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**PRESS RELEASE**

*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

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## **ATCHISON RECEIVES AWARD FOR COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP**

*ORLANDO, FL (December 4, 2009):* On Saturday, December 19th, at the largest black-tie holiday gala for the hospitality industry, the Central Florida Hotel & Lodging Association (CFHLA) will present Jim Atchison, President & CEO of SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment, the 2009 CFHLA “Charles Andrews Memorial Hospitality Award for Community Leadership.” Each year, this prestigious award is given to one local leader for their contribution to tourism through community service.

This award is the “highest honor” bestowed upon an individual by CFHLA, in recognition of their achievements and contributions to the Central Florida hospitality industry, as well as the community at large. The award is named after the founding father of CFHLA, Charles Andrews, and exemplifies perseverance and dedication to a cause.

Atchison began his career in 1985 as a parking lot attendant at Busch Gardens Tampa. Since that time, Atchison has held leadership positions in park operations, finance, business analysis, and marketing in 6 of the company’s 10 parks. Mr. Atchison holds a Bachelor’s Degree in Marketing from the University of South Florida and an MBA from the University of Central Florida. Prior to assuming his current role, Atchison served as Executive Vice President and General Manager of SeaWorld Orlando and Discovery Cove.

A supporter of the Orlando community, Atchison is active in civic projects and organizations including the Special Olympics, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, United Arts, Orlando/Orange County Convention and Visitors Bureau, Florida Chamber of Commerce, the UCF Rosen College of Hospitality Management, UCF Foundation and the UCF College for Business - Dean’s Executive Council. The Florida Governor reappointed him to a second term on the Florida Commission on Tourism, the agency that oversees Florida’s tourism promotion.

Atchison will be honored during the 2009 CFHLA Hospitality Gala, which will be held at the Hyatt Regency Grand Cypress on Saturday, December 19<sup>th</sup>, from 6 P.M. to Midnight. Nearly 800 Hospitality Executives are expected to attend along with many elected officials from all over Central Florida.

For more information about CFHLA, please visit our website: [www.cfhla.org](http://www.cfhla.org)

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*The Central Florida Hotel & Lodging Association is the world’s largest regional hotel association, representing approximately 80% of the hotels in Orange, Osceola and Seminole Counties and over 117,000 of their employees.*