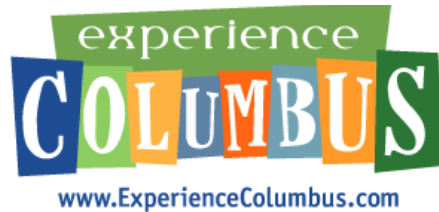


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MEDIA CONTACT:

Scott Peacock
Media Relations Manager
Experience Columbus
614-222-6104
Speacock@ExperienceColumbus.com

Seventh Annual EXPY Award Winners to be Recognized

COLUMBUS, Ohio (Jan. 14, 2010) – Experience Columbus announces the winners of the seventh annual EXPY Awards – [Egypt in Columbus](#), [Pelotonia](#) and [Huntington Park](#). The Experience Columbus EXPY Awards recognize outstanding contributions that businesses and organizations make toward creating a more vibrant and distinct Columbus experience for residents and visitors. Recipients must present unique events, attractions or marketing initiatives that bring visitors to Columbus.

[Egypt in Columbus](#) took place in the spring and summer and was a partnership comprised of the [Columbus Museum of Art \(CMA\)](#), [COSI](#), [Columbus Metropolitan Library](#) and five additional public libraries. A Passport to Egypt was created to encourage children to explore each exhibit at both COSI and CMA, then visit a participating library to answer questions and receive stamps in their passport. Once completed, passports were turned in for a chance to win a prize. The program saw 18,000 passports distributed to central Ohio students and families. CMA's exhibit brought in nearly 100,000 visitors, and COSI's attendance exceeded 174,000 guests.

Started in 2009, [Pelotonia](#) is an annual grassroots bike tour and fundraiser that raises money for cancer research. Riders travel varying distances from Columbus down to Athens and back, with every dollar raised going directly toward funding cancer research at The Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center-James Cancer Hospital and Solove Research Institute. In its inaugural year, Pelotonia attracted 2,265 riders from 31 states and Canada, including seven-time Tour de France winner Lance Armstrong. The appeal of this event was widespread with 418 riders traveling from more than 50 miles away to stay in Columbus and participate in the event. Pelotonia also had more than 1,200 volunteers from seven states. According to Google and Zeitgeist, Pelotonia was the number one most popular search term unique to Columbus in 2009. All this led to the event exceeding its fundraising goals for year one, raising \$4,511,868 for cancer research.

The Columbus Clippers officially ushered in a new era in Columbus baseball with the opening of [Huntington Park](#) on Saturday, April 18, 2009 in front of a record crowd of more than 11,000 fans. The park has received local, regional and national praise for its multiple game-watching locations, the unique external sidewalk viewing area and the skyline views of downtown Columbus. Huntington Park won 'Ballpark of the Year' by *Baseballparks.com*, beating out several other major league competitors including the new Yankee Stadium. Season attendance was a franchise record of more than 588,000.

"We feel that there were a lot of great, deserving events and programs in Central Ohio in 2009. However, these three really stood out as examples of Columbus' collaborative and innovative spirit," said Paul Astleford, president and CEO of Experience Columbus. "Egypt in Columbus, Pelotonia and Huntington Park all raised awareness of Columbus as a destination nationally, one that is ever evolving and striving to make the visitor experience uniquely definable and memorable. For this, we applaud their efforts."

The recipients will be recognized at Experience Columbus' 2010 Annual Meeting on Tuesday, March 2 from noon to 1:15 p.m. The meeting will be held in the new Battelle Grand ballroom at the Greater Columbus Convention Center located at 400 N. High St. This year's theme is "The Next Columbus." A networking reception before the program starts at 11 a.m. The event is open to the public, with a February 19 deadline to reserve seats. Tickets can be purchased at www.ExperienceColumbus.com/annual.cfm.

Experience Columbus is the destination sales and marketing organization for the Greater Columbus community. Formerly the Greater Columbus Convention and Visitors Bureau, Experience Columbus works with the Columbus community to create a competitive distinction in the visitor marketplace, attracting leisure visitors, conventions and meetings.

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