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AND THE AWARD GOES TO...RESPONSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE
American Express announces the opening of its 2007 Caribbean Environmental Award

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (February 26, 2007) – The Caribbean Hotel Association (CHA) and its environmental subsidiary, the Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism (CAST), are pleased to announce the opening of the nomination process for the new 2007 American Express Caribbean Environmental Award. This award recognizes the commitment made to sustainable tourism by Caribbean hotels each year and social performances as demonstrated by their policies, plans and records of activities. The deadline for submission of nominations is March 20, 2007.

“This is probably one of the most important awards this year. In the light of the recent debate on climate change, recognizing a property whose environment and social development becomes a priority encourages other Caribbean’s properties to follow suit - and spread the word about initiatives to preserve natural resources and attract responsible travelers,” said Dianelys Rodríguez, Vice President of Destination Business Development, American Express Company. Candidates for the *2007 American Express Caribbean Environmental Award* must demonstrate a track record of environmental stewardship through activities such as reduction/elimination of waste streams through innovative practices, water/energy efficiency and conservation, guest and employee participation in conservation and community enrichment programs, among other achievements.

Given the colossal international attention to the issue of environmental responsibility – ranging from award-winning documentaries, animated films, and even advertising campaigns, the message is increasingly grasping the consciousness of the public and, consequently, the vacation traveler.

The 2007 winner will join an elite group of Caribbean properties that are leading the regional movement towards a tourism product that is good for the environment and the local people. The most recent honorees were Sandals Montego Bay in Jamaica and 3Rivers Eco Lodge in Dominica, winners of the 2006 award in the large and small hotel categories, respectively.

In 2007, one overall award will be presented. “We consolidated the two categories because, over the years, we have found that small hotels have the same capacity as larger properties to implement responsible practices into their mainstream operations and are not at all disadvantaged by their relative size. It’s a matter of quality not quantity,” said CAST



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director, Deirdre Shurland, adding that nominees would be reviewed on their individual performance against established criteria, not in comparison to other properties nominated.

A panel of judges will evaluate the nominations and three finalists will be selected for site inspections. The purpose of these independent inspections is to verify the accuracy of the information submitted. The panel of judges will designate the winner, which will be announced at the Caribbean Hotel & Tourism Conference, to be held June 17 – 19, in Miami, Florida.

The 2007 American Express Caribbean Environmental Award application form and eligibility requirements are available on the CAST website at www.cha-cast.com. American Express is a member of the governing council of the Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism (CAST). As a governing council member, American Express helps develop the organization's sustainable tourism policies. To learn about the 2006 winners, or for additional information on how to develop an environmental program, contact CAST at 1000 Ponce de León Ave, 5th Floor, San Juan, Puerto Rico, 00907; telephone 787-725-9139; fax 787-725-9108; Website: www.cha-cast.com; E-mail: cast@cha-cast.com

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About the Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism (CAST) – www.cha-cast.com

CAST, the environmental subsidiary of the Caribbean Hotel Association (CHA), was chartered in 1997 to undertake collaborative environmental efforts within the hotel industry, enhance the practices of the region's hotel and tourism operators by providing high quality education and training related to sustainable tourism; promote the industry's efforts and successes to the traveling public and other stakeholders; and serve as a vital link to all stakeholders with sustainable tourism interests in the Caribbean region. CAST has consolidated its strategic focus within the following four program areas: sustainable tourism certification and standards development, development of environmental management tools, advocacy and fundraising.



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