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National Harbor Heats Up

PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY, MD - High demand for hotel rooms and convention space is ramping up activity at the \$2 billion National Harbor mixed-use development in Prince William County, Md. This spring, developers announced that another 1,400 rooms at six hotels would be built on the 300-acre development along the Potomac River south of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge, scheduled to open this month.

Gaylord Hotels announced that it will expand its Gaylord National project by 500 rooms and add 25,000 to 30,000 sq. ft. of meeting space. The original Gaylord National project called for 1,500 rooms, 400,000 sq. ft. of convention and meeting space, and parking for 2,600 cars. The joint venture of Washington, D.C.-based Perini/Tompkins is the general contractor. Gensler of Washington, D.C., is the design architect.

Colin Reed, Gaylord's chairman and chief executive officer, said the company is expanding the project to meet rising demand. Although the project is not scheduled to open until 2008, more than 600,000 room nights have been booked around future convention business. In the fourth quarter of 2005, Gaylord booked 184,000 room nights.

The contract for the original 2.4 million-sq.-ft. design was valued at \$350 million, but Gaylord announced that the cost of the expansion, as well as higher construction costs, are expected to add between \$235 million to \$285 million to the total budget.

National Harbor's master developer, the Peterson Companies of Fairfax, Va., announced in April that five new hotels would be built on the site. Westin Hotels and Resorts, Marriott Residence Inn, Fairfield Resorts, Hampton Inn and Suites, and W's Aloft together will add 900 rooms.

In addition to hospitality projects, several other mixed-use developments are moving forward. WDG Architecture of Washington announced that it was selected by the Peterson Companies to design four blocks of residential, retail, and hotel space within the development.

The first of the four projects to go forward, Potomac Promenade Condominiums, will include 246 units with 41,500 sq. ft. of street- and mezzanine-level retail. The building will include a rooftop pool and plaza that will provide views of the Potomac River along National Harbor's western edge.

Potomac Promenade will also include a fitness center, media room, club room, and two levels of underground parking. The >> 526,000-sq.-ft. property is scheduled to begin construction this summer, with completion anticipated for early 2008.

When built out, National Harbor will include 7.3 million sq. ft. of residential, hotel, office, and restaurant and retail space. The development is located approximately 15 minutes from Washington, D.C.