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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**MONTEREY COUNTY SEES UNPRECEDENTED LEVELS OF INVESTMENT  
AND A WAVE OF RENOVATIONS**

**MONTEREY, Calif., October 5, 2016** – With awe-inspiring coastal views and the breathtaking Santa Lucia Mountains, Monterey County draws millions of visitors and groups from around the world every year. As more and more travelers are coming to the region, looking to be inspired and invigorated, properties throughout the county have invested tens of millions of dollars to undergo major renovations, remodeling and additions for a fresh new look and feel.

"This is an exciting time in Monterey County with renovations and improvements happening throughout our region, and we are seeing unprecedented levels of investment into our community," says Tammy Blount, President and CEO of the Monterey County Convention and Visitors Bureau.

The wave of projects and renovations in the region will be continuing into 2017. One of the largest projects is the new **Monterey Conference Center**. The goal of this modern, state-of-the-art meeting facility is to welcome and encourage cultural and economic prosperity for the City of Monterey. The \$60 million renovation of the Conference Center will be LEED certified with 40,000+ square feet of flexible meeting space and a capacity of 3,200 people. With the anticipated opening in spring 2017, groups have already begun to book meetings and events in the new space.

"The renovation of the Monterey Conference Center will be the catalyst for the revitalization of the city of Monterey and the economic engine that will fuel the revenues necessary to continue to improve the quality of our community as well as the services and facilities that make Monterey a wonderful place to live work and play," says Doug Phillips, Monterey Conference Center General Manager.

In 2016 and going into 2017, a number of hotel properties and attractions in Monterey County have received or are getting an upgrade. Here is a brief list:

- Following the 2015 restoration of the 57-guestroom **Bernardus Lodge & Spa** in Carmel Valley, the property debuted 14 brand new villas and suites in August 2016. These new lifestyle accommodations will transport guests to a private sanctuary paired with butler services, complimentary Mercedes-Benz convertibles, alfresco rain showers and a three-to-one staff ratio focused on exceeding guests' expectations.
- **Casa Munras Garden Hotel & Spa** in Monterey has undergone significant upgrades. Of the 163 rooms, 138 rooms have been newly renovated as well as a fitness room. New features include stylish hardwoods, custom-made furnishings, flat screen TV's, new windows and more. The new decor and historic images reflect the area's Spanish heritage. The remainder of the guestrooms will be completed in early spring 2017.
- **Colton Inn** in downtown Monterey is currently in the process of updating and upgrading all guestrooms to be completed by February 2017.

- Located just two blocks from the beachfront in Seaside, **Embassy Suites by Hilton** will be undergoing a \$10 million renovation beginning in November of this year with the restaurant and lounge area. The extensive project is expected to continue until March 2017 and will also include the atrium, lobby, public space, guestrooms and ballroom.
- The **Esalen Institute** in Big Sur is currently in the midst of its Campus Renewal Project, a multi-million dollar transformation. In June of this year, Esalen completed the renovation of the main lodge building. Looking ahead, Esalen will be enhancing and expanding staff residential housing, improving accessibility, making safety improvements, replacing the Hot Springs Creek Bridge and more.
- **The Hideaway** in Carmel-by-the-Sea, most recently named The Cobblestone Inn, was purchased earlier this year by The PlumpJack Group and Meriweather Companies. The property underwent a full renovation and reopened their doors in April. The guestrooms were completely redone to include tiled floors, large showers with glass enclosures, smart TVs and more. The courtyard, front desk and lobby area also have a new modern look.
- **Hotel Carmel** in Carmel-by-the-Sea, formerly known as the Dolphin Inn, was purchased by Classic Hotels and fully renovated the property, which reopened in April 2016. The guestrooms, garden courtyard and gastropub - Brophy's Tavern – were all renovated and remodeled.
- The **Hyatt Carmel Highlands** is completing one of the most exciting renovations in its 99-year history. The hotel's guestrooms, bar, hotel entrance, lobby area and restaurant are all undergoing a series of upscale enhancements inspired by the property's refined charm, classic seaside setting and rich history. The multi-million dollar project also includes the merger of the restaurant with its bistro into a new eatery — California Market at Pacific's Edge.
- The **Hyatt Regency Monterey Hotel & Spa** is undergoing a \$2.5 million renovation. All 550 guestrooms were re-carpeted, and each received new desk chairs and lamps. Coming up in the next six months, the hotel lobby and lobby lounge flooring will be replaced, all pool furniture will be replaced and the President's House and Hospitality Suites will undergo renovations.
- Adjacent to the Conference Center, the **Monterey Marriott** recently completed a \$2.4-million renovation to its new Greatroom which includes the lobby and restaurant and bar - Fin + Field. Designers were inspired by life in Monterey and the beauty of the area. This holiday season, the hotel will also remodel the bathroom in the lobby area, guestroom elevators and replace the hotel's canopies at the entrance of the hotel.
- In Pacific Grove, the **Monterey Peninsula Inn** has invested nearly \$3 million in upgrades. This past year, 8 new guestrooms were built, one of which is a handicap unit. The 7 new rooms have two queen-size beds, fully equipped kitchen, a gas fireplace and more. The property also has a new front office and lobby, and in November, there will a complete remodel of the outdoor pool area as well as adding two new guestrooms.
- Reflecting the surrounding shoreline and its history at Cannery Row, the **Monterey Plaza Hotel & Spa** unveiled a new lobby in March, part of the \$2.7 million in improvements. The project also included upgraded guest service stations, the new Helmsman Lounge located in the lobby and overlooking the bay, a new rooftop sundeck at the Vista Blue Spa, remodeled penthouse luxury suites and more.
- **Monterey Tides**, formerly known as Unscripted Monterey Bay, officially celebrated its reopening in July 2016. As part of the Joie de Vivre Hotels brand, the \$12.5 million renovation included the guestrooms, lobby, bar and lounge and pool. This beachfront resort blends Mexican-inspired accents with mid-century influences.
- Next to the Conference Center, the **Portola Hotel & Spa** is undergoing an \$8 million renovation. In May, the hotel completed a guestroom bathroom renovation and recently finished renovating the lobby restrooms and third floor meeting room restrooms. Additional renovations are planned through early 2017 including new front doors and a new front desk, new hallway carpet for the entire hotel, full lobby renovation and more.
- **SpringHill Suites by Marriott The Dunes on Monterey Bay** will be debuting an all-suite hotel in Marina in February of 2017.

“By investing in these properties, these businesses are investing in our community and county. They are giving visitors and groups something new and exciting, and we hope that this wave of renovations will give folks yet another reason to meet and vacation in Monterey County,” Blount says.

For more information on lodging, restaurants, events and things to do in Monterey County, please visit [SeeMonterey.com](http://SeeMonterey.com).

#### **ABOUT MONTEREY COUNTY CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU**

The Monterey County Convention & Visitors Bureau (MCCVB) is a 501©6 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.

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