



CONTACT:

Jessica Keener, Monterey County CVB
(831) 657-6413; cell: (917) 450-0210
jessica@seemonterey.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SUSTAINABLE FUTURE: FIRST-EVER SUSTAINABLE HOSPITALITY DEVELOPMENT SYMPOSIUM A SUCCESS AS LEADERS IN MONTEREY COUNTY AND COSTA RICA UNITE

MONTEREY, Calif., February 28, 2017 – Monterey Bay and Costa Rica - a partnership 3,000 miles apart but bonded by being world-renowned destinations in sustainability. While Monterey County has been at the forefront of sustainable practices and initiatives, community leaders want to take the region to another level and join Costa Rica as world leader in sustainability. On Thursday, February 23, visionaries, public officials, public policy experts, hospitality and tourism professionals and hospitality developers and contractors gathered for the first-ever Sustainable Hospitality Development Symposium hosted by the Sustainable Hospitality Management program in the College of Business at California State University, Monterey Bay (CSUMB). The event was held at the InterContinental The Clement Monterey.

“Monterey County is such a special place and incredibly inspiring destination, attracting visionaries, innovators and leaders for decades. It is also a destination that has been leading the charge and setting standards in sustainability from responsible seafood guidelines to water conservation to reducing carbon footprint,” said Tammy Blount, President and CEO of the Monterey County Convention and Visitors Bureau (MCCVB). “What better place to host this innovative symposium than here in our extraordinary region and to bring together the minds of leaders looking to elevate sustainable efforts.”

“The vision for this symposium is for the Monterey Bay region to develop as the center for sustainable hospitality, ecotourism, eco-recreation and health and wellness here in the United States,” said Shyam Kamath, Dean of the College of Business at CSUMB. “It would be a wonderful step forward to grow our hospitality, tourism and recreation industries into extremely profitable and sustainable endeavors rivaling Costa Rica, the South of France and other leading sustainable hospitality regions in the world while growing jobs, livelihoods and businesses.”

The idea for the symposium sparked 9 months ago after Kamath and Sustainable Hospitality Management Program Executive Director John Avella traveled to Costa Rica to meet with former President José María Figueres Olsen. At the symposium, President Figueres delivered an inspiring and passionate speech via video conference in which he presented challenges to sustainability such as poverty and climate change as well as outlined Costa Rica’s strategies and models that have helped them to be successful as the world’s leading ecotourism destination and one of the leading countries on the global Sustainability Index (#3).

“I believe by working together, Monterey and Costa Rica, it would be my aspiration that with this symposium, we begin learning from each other,” said President Figueres. “We go through our lives and we run our businesses on strategy... Plan A, Plan B, even a Plan C. At the end of the day, there is no ‘Planet B.’ This is the one. We better get our act together and take good care of it.”

The all-day event drew more than 130 attendees including an impressive list of speakers and panelists. Participants discussed topics such as sustainable hospitality, ecotourism, eco-recreation development and opportunities. A few highlights from the Sustainable Hospitality Development Symposium include:

- The Keynote Address was delivered by [Allison Gosselin](#), Director of Sustainability and Engineering, at Aramark. Gosselin shared goals including waste minimization and efficient operations. One of the examples she shared was how Asilomar Conference Grounds was able to reduce food waste by 55% and overall compose waste by 29% within the first 3 months of implementing the program.
- “There’s no better marketing program than nature,” said [Ted Balestreri](#), President and CEO of Cannery Row Company. Balestreri added that hospitality is the largest industry on the Monterey Peninsula and commitment to sustainability can increase profits while reducing environmental footprints.
- Congressman [Jimmy Panetta](#) of the 20th District of California spoke about the effects of collaboration and protecting the Monterey Bay by working on immigration and focusing on infrastructure. “It’s our job in Washington, D.C., to make sure that we continue to protect the natural resources we have,” said Congressman Panetta. “I want to make sure that as my grandfather came here, the reason he came here, was to give his children a better life, and all of us have that obligation, it’s incumbent upon all of us to make sure that all of our children have that better life by protecting our environment and being able to live in this place all of us call home.”
- [Janine Chicourrat](#), General Manager of the Portola Hotel and Spa, shared the story of the \$60 million renovation of the Monterey Conference Center and the importance of strong public-private partnerships. “This story is really about a community coming together. It started with the hoteliers recognizing the need to renovate this Conference Center, and with them, we had to partner with the city council of Monterey, and then it also takes a community.” Chicourrat also spoke about the Portola’s LEED Certification and how it has influenced like-minded corporations to collaborate.
- [Cody Plott](#), President and COO of Pebble Beach Resorts, spoke about the company’s commitment to sustainability. Plott gave a number of examples including the sustainable filtration system which irrigates Pebble Beach’s golf courses and has saved more than 4 billion gallons of potable water since its inception in 1994. Pebble Beach Resorts was also recently recognized by the International Association of Golf Tour Operators as the 2017 IAGTO Sustainability Award for Resource Efficiency.
- [Blount](#) spoke about the MCCVB’s efforts in promoting sustainability and the “Sustainable Moments” initiative. As part of the effort, the organization is working to protect the destination's incredible natural assets and pristine landscape by educating visitors on the importance of treating the destination with care.

