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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MENNONITE CHURCH USA SIGNS CONTRACT TO BRING 2007 NATIONAL CONVENTION TO SAN JOSE

First Time in 15 Years for Group to Meet on West Coast

SAN JOSE, CALIF. – June 23, 2004 – Representatives from the San José Convention & Visitors Bureau (SJCVB) successfully returned home after meeting with the Office of Convention Planning of the Mennonite Church USA on June 8-10, 2004. Based in Indiana and Kansas, the Mennonite Church USA officially signed a contract to bring its biennial Churchwide Convention to San José in 2007. This will be the first time since 1991 that the Mennonite Church will meet on the West Coast.

The Mennonite Church USA was founded in 2002, when the former Mennonite Church (founded in 1898) and General Conference Mennonite Church (1860) merged. The Mennonite Church USA is a part of the larger Christian faith referred to as Anabaptism. With more than 111,000 members in the U.S., the Mennonite Church Assembly and Youth Convention are expected to congregate more than 8,000 delegates in San José.

Scheduled July 1-7, 2007, the citywide assembly will represent over 12,000 room nights. The estimated economic impact of the convention is \$9 million based on IACVB's standardized economic impact formula.

SJCVB Breaks Bread with Mennonites

SJCVB President and CEO, Dan Fenton, along with Kelli Donahoe, CMP, National Sales Manager; Jennifer Ahn, Convention Services Manager; and Vincent Lai, Chef for the San José McEnery Convention Center, flew to Indiana to formally break bread with the Mennonites.

To celebrate the new business venture, Chef Lai, known for his extraordinary Chef's Table, prepared a California luncheon for the Mennonite Church USA's Convention Planning staff. Using only the freshest ingredients, Chef Lai visited a local Farmer's Market and purchased garden-fresh produce and other items to prepare a delicious four-course meal.

Menmonite Church USA Signs Contract to Bring 2007 Convention to San José, June 23, 2004

“We were very impressed that the San José Convention and Visitors Bureau took the time to visit our headquarters and become more acquainted with our members,” said Jorge Vallejos, director of convention planning for the Mennonite Church USA. “Not only does it say a lot about San José’s service, but it also represents a higher level of commitment and interest that they have for our group.”

About Mennonite Church USA

Mennonite Church USA is one of several denominations that trace their beginnings to the Protestant Reformation in the early 1500s. Mennonites hold common core beliefs with other Christian denominations, but they live out God’s call in some ways that make them distinct. Mennonites share a strong commitment to nonviolence and the use of conflict resolution, believing God calls them to witness to the reconciling work of Jesus Christ. In addition to their peace witness, Mennonites are well known for their relief and development efforts in the United States and abroad. Of the almost 1,000 Mennonite Church congregations in the U.S., 44 congregations are established in California, with 20 more emerging. Mennonite Church USA congregations in California are culturally diverse, with 11 languages represented. For more information about Mennonite Church USA, visit www.MennoniteUSA.org or call toll-free 866-866-2872.

About The San José Convention & Visitors Bureau (SJCVB)

The San José Convention & Visitors Bureau’s (SJCVB) mission is to enhance the image and economic well being of San José by taking the leadership role in marketing San José as a globally recognized destination. The SJCVB offers meeting planners, tour operators, and individual visitors a team of professionals who can assist with their destination planning process from beginning to end. To receive a copy of the Bureau’s *Meeting Planning Guide* or *Official Visitors Guide*, please contact the SJCVB at 1.888.SAN.JOSE (1.888.726.5673) or visit <http://www.sanjose.org>.

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