, CMP, Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide will move into the position of Past President. Denise Suttle, CMP, Albuquerque CVB will serve as First Vice President and Madonna Carr, CMP, Meet Minneapolis, as Second Vice President. ESPA Director Paul Ruby, CMP, Sheraton Dallas Hotel will move into the position of Secretary/Treasurer.

The following ESPA members were elected to serve on the Board of Directors:

- Jamie Huckleberry, David L. Lawrence Convention Center/SMG

- Joan Kremer, CMP, Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide
- Carla Quercioli, Northern Kentucky CVB
- Gary Stauffer, Freeman
- David Raymond, CMP, Westin Charlotte

The following ESPA members will continue to serve on the Board of Directors:

- Amy Cabe, Visit Spokane
- Kathy Denkenberger, Saratoga CVB
- Lois McLaughlin, Nashville Convention Center
- Marcy Roitman-Boothe, Grapevine CVB
- Barbara Stone, CTA, Fort Worth CVB
- Advisory Director (Ex-Officio), Vanessa Kane, CMP, CMM, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States

For more information on ESPA, visit www.espaonline.org.

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About ESPA

The Event Service Professionals Association (ESPA) (formerly the Association for Convention Operations Management) is dedicated to elevating the event and convention services profession and to preparing members, through education and networking, for their pivotal role in innovative and successful event execution. For more information, visit www.espaonline.org.