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**CONNECTICUT'S CONVENTION & HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY WELCOMES
THE INAUGURAL "CONNECT NEW ENGLAND" TRADE SHOW TO HARTFORD**

HARTFORD, CONN., June 21, 2016 – This week, Downtown Hartford will be the site of the first-ever "Connect New England." The prestigious appointment-only trade show will bring together the most active planners, suppliers and experts in association, sports and specialty meetings who focus on New England destinations for their meetings and events. The private event will take place on **Wednesday, June 22 through Friday, June 24, 2016, at the Connecticut Convention Center**, 100 Columbus Blvd. in Hartford, Connecticut. Attendees will stay at the connecting Marriott Hartford Downtown.

"Connect New England" is hosted by Connect in partnership with Connecticut Convention Center, the Connecticut Convention & Sports Bureau, and the Hartford Marriott Downtown/Waterford Hotel Group.

"We are very pleased that Connect selected Connecticut's Capital City as the site of this first-time event," says H. Scott Phelps, president of Connecticut Convention & Sports Bureau (CTCSB), the State's official meetings and sports event sales and marketing organization. "We welcome the opportunity to meet many influential professional meeting planners from across New England and to help them discover what makes our state an attractive choice for so many conventions, meetings and sports events."

"Hosting Connect New England allows us to provide the planners with the unique opportunity to experience the Convention Center and the city of Hartford as their meeting attendees would," says Michele Hughes, Director of Sales & Marketing for the Connecticut Convention Center. "We are excited to showcase the Convention Center and the talents of our incredible culinary team to make the first-ever Connect New England an event to never be forgotten."

"We are looking forward to the inaugural Connect New England with our partners in Hartford," says Connect President, Chris Collinson. "Our No. 1 goal is to help our attendees form new relationships or build on current ones that result in long-lasting business connections. Our model has proven that attendees are able to satisfy their business goals during and after our events and Connect New England will be no different."

During the Marketplace session of Connect New England, planners and sellers meet in preset, scheduled appointments specific to their markets; exchange RFPs; arrange future site visits; and book events. The popular Marketplace format was first introduced to the meetings industry by Collinson Media and Events, which has recently rebranded to Connect. Connect produces Connect Marketplace, Connect Sports Marketplace, Connect Faith Marketplace and Diversity Marketplace, as well as state-specific shows in the meetings and hospitality industries.

Connect is a leader in the meetings, travel and tourism industry. Specializing in destination marketing, the company produces digital programs, online and mobile solutions, meetings business and travel magazines, trade shows and consumer events, travel guides for newspapers and leisure magazines, and destination information, which is distributed through broadcast and custom programs. More information about the company's brands and services is available at connectmeetings.com. For more information on Connect New England, please visit connectnewenglandmeetings.com.

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The **Connecticut Convention & Sports Bureau (CTCSB)** works in partnership with the state's businesses, institutions, nonprofit organizations, and surrounding communities to market all of Connecticut – convention and meeting venues, hotels and attractions, and sporting venues – as a premier destination for international, national, regional and statewide conferences, conventions and major sports events. The public-private partnership is funded by dues from members and by the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) and Connecticut Office of Tourism. The **Connecticut Sports Advisory Board**, a division of the CTCSB, focuses its efforts on attracting and serving international, national and regional sporting events. For more information, visit CTmeetings.org or call 860-728-6789.

The **Connecticut Convention Center** in Hartford is the state's premier meeting venue and the largest full-service convention facility between New York and Boston. Overlooking the beautiful Connecticut River, it features 140,000 square feet of exhibition space, a 40,000-square-foot ballroom and 25,000 square feet of meeting space, as well as ample sheltered parking. The venue is professionally managed for the State of Connecticut by Waterford Venue Services, an affiliate of Waterford Hotel Group. For more information, visit CTConventions.com or call 860-249-6000.

The **Marriott Hartford Downtown** is located in the Front Street District of Hartford, overlooking the Connecticut River and interconnected with the Connecticut Convention Center. Attracting business and leisure travelers alike since 2005, this 409-room upscale hotel is AAA rated with four Diamonds. Many popular Hartford attractions are within walking distance. For more information, visit marriotthartford.com or call 860-249-8000.

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