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**Hilton Columbus Downtown Marks Milestone in its Construction Schedule  
With Traditional “Topping Out” Ceremony**

*Distinctive Green Metal Tree Created by Local Ironwork Designer Perched on Top of Building Offers a New Twist on Time-Honored Construction Ceremony 14 Stories Above Ohio’s Capital City*

**COLUMBUS, OH – (October 18, 2011)** – Today representatives from Franklin County, City of Columbus, Turner Construction Company, Franklin County Convention Facilities Authority, Hilton Worldwide, community leaders and other hotel project supporters celebrated the “topping out” of the \$140 million Hilton Columbus Downtown scheduled to open in fall 2012. The convention headquarters property will be located on the west side of High Street directly adjacent to the SMG-managed Greater Columbus Convention Center and Nationwide Arena.

In recognition of Hilton Columbus Downtown reaching its highest point in construction, the topping out ceremony was attended by Franklin County Commissioners Marilyn Brown, Paula Brooks and John O’Grady, Columbus Mayor Michael B. Coleman; Kyle Rooney, vice president and general manager for Turner Construction Company’s Columbus office, John S. Christie, chairman of the Franklin County Convention Facilities Authority, Bill Jennison, executive director, Franklin County Convention Facilities Authority and Christian Coffin, general manager, Hilton Columbus Downtown.

“Hilton Columbus Downtown is a structure designed to fit into the diverse growing downtown of Columbus,” stated John S. Christie, chairman, Franklin County Convention Facilities Authority. “It is a building that connects the Short North Arts District to the ever-expanding Arena District. The project is on time and on budget, based on great coordination between the owner, architect, construction manager and the Hilton organization. It will be a showcase for downtown.”

“Today marks an important milestone in long-standing relationship between Hilton and the City of Columbus and our distinguished business partners involved in this monumental project,” said Christian Coffin, general manager, Hilton Columbus Downtown. “We are honored that Hilton was selected as the hotel partner for this project to provide additional rooms to help meet the city’s growing demand for convention business at the state, regional and national level,” Coffin added. “For today’s topping out ceremony, we wanted to do something different. Since the hotel features a striking contemporary design, we asked a local ironwork designer to create a green metal tree and give it a more modern re-interpretation.”

The project is a collaboration between the Franklin County Commissioners, Franklin County Convention Facilities Authority, City of Columbus and Nationwide Realty Investors, Inc. Hilton Worldwide manages the hotel and provides day-to-day operations support including sales, marketing and customer service.

“We are working to make Columbus a best-in-class destination for national conventions and events, and this hotel is a cornerstone to attract millions of new visitors each year to enjoy our restaurants, shopping, arts and sports,” said Mayor Michael B. Coleman. “Visitor spending has a major local impact and I cannot wait to welcome all that new business when these doors open during our bicentennial in 2012,” added Mayor Coleman.

“Given the size and scope of the new Hilton Columbus Downtown, we truly can step up to a new level of competition for events, conventions, sports and trade shows,” stated County Commissioner Marilyn Brown. “This industry represents some 60,000 jobs in Franklin County and this is just the sort of new economic development that we want to keep growing for our future,” Commissioner Brown added.

The hotel topping out ceremony marks a time-honored construction custom dating back more than one thousand years. With its Scandinavian origins, local superstition held that it was necessary to appease the gods and ancestral spirits living in the trees that were cut and used in building structures. In modern times, once the top story of a structure is completed, a live evergreen is hoisted to the top of the building. For the building’s topping out ceremony, a new twist on an old tradition was created. A distinctive green metal tree designed by local ornamental iron designer, Dan Fortin of Fortin Ironworks, will be positioned next to a traditional evergreen on top of the 14<sup>th</sup> floor’s I-beam framework.

“Construction is progressing on schedule and we are optimistic that the hotel will be completed on its anticipated opening date in the fall of 2012,” said Kyle Rooney, vice president and general manager for Turner Construction Company’s Columbus office.

