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**COMPETITIVENESS CONFERENCE ATTRACTS WORLDWIDE PARTICIPANTS
TO PORTLAND, OREGON**

To date, representatives from 28 countries register to learn about cluster development

PORTLAND, Ore. – To many, an international gathering of hundreds of people all interested in competitiveness might conjure up such world-renowned athletic events as the Tour de France, the Olympics or the World Cup. But this fall, the 500 participants in the 2007 Global Conference on Competitiveness will be focusing their sites on much different goals: the development of industry clusters and improved competitiveness in the regions they represent around the world.

The annual conference is hosted by The Competitiveness Institute (TCI), headquartered in Barcelona, Spain, whose mission is to improve living standards and the local competitiveness of regions throughout the world by fostering industry cluster-based development initiatives. The 2007 conference, which will be held in Portland, Ore., on October 8 through October 12, is jointly hosted by the states of Oregon and Washington and the City of Portland. The theme for this year's conference is "Collaboration, Innovation and Sustainability."

With the conference just over a month away, more than 250 registrations have already been received from all parts of the globe including such countries as Cameroon, Uganda, Spain, Poland, Pakistan, and Russia to name a few. The conference is limited to 500 participants and organizers are confident that it will be a packed house.

"It's a great honor to be chosen as the host state for TCI. This global event will highlight Oregon's innovative industries and our work to implement an industry cluster strategy," said Bob Repine, director of the Oregon Economic & Community Development Department. "Any time we have the opportunity to engage with an international audience and tell them about Oregon, we take advantage of it."

Industry clusters are defined as groups of companies that interact based on essential business relationships among firms in a geographic region. These business relationships can

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be the markets they serve, the products they produce, as well as the suppliers, trade associations and educational institutions that are associated with their industries. Oregon has been taking steps to use the cluster approach to identify industry needs and provide a more comprehensive and coordinated package of services to businesses.

A primary reason for this worldwide interest in the conference stems from the slate of speakers and presenters ranging from distinguished professors to Fortune 500 executives, economists and other thought leaders on economic and cluster development. Among these are:

- Dr. Bob Sutor, vice president, Open Source and Standards, IBM Corporation
- Christian Ketels, Harvard Business School faculty at Professor Michael E. Porter's Institute for Strategy and Competitiveness
- Carol Coletta, president and CEO of CEOs for Cities, and host and producer of the nationally syndicated public radio program Smart City
- AnnaLee Saxenian, dean and professor in the School of Information and professor in the Department of City and Regional Planning, University of California, Berkeley
- Harry Feuerstein, chief financial officer and senior vice president, Siemens One, Inc.
- Dr. Vinod Jain, director, Center for International Business Education and Research; Professor, Robert H. Smith School of Business, University of Maryland
- Dr. Karl-Henrik Robèrt, founder of the Natural Step Network, who will be the opening keynote speaker for the Academic Summit to be held on October 9

Other highlights of the conference will be tours of local and regional industry clusters in both Washington and Oregon. For participants flying into Seattle on Monday, October 8, tours will be held of the life sciences, aerospace and video games clusters. In Portland, participants can choose among a wide array of cluster tours, to be held on October 8 and 9, featuring such industries as: wine; metals manufacturing and defense contractors; agriculture and food products; green building; nanotech; forestry; microbrews; and distribution and logistics. Tour participants will learn first-hand, from top leaders in their industries, how the clusters were formed, the challenges they faced, and the benefits of working in “co-opetition.”

A “town hall” event featuring Cascadian region elected officials will take place the evening of Tuesday, October 9th. This event will feature Oregon’s Governor Ted Kulongoski, former Washington Governor Gary Locke, Premier Gordon Campbell of British Columbia, and

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the mayors of Portland, Ore., and Vancouver, Wash. They will take questions from the audience and each other about regional competitiveness and economic development.

As host of this year's TCI annual conference, Portland is in good company with past host cities throughout the world such as: Glasgow, Cairns, Ottawa, Hong Kong, and Lyon.

About The Competiveness Institute

The Competiveness Institute (TCI) is a not-for-profit alliance of cluster practitioners. Its mission is to improve living standards and the local competitiveness of regions throughout the world by fostering cluster-based development initiatives. TCI offers information on clusters and competitive regions worldwide employing multiple arenas such as networking and the Internet for exchange of ideas, knowledge and experiences on methodologies for economic growth. It focuses on clusters, innovation systems, promotion of entrepreneurship and regional branding. The organization's membership base is comprised of more than 800 leading practitioners from all levels of governments, academia and the private sector from more than 60 countries.

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