



**Contact Information:**  
**Kathy Leonard (314) 574-2510**  
**John O'Connor (314) 761-1610**  
**Robert Allegrini (312) 663-6516**

## **Branson Convention Center Celebrates Grand Opening**

### *Hundreds Head to Branson for Convention Center's Grand Opening Weekend*

**BRANSON, MO (Sept.7, 2007)** —The **Branson Convention Center** celebrated its **Grand Opening** Sept. 7-9 with three days of blockbuster special events, entertainment and attractions.

The celebration, which drew meeting planners from all over the country, began Friday afternoon with a ribbon-cutting ceremony in front of the new Convention Center. Those in attendance were treated to a spectacular illusion show from the "Living Garden", performance artists who literally bring nature's most beautiful treasures to life. In keeping with the theme of "Where Water Meets Spectacle", the "Living Fountain" featured a statue of a young woman, who slowly animates into a living fountain, with delicate jets of water appearing from her fingers.

After the ceremony, guests and meeting planners got their first look at the stunning new facility during the first ever **Branson Vendor Fair**, which featured dozens of local businesses displaying their goods and services to the meeting planning industry. Participating vendors covered a wide spectrum of Branson businesses - from hotels, resorts and live theaters, to restaurants, jewelry stores and limousine services.

"This is the future of Branson commerce," said Branson Mayor Raeanne Presley. "Our goal is to offer meeting planners, who always wanted to book big groups in Branson but couldn't because of a

lack of space, the opportunity to bring their clients to experience the charm and hospitality of Branson. We know this convention center will make us a major meeting destination.”

Throughout the weekend guests were treated to a non-stop schedule of live shows, special tours, golf and fishing outings and a Saturday evening concert headlined by two of the music industry’s fastest rising stars - **Michael Tolcher** and **Joshua Radin**.

Hilton Hotels will manage and market the Branson Convention Center for the City of Branson, the Convention Center’s owner. “Each and every team member of the Branson Convention Center is required to pass a rigorous training program based on Hilton’s ‘Ten Points of Service’ pledge,” said Mark Hartman, General Manager, Hiltons of Branson. “Hospitality is always our top priority. Our team members understand that they’re not just the ‘face’ of Hilton, they are the face of Branson as well.”

Located within view of beautiful Lake Taneycomo, the **Branson Convention Center** features a unique, undulating façade and exposed timber to reflect the beauty of the surrounding Missouri Ozarks. The **Branson Convention Center** offers guests 220,000 gross square feet of flexible, high-tech meeting space. The facility includes two exhibit halls totaling 47,000 square feet, and additional meeting rooms on the second floor.

One of the Convention Center’s most breathtaking design elements involves the 23,000 square foot ballroom. When guests look upward, they will be treated to a stunning, one-of-a-kind light and sound display of birds in flight. The display features 72 silver and white high-tech fixtures that will create a light and sound display depicting migratory birds in flight suspended from an all-white ceiling, each containing hidden lights that can change the color of the fixture, as well as the color of the ceiling.

The **Branson Convention Center** is an ideal location for a diverse range of events and gatherings -- from national and regional trade shows and conventions, to religious symposiums, corporate meetings, public expos and large-scale entertainment events. With the capacity to accommodate up to 4,500 attendees at a time, the **Branson Convention Center** is an exciting and powerful addition to an area that already attracts more than seven million visitors a year.

On Aug. 26, the Convention Center hosted its first event, the Missouri School Boards’ Association’s “First Annual Conference on Coordinated School Safety.” The two-day conference drew more than 250 educators, law enforcement professionals and other participants to Branson.

The **Branson Convention Center** was designed by Thompson, Ventulett, Stainback & Associates Inc., an award-winning architectural firm based in Atlanta. In 2002, TVS was honored with the prestigious American Institute of Architects Architecture Firm Award. In addition to the Branson Convention Center, TVS has designed 55 convention centers, including four of the largest convention centers in the country.