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Santa Monica Welcomes Back Cirque du Soleil in 2009

*The Magic and History of the City Will Come Alive
With the Celebration of Two Milestones*

SANTA MONICA, Calif. (January 28, 2009) -- As 2009 gets underway, so does the Centennial Celebration for the Santa Monica Pier. The Pier, observing its 100th anniversary on September 9, 2009, plays an important role in Santa Monica's history, representing much of the history and magic that has made the city a unique place to live and visit for over a century. As part of this once-in-a-lifetime year of festivities, the Pier Centennial proudly welcomes the return of Cirque du Soleil in October 2009.

Cirque du Soleil chose Santa Monica as its first United States tour destination over 20 years ago; and, Cirque founders view this beach community as the vehicle that launched the small touring company into the world-renowned brand it is today. In fact, Santa Monica is so significant to the evolution of Cirque du Soleil that the organization is choosing to celebrate its 25th birthday by returning here.

"Santa Monica is excited to welcome back Cirque du Soleil on their 25th birthday", said Misti Kerns, President/CEO of Santa Monica Convention & Visitors Bureau. "The Pier played a major role in Cirque's success, and it is wonderful to see them reunited. It is an incredible year for our city culturally, with the return of Cirque du Soleil in its 25th year coinciding with the Santa Monica Pier's Centennial anniversary. This is the perfect way to commemorate these two major milestones, and we plan to celebrate all year long."

The Cirque du Soleil production KOOZA will run in Santa Monica from October to December 2009, with final dates and show times to be announced soon. KOOZA tells the story of The Innocent, a loner who is searching for his place in the world. The visually stimulating story is told through a combination of two circus traditions - acrobatic performance and the art of clowning. All of Cirque's shows are based on concepts very different from those of standard circuses, with an extraordinary mix of circus arts, street entertainment, outrageous costumes and original music. With not a single animal in the ring, Cirque's distinction is apparent from the very beginning.

“It has long been our desire that Santa Monica be the site to which Cirque du Soleil returns with its touring shows when we visit the greater LA Area,” said Daniel Lamarre, Cirque du Soleil’s President and CEO. “We are very thankful to everyone who has made this desire closer to becoming a reality.”

Santa Monica offers the perfect venue for this exceptional show, set to the backdrop of the Pacific Ocean and world-famous Pier, and within walking distance to numerous award-winning restaurants. The Santa Monica hospitality community is set to embrace the return of this internationally recognized performance. Many local hotels and restaurants will be offering special packages to create a complete experience for both visitors and locals, ensuring that 2009 is truly a year of celebration in Santa Monica. For more information visit <http://www.santamonica.com/cirque-du-soleil>

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Santa Monica Convention & Visitors Bureau (SMCVB) is a non-member, non-profit organization designed to increase visitor expenditures, tourism revenues and local employment opportunities through the promotion of Santa Monica as a premier travel destination. For travel and accommodation information please call (800) 544-5319 or (310) 319-6263; or email info@santamonica.com; or write Santa Monica Visitor Center, 1920 Main Street Suite B, Santa Monica, CA 90405. Official Santa Monica Maps, Visitor Guides, Corporate Guides, Art Trek, Design District, Big Blue Bus and Historical Landmark Maps are available at all Santa Monica visitor service locations and can be mailed upon request. To reduce our environmental footprint, some of these materials can also be downloaded or ordered from our website at www.santamonica.com.

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