



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Sept. 27, 2002

CONTACT:

Katie Smith

Knoxville Convention Center

(865) 251-6057

Grand Opening Festivities Planned at New Convention Center

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. – Non-stop celebrating is planned when the city officially opens the doors to its new \$93 million convention center on grand opening weekend, Oct. 18 and 19.

From free family activities throughout the day on Saturday, Oct. 19 to an around the world international gala that evening, “**Celebrating at the Center**” will offer something for everyone.

“This is the public’s convention center, and we want everyone to come join in the celebration on grand opening weekend,” said William Overfelt, General Manager of the Center.

The opening day of events, Friday, Oct. 18, will feature the “**News - Sentinel’s East Tennessee’s Best Awards Luncheon**” at 11:30 a.m., the “**Official Dedication and Ribbon Cutting**” beginning at 5:30 p.m. at the Clinch Avenue entrance

-more-

Celebrating at the Center – Page 2 of 2

and will culminate with “**Bridge Bash,**” a free country music concert co-produced by WIVK and taking place on the Clinch Avenue Bridge. Proceeds from the evening will benefit the **Dogwood Arts Festival.**

Starting at 10 a.m. on Saturday will be “**Center Fest,**” a free, all-day open house at the center. “**Center Fest**” will include continuous live entertainment on two stages, children’s games and activities, tours of the facility, community vendor exhibits, animal rescue exhibits and pet adoptions. Donations will be accepted that day for the **Knoxville-Knox County Animal Center.**

The “**Grandest Grandparents Day Luncheon,**” hosted by the Beck Cultural Exchange Center, will begin at 11:30 a.m. on Saturday. Tickets for this event are on sale at Beck Cultural Exchange Center.

Grand opening weekend will conclude with “**World’s Fare Under the Stars:** *A Gala Evening of Dancing, International Cuisine and Adventure.*” This elegant affair (black tie optional) will take guests on a journey around the world through food, music and ambiance. Delectable desserts, a champagne toast and a spectacular fireworks display will top off the evening. Tickets for this event are \$100 per person and proceeds will go to benefit **Friends of Great Smoky Mountains National Park.**

For more information about “**Celebrating at the Center**”, contact the Knoxville Convention Center at (865) 522-5669.

-END-