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World Religious Travel Association Announces Management Partnership with NTA and IMG Associations

LEXINGTON, Ky. (March 30, 2009) — The World Religious Travel Association has signed an agreement to be fully managed by the National Tour Association and its management company, IMG Associations. Under the new agreement, NTA and IMG staff will power the back-of-the-house operations of WRTA. IMG Associations currently provides management services for NTA and will be supporting WRTA in its expansion efforts over the next three years.

"As an association that has experienced remarkable growth and visibility in its first two years, we are confident that the travel management expertise along with the knowledgeable staff, proven systems and intimate knowledge of the travel business that NTA and its management partner, IMG Associations, provides will further our development as a world-class organization and leader in the travel industry," said Kevin J. Wright, WRTA president.

In addition to an ongoing strategic partnership with NTA, WRTA's 2009 World Religious Travel Expo & Educational Conference will be co-located Nov. 14-16 with the NTA Annual Convention in Reno, Nevada, offering members of both associations unprecedented opportunities for business growth, education, and networking.

"The NTA Board recognizes the value to the NTA membership of working with WTRA and believes in the innovative and forward-thinking management staff that has helped create the success of NTA," said Lisa Simon, CTP, president of the National Tour Association. "NTA has a long and rich history and faith-based travel is an important part of the overall industry. Together, members of both organizations can help strengthen their business as well as the travel community overall."

In 2008, WRTA and NTA entered a unique agreement, in which the associations began working together to educate their members on the value of the faith tourism industry and bring new business opportunities to the members of both organizations. In fact, last year's historic World Religious Travel Expo & Educational Conference was managed in part by NTA.

Through the agreement, WRTA aligns itself with NTA's strength and position in the packaged travel industry. NTA, an organization for tour operators, suppliers and destinations, has a highly respected reputation for excellent association management and successful conference execution. NTA will be sharing that expertise with WRTA, to help move the dynamic young association to the next level. Services will include communications, marketing, member services, administrative support, event management and technology services, as well as selling advertising and corporate partnerships.

In return, NTA members will be gaining access to more diverse tour product with the 600-plus buyers and sellers (from more than 30 countries) of faith-based tours and packages expected in Reno. Faith-based tourism is an \$18 billion and 300 million traveler market segment and currently nearly 35 percent of NTA tour operators offer product for the faith-based traveler.

World Religious Travel Association:

WRTA is the leading global network for the \$18 billion faith tourism industry. WRTA's primary purpose is to guide, enrich, and expand religious travel and hospitality around the globe via the trade, consumer, and media. Its membership is comprised of airlines, accommodations, tour operators, travel agents, tourism offices, media and other key players in the tourism industry.

National Tour Association:

The National Tour Association is the preferred association in the tourism industry for packaged travel professionals. NTA strives to provide value for its members by advancing the packaged travel industry through its advocacy efforts and progressive leadership. Connecting its members through business development, government relations, professional development and research, NTA has remained committed to serving its members with integrity and quality service since its founding in 1951. Today, the NTA membership represents 40 countries, and includes tour and travel packagers of all types.

IMG Associations:

IMG Associations is a professional association management company and a leader in helping professional and trade associations expand membership, promote their mission, and seize opportunities for growth. IMG Associations is a division of IMG (<http://www.imgworld.com>), the world's premier sports, entertainment and media company, and an active member of the Association Management Company Institute and the American Society of Association Executives. For more information on IMG Associations, visit <http://www.imgassociations.com>.

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