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Ohio Tourism Division Honored with SABRE Award for Public Relations*"Discover Ohio Deals" Campaign Wins National Award*

COLUMBUS, Ohio (May 16, 2011) – The Ohio Tourism Division continued a successful awards season last week by receiving its first-ever North American SABRE Award for the "Discover Ohio Deals" public relations campaign. The SABRE Awards, conducted by The Holmes Report, recognize "superior achievement in branding and reputation in North America," and are the world's largest public relations awards competition. The annual awards ceremony was held this year on May 10 at New York's Cipriani 42nd Street.

This year, more than 2,000 program entries were submitted to the SABRE Awards in numerous categories. The Ohio Tourism Division was honored with a silver SABRE for the best campaign conducted by a government agency. The "Discover Ohio Deals" campaign was also honored during the past year with the tourism industry's highest public relations honor, a Mercury Award from the U.S. Travel Association.

"This award shows the high quality of work that is being produced by the Ohio Tourism Division and proves once again that Ohio has a compelling story to tell," said James A. Leftwich, Director of the Ohio Department of Development. "The campaign is not only winning awards, but has proved effective in bringing visitors to our state to experience Ohio's unique and exciting tourism opportunities."

The Ohio Tourism Division's public relations program is executed in partnership with the Division's agency of record, Fahlgren Mortine. The public relations program took advantage of a number of unique market conditions in 2010. These included economic realities and the consumer's quest for affordability/value; increased focus on drive-market/closer-to-home travel; and increasing use of social media/technology in travel planning. The public relations program was developed around a "Discover Ohio Deals" theme and featured specific deals, travel packages and affordable destinations.

"Our public relations program highlighted Ohio's tourism strengths including the value of Ohio travel experiences, and we're honored to be recognized by The Holmes Report for the success of the campaign," said State Tourism Director Amir Eylon. "The awards bring third-party validation to the success of our program, but our priority has always been driving travel to and within Ohio."

As a result, Ohio Tourism Division marketing programs contributed to an estimated \$36 billion in total sales in 2009, and Ohio experienced a 6 percent increase in overnight leisure trips over 2008. In addition, the 2009 media relations program significantly outpaced program results from the prior year.

About the Ohio Tourism Division

The Ohio Tourism Division is the premier source of information for travelers and media about Ohio's vibrant tourism experiences, attractions and economy. Division marketing programs contributed to an estimated \$36 billion in total sales in 2009 and 437,000 jobs sustained by visitors to the state. A part of the Ohio Department of Development, the Division's mission is to promote and celebrate Ohio's

unique travel opportunities and market the state's outstanding quality of life. For more information, please visit <http://consumer.discoverohio.com/>.

About Fahlgren Mortine

Columbus, Ohio-based Fahlgren Mortine is one of the nation's largest independent marketing and communications agencies with 2010 revenue of approximately \$20 million and locations in Columbus, Cleveland, Dayton, Cincinnati and Toledo, Ohio; Parkersburg and Charleston, W. Va.; Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.; and Denver, Colo. Fahlgren Mortine provides a full-service offering to clients in 26 states from California to Connecticut, with industry specializations in automotive, business-to-business, consumer packaged goods, education, financial services, healthcare, retail, technology, and tourism and economic development. Capabilities include social media, digital services, advertising, public relations, research, branding, creative and design. For more information, please visit www.fahlgren.com.

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