



MEDIA RELEASE

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Vehr on Panel for Ohio Ambassador Launch ***Focuses on importance of visitors to growing the economy***

CINCINNATI (OH) – July 1, 2009 - More than 200 state and local business and government leaders gathered at the Westin Hotel in downtown Cincinnati on June 29 for the formal launch of the Ohio Ambassador Program. The program was introduced by the Ohio Department of Development and the Ohio Commodores Association.

Vehr Communications president, Nick Vehr, participated in the headline panel discussion in his role as chair of the Cincinnati USA Convention and Visitors Bureau and vice chair of the Cincinnati USA Regional Tourism Network. Vehr shared his perspective on the importance of visitor spending, whether by convention attendees or travel and leisure guests, to the growth of the Cincinnati USA and Ohio economies.

“In 2008, our community attracted visitors who committed to nearly 188,000 future room nights. At an estimated spend of approximately \$297 per visitor per night in our region, this means nearly \$56 million will be spent directly in our region,” Vehr shared. “By thinking strategically, focusing on the needs of the customer and committing to build relationships, Cincinnati and Ohio can grow their economies.”

The Ohio Ambassador Program is a key initiative in the Ohio Department of Development’s Strategic Plan, Ohio Home of Innovation and Opportunity. Lt. Gov. Lee Fisher led the effort to design a program that would give the tools to promote Ohio throughout the world to the most persuasive advocates – Ohio’s own citizens.

Lisa Patt-McDaniel, interim director of the Ohio Department of Development, unveiled the Ohio Ambassador Program while stressing the importance of sharing the Ohio story and showcasing all that the state has to offer. WLWT’s Courtis Fuller was the event’s master of ceremonies, while presenters included Patt-McDaniel; Louise Hughes, Association of the Ohio Commodores; and David Pepper, Hamilton County Commission president.

The event's southwest Ohio panelists included Nick Vehr, Vehr Communications; Kay Geiger, PNC Bank; Elijah Rudolph, Greater Cincinnati Workforce Network; Harvey Cohen, Dinsmore & Shohl; and Myrita Craig, Office of Agenda 360, Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber.

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