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Rhode Island Residents and Businesses Honored at Rhode Island Hospitality Association's 20th Annual "Stars of the Industry" Awards

Cranston, RI – *December 2, 2009* – **The RI Hospitality Association** (RIHA) recently honored several Rhode Island hospitality professionals and businesses at its 20th Annual "Stars of the Industry" Awards Ceremony, which took place at the Crowne Plaza Hotel at the Crossings in Warwick, RI. The Stars of the Industry Awards recognize the outstanding achievements of members of the hospitality, foodservice and tourism industries. Award recipients were nominated by their peers and chosen not only for their dedication and contributions to their careers, but for their involvement in their local communities.

"I would like to congratulate all of this year's winners for their contributions to their communities and dedication to our industry," said Dale J. Venturini, President and CEO. "During these challenging times, their achievements go far in making our industry so successful and reinforcing our position as the cornerstone of the State's economy and the community."

The 2009 Stars of the Industry are as follows:

- **Chairman's Award: J. Lynn Singleton**, President of the Providence Performing Arts Center (PPAC)
- **The Educational Foundation Chairman's Award: The Governor's Workforce Board**
- **President's Award: Rachel Roginsky**, Principal of the Pinnacle Advisory Group in Boston, MA.
- **Caterer of the Year: Pranzi Catering**, located in Providence and co-owned by Lisa and Nick Mattiello.
- **Chef of the Year: Executive Chef Jules Ramos** of Eleven Forty Nine Restaurant in Warwick and Eleven Forty Nine East in Seekonk, MA.
- **Education Partnership of the Year:**
 - **Hotel Viking**, located in Newport
 - **Rhode Island Commodores**

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- **Hospitality Man of the Year: Richard Kizirian** of Kizirian Photography in Providence.
- **Hospitality Women of the Year:**
 - **Barbara Shea**, Tourism Marketing Manager of the Preservation Society of Newport County
 - **Lauren Minutoli**, Human Resources Director for the Providence Biltmore Hotel
- **Hotelier of the Year: Rita Draper**, owner of Hotel Manisses and The 1661 Inn in Block Island
- **Lifetime Achievement Award: Alan Chille**, General Manager of the Providence Performing Arts Center
- **Mary Brennan Tourism Award: Mark Brodeur**, Director of Tourism for the Rhode Island Division of Tourism
- **The Media Partnership Award** was presented to **Providence Media** as represented by:
 - **Richard Fleischer**, Publisher at *Providence Monthly Magazine*
 - **Jeanette St. Pierre**, Publishing Director at *Providence Monthly Magazine*
- **Nightclub of the Year: Mardi Gras Multi Club** in Cranston, owned by **John Readey Jr.**
- **Restaurateur of the Year: David Lahousse**, owner of The Lodge Pub & Eatery and Kay's Restaurant in Lincoln
- **Vendor of the Year: Eric Weiner**, President/CEO of **All Occasion Transportation**, headquartered in Providence
- **Vendor Representative of the Year: Nancy Abdalla**, Divisional Manager of Heartland Payment Systems in Lincoln
- **Volunteers of the Year** include:
 - **Janet Courtois**, Director of Service for Gregg's Restaurants in Warwick
 - **Anne Devaney**, Director of Human Resources for IDC, The Newport Experience
- **Allied Employees of the Year include:**
 - **Heather Libby**, Operations Manager of All Occasion Transportation in Providence
 - **Frank Azevedo**, Marketing Associate at Sysco Boston in Norton, MA
 - **Jason Winpenny**, VP of Operations at The Valet Connection, Inc. in Warwick
 - **Desiree Favreau**, Sales Manager for The Valet Connection, Inc. in Warwick
- **Caterer Employees of the Year include:**
 - **Danielle Costa**, Sales Manager for Blackstone Caterers in Middletown
 - **Elise Shatraw**, Catering Sales Manager for Cornerstone Catering at Providence Biltmore
 - **Tania Scott**, Senior Event Coordinator for McGrath Clambakes, Inc. in Newport
 - **Alex Ruggieri**, Director of Catering for the Hyatt Regency Newport Hotel & Spa
- **Hospitality Ambassadors of the Year** were presented to:
 - **Thomas Nerney**, Compliance Evaluation and Standardization Officer at the RI Department of Health in Providence

- **Representative Steven M. Costatino** of Providence
- **Senator David E. Bates** of Barrington
- **The American Hotel and Lodging Association State Leadership Award** was presented to **Mark Gervais**, General Manager of the Hotel Viking in Newport
- **The National Restaurant Association Restaurant Neighbor Awards** were presented to:
 - **Eleven Forty Nine Restaurant** in Warwick
 - **Chelo's Hometown Bar & Grille** in Cumberland
 - **Joe Prazeres, Dunkin' Donuts Franchisee** in Bristol, Barrington and Warren
- **Hotel Employees of the Year** include:
 - **Derek Gibson**, Purchasing Manager at the Renaissance Providence Hotel
 - **Mohammed Iqbal**, Bellman at the Newport Harbor Hotel & Marina
 - **James Burgess**, Engineer for the Hotel Viking in Newport
 - **Lori Famiglietti**, Executive Assistant at the Renaissance Providence Hotel
 - **Ben Stannard**, Front Office Director at NYLO Providence/Warwick
 - **Karen Campbell**, Payroll Clerk at the Hyatt Regency Newport Hotel & Spa
 - **Kimberly Greene**, Assistant General Manager of the Renaissance Providence Hotel
 - **Peter Fontaine**, Guest Services/Van Driver for the Hampton Inn and Suites Providence
 - **Agnes Mokry**, Front Desk Agent at the Sheraton Providence Airport Hotel
 - **Annie Harding**, Front Desk Agent at The Village Inn, Narragansett
 - **Hilda Castillo**, Room Attendant at The Providence Biltmore Hotel
 - **Jaime Vazquez**, Laundry Attendant at The Providence Biltmore Hotel
 - **Nancy Jane Hargraves**, Room Service Supervisor at the Renaissance Providence Hotel
 - **Kimberly Rojas**, Front Desk Associate at the Hilton Garden Inn, Warwick
- **Restaurant Employees of the Year** include:
 - **Donna Sweeney**, Prep Cook/Line Cook at T's Restaurant in Cranston
 - **Kim Wells**, General Manager of Rick's Roadhouse in Providence
 - **RI Convention Center Banquet Staff**, RI Convention Center in Providence
 - **Roger Payette**, Manager of Kay's Restaurant in Woonsocket
 - **Annie Connery**, Server at Hemenway's Seafood Grille & Oyster Bar
 - **Anthony Batrone**, Bartender at Aspire in Providence
- **Tourism Organization Employees of the Year** include:
 - **Susan Pratt**, Senior Sales Coordinator at Newport County CVB

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- **Kimberly Wardyga**, Youth Coordinator at the RI Hospitality Education Foundation in Cranston
- **Erin Degulis**, Director of Convention Services at the Providence/Warwick CVB

With more than 600 foodservice and hospitality members in Rhode Island, the RI Hospitality Association has been the voice of the hospitality and tourism industry in the state more than for 26 years. For more information, please call (401) 223-1120, or write to: RI Hospitality Association, 94 Sabra Street, Cranston, RI, 02910, or visit www.rihospitality.org.