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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

June 27, 2007

MLCVB Market Research Links Tourism Websites, Economic Growth

LYNDHURST, N.J. – The Meadowlands Liberty Convention and Visitors Bureau (MLCVB) today presented the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission Board with a summary of regional hotel revenue attributed to MLCVB tourism websites. The summary was highlighted by an average 14,000 room nights and \$1.8 million in booking revenue by site visitors in the first quarter of 2007.

“These findings are further proof of the region’s new identity as a tourism destination. Through the ongoing efforts of the MLCVB, NJMC eco-tourism initiatives including a birding and wildlife trails guide to the region, development of new parks, trails, and a marina, and support of Hackensack River recreation, we are creating a unique sense of place for the Meadowlands,” said NJMC Executive Director Robert Ceberio. “What’s more, this report reflects the reality that people who stay in the region spend in the region.”

Formulas in the MLCVB report were derived from website hit counters applied to www.stayinthemeadowlands.com, www.stayonthewaterfront.com, www.mlcvb.com, and market research conducted with representatives from the regional hospitality sector.

Traffic to the three sites totaled approximately 60,000 unique visitors and two million total page hits. The Travel Planner feature of the MLCVB site, which forwards leads to participating hotels, recorded an estimated 35,000 users who pursued reservations. The Travel Planner, which is also used for group travel, gauged a revenue opportunity of \$4.5 million, including requests for meeting rooms, rental vehicles, meals, entertainment, services, incidental and retail purchases.

Website tracking revealed that the Calendar and Transportation sections of the MLCVB site are returned to frequently by visitors after booking hotels, and that entertainment and cultural attractions may encourage travelers to stay in the Meadowlands region.

The MLCVB was established by the Meadowlands Regional Chamber of Commerce through a \$250,000 seed grant from the NJMC. Since its inception, the MCLVB has created information kiosks, printed marketing materials, developed training programs for hotel staff and hosted MDEST, an annual travel, tourism, and employment opportunities trade show.

Through additional grant funding from the NJMC's MAGNET (Meadowlands Area Grants for Natural and Economic Transformation) program, the MLCVB also organizes Meadowfest, a celebration of the Hackensack River's ongoing environmental recovery. On June 10, more than 8,500 residents and visitors attended the free, all-day event at Laurel Hill Park in Secaucus. It featured wildlife exhibits, live music, games including "Soak the Polluter," NJMC pontoon boat cruises into the 750-acre Sawmill Creek Wildlife Management Area, and a Cosmic Trail in anticipation of the William D. McDowell Observatory, opening in late fall 2007.

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