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13th National Tourism Awards

Belize City, Belize – July 30, 2015 – The Belize Tourism Board is gearing up for the grandest event of the year. The 13th National Tourism Awards is taking place on Saturday, August 1st.

This is an event to honor those who have been recognized as the leaders in their categories. This year, the list of categories has increased to 11, and they are:

- **Hotel of the Year**

A licensed hotel with more than ten rooms that offers a gateway to paradise, where service exceeds excellence, engulfed with positive attitude and attentiveness of staff. Offering exceptional value for money, equipped with outstanding facilities and amenities, remarkable ambience, innovation and the ability to provide visitors with a truly authentic and all-encompassing Belize experience.

- **Small Hotel of the Year**

A licensed small hotel with less than ten rooms that captures the essence of warmth and homeliness, displays customer service excellence and utilizes the best environmental practices and sound management.

- **Guesthouse of the Year (NEW)**

A licensed guesthouse with less than 10 rooms which offers superior quality, and a personalized touch in delivering the Belize brand to its visitors.

- **Tour Operator of the Year**

A licensed tour operator that offers a variety of tours which excels in service, marketing, creativity, uniqueness, safety, reliability, value for money and exemplifies a strong commitment to sustainable and innovative business practices.

- **Cruise Tour Operator of the Year (NEW)**

A licensed tour operator which has a specific contract or concession with any cruise line only, offering excellent customer service and safety, with attention to the unique needs of cruise visitors.

- **Tour Guide of the Year**

A licensed tour guide with a wealth of knowledge, has the ability to mesmerize an audience, excellent communication and interpersonal skills, positive attitude, creativity, and the ability to provide a world class tour experience.

- **Cruise Tour Guide of the Year (NEW)**

A licensed tour guide who specifically caters to cruise visitors, works directly with a cruise operator, conveys the Belize product in a captivating, memorable and dynamic manner, having received specialized training for this niche market, having received distinction from cruise lines for commitment to service excellence.

- **Frontline Person of the Year**

A frontline employee who has unmatched interpersonal skills, the ability to welcome guests with great Belizean hospitality, is product knowledgeable about Belize and provides a memorable experience.

- **Restaurant of the Year**

A restaurant that offers a dining experience and not just a meal or a routine. Here, the ambiance is bliss, the menu offers diversity and the service is great. The personality of the restaurant is as distinct as the staff is professional.

- **Major Festivals and Events**

This award is in recognition of hallmark festivals or events including major exhibitions that: i.) create substantial economic impact, ii.) Attract visitors (local and overseas), iii.) Generate national or international media profile; iv.) Positively promote the destination. They may be one off or recurring.

- **Hospitality Award**

A tourism business entity or tourism ancillary organization that offers exceptional service to customers, the ability to manage a business seamlessly, is sensitive to the needs of staff, flexible in adapting to change and accommodating to the industry's needs and offers an authentic top class Belizean experience.

A total of 57 nominations were received this year, doubling last year's nominees. The judging process included meeting minimum requirements such as valid licenses and tax compliance with Belize Tourism Board. Further assessments were conducted for each category with a point system whereby a panel of judges rated the nominees. Results were tallied and winners were selected.

The highlight of the night will end with the Minister's Award and a celebration of a Pioneer, Mrs. Celi Nunez McCorkle, whose hotel, Holiday Hotel, is celebrating 50 years of service to San Pedro.

The awards ceremony is being held in San Pedro, to commemorate the 50th year of tourism in San Pedro, Ambergris Caye. All nominees have been invited for the reveal of this anticipated process and to celebrate the hard work and dedication to the industry. We wish all nominees the best of luck.

A full list of winners will be sent out after the event. Stay Tuned.

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The Belize Tourism Board (BTB) is a statutory body within the Belize Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Civil Aviation, and it is governed by a Board of Directors appointed by the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Civil Aviation. The BTB works in conjunction with members of the private sector - including the Belize Hotel Association, Belize Tourism Industry Association and Belize National Tour Operators Association – and is dedicated to building tourism in the most economically and environmentally sustainable manner. As a part of its responsibilities, the BTB promotes Belize as a premier tourism destination to both in-country and international consumers. Among its outreach to the international travel market, the BTB markets the country's unique attractions to travellers, members of the travel trade industry and media outlets in key markets. The BTB is also dedicated to developing and implementing tourism programs that will help strengthen and grow the Belizean tourism industry; promote good destination stewardship; and instil high quality standards for accommodations and travel experiences. For more information on the BTB and its services, visit www.travelbelize.org.

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