- [Julie Packard](#), President and CEO of the Monterey Bay Aquarium, delivered the Capnote Address and shared the community's efforts in making the Monterey Bay a model for sustainability as well as ocean conservation, protection and restoration. "If we don't nurture and sustain it, we will have nothing, and that's what we need to think about for the future."

Additional speakers included: [Eduardo Ochoa](#), President of CSUMB; [John Avella](#), Executive Director of the Sustainable Hospitality Management Program at CSUMB; [Shyam Kamath](#), Dean of the College of Business at CSUMB; [Alberto Lopez](#), General Manager of the Board of Tourism of Costa Rica; [Roberto Fernandez](#), Founder and Co-Owner of Pacuare Lodge; [Alfonso Gómez](#), Vice President of Azucarera El Viejo; Roberto Levi, President of Americas Educational Programs in Costa Rica; Brent Marshall, Superintendent of the Monterey District of California State Parks; [Paul Michel](#), Superintendent of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary; [Margaret Spring](#), Vice President of Conservation Science at the Monterey Bay Aquarium; [Kurt Gollnick](#), COO of Scheid Vineyards; [Jane Parker](#), Monterey County Supervisor, Fourth District; [Teresa Matsui](#), CEO of Matsui Nursery and Founder of InnWorks; [Tejal Sood](#), Partner of Operations and Development for the Bayside Hotel Group; [Anna Caballero](#), Assemblymember, District 30; and [Bud Colligan](#), Co-Chair of the Monterey Bay Economic Partnership.

CSUMB plans to continue the sustainable hospitality development conversation with leaders in Costa Rica. Kamath says the hope is to bring a group of about a dozen community and business leaders from Monterey County to Costa Rica in 6 months and host a symposium there to brainstorm and further discuss opportunities in eco-tourism and sustainable hospitality. For more information, please visit: csumb.edu/green. The MCCVB continues its Sustainable Moments initiative and educating visitors in an effort to protect and preserve this incredible region for generations and generations to come. Visit seemonterey.com/sustainable to learn more.

ABOUT THE SUSTAINABLE HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT PROGRAM AT CSUMB

The central core of the Sustainable Hospitality Management program at California State University, Monterey Bay, focuses on the concept of "sustainability plus," going beyond sustainability to address issues in terms of the five-dimensional lens of People, Ethics, Equity, Planet, and Profit. Students can focus in Sustainable Hotel, Resort, and Event Management or Sustainable Ecotourism Management. The B.S. Sustainable Hospitality Management degree emerged from a concentration with the B.S. Business Administration in 2015. Students gain hands-on knowledge and skills needed to pursue careers in hospitality, including hotels, restaurants, resorts, festivals and events, ecotourism, attractions, and eco recreation with a focus on "green" jobs in business and industry.

ABOUT MONTEREY COUNTY CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

The Monterey County Convention & Visitors Bureau (MCCVB) is a 501c6 organization that drives tourism for Monterey County and in recent years has led the destination to record levels of growth. Tourism is the largest industry on the Monterey Peninsula and the second largest in the County. The MCCVB is a partnership of the hospitality community and local governments that aims to drive business growth through compelling marketing and sales initiatives that maximize the benefits of tourism to our guests, members and the community. Travel spending in Monterey County was more than \$2.7 billion in 2015, representing a 4.5 percent increase from 2014, and per person/per day spending rose to \$333. Visitors in 2015 also generated \$109 million in local tax receipts, a 7.4 percent increase and supported 24,390 jobs.

###