“With the addition of the Hilton Columbus Downtown, Columbus can now offer multiple downtown-headquarter hotel opportunities to more than one convention or trade show at a time, as well as meet the needs of our existing annual business that continues to grow each year,” said Bill Jennison, executive director, Franklin County Convention Facilities Authority. “The additional rooms and meeting space the Hilton Columbus Downtown brings, significantly strengthens our product offering in the global market allowing us to host larger national conventions and trade shows within the 1.7 million-square-foot Greater Columbus Convention Center,” Jennison added.

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#### **About Turner Construction Company**

Turner Construction Company has been serving Ohio clients for over 100 years, and offers a network of four regional office locations in Columbus, Cincinnati, Cleveland, and Toledo. Turner's managed construction in Ohio was over \$800 million for 2010.

Turner Construction Company is the leading general builder in the U.S., ranking first or second in the major segments of the building construction field. During 2010, Turner Construction Company completed \$8 billion of construction. Turner Construction Company is the only builder offering clients a nationwide network of offices across the U.S. Founded in 1902, the firm is a

subsidiary of HOCHTIEF, a publicly traded company and one of the world's leading international construction service providers. For more information, visit Turner's website at [www.turnerconstruction.com](http://www.turnerconstruction.com).

### **About Hilton Columbus Downtown**

Located in the heart of the city's downtown core, on the west side of High Street and connected to the SMG-managed Greater Columbus Convention Center and Nationwide Arena, Hilton Columbus Downtown is scheduled to open in the fall of 2012. The 532-room, 48-suite convention center hotel will feature 22,800 square feet of meeting space, including a 12,000 square foot ballroom, and boast a 160-seat full-service restaurant, 100-seat lounge, specialty coffee outlet and Executive Lounge. The hotel is connected to the Greater Columbus Convention Center via a glass-enclosed walkway. Hilton Columbus Downtown will be Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified when completed. For additional information on Hilton Columbus Downtown, please contact the pre-opening office at 614) 384-8604.

### **About Hilton Hotels & Resorts**

One of the most recognized names in the industry, Hilton Hotels & Resorts stands as the stylish, forward thinking global leader in hospitality. From inaugural balls and Hollywood award galas to business events and days to remember, Hilton is where the world makes history, closes the deal, toasts special occasions and gets away from it all. The flagship brand of Hilton Worldwide continues to build upon its legacy of innovation by developing products and services to meet the needs of tomorrow's savvy global travelers while more than 144,000 Team Members shape experiences in which every guest feels cared for, valued and respected. Today, the Hilton Hotels & Resorts portfolio includes more than 540 hotels in 78 countries and the brand remains synonymous with "hotel." Access the latest Hilton news at [www.hiltonglobalmediacenter.com](http://www.hiltonglobalmediacenter.com) or begin your journey at [www.hilton.com](http://www.hilton.com). Social media users can engage with Hilton at [www.twitter.com/hiltononline](http://www.twitter.com/hiltononline), [www.facebook.com/hilton](http://www.facebook.com/hilton) and [www.youtube.com/hilton](http://www.youtube.com/hilton). Hilton Hotels & Resorts is one of Hilton Worldwide's ten market-leading brands.

### **About Hilton Worldwide**

Hilton Worldwide is the leading global hospitality company, spanning the lodging sector from luxurious full-service hotels and resorts to extended-stay suites and mid-priced hotels. For 93 years, Hilton Worldwide has been offering business and leisure travelers the finest in accommodations, service, amenities and value. The company is dedicated to continuing its tradition of providing exceptional guest experiences across its global brands. Its brands are comprised of more than 3,750 hotels and timeshare properties, with 615,000 rooms in 85 countries and include Waldorf Astoria Hotels & Resorts, Conrad Hotels & Resorts, Hilton Hotels & Resorts, DoubleTree by Hilton, Embassy Suites Hotels, Hilton Garden Inn, Hampton Hotels, Homewood Suites by Hilton, Home2 Suites by Hilton and Hilton Grand Vacations. The company also manages the world-class guest reward program Hilton HHonors®. For more information about the company, visit [www.HiltonWorldwide.com](http://www.HiltonWorldwide.com) or connect with Hilton Worldwide at [www.HiltonWorldwide.com/Media](http://www.HiltonWorldwide.com/Media).