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**NEWS RELEASE
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BIRMINGHAM MEETINGS BUSINESS NOT AFFECTED BY RECENT TORNADOES

Birmingham, AL---As the storm-ravaged state begins to pick up the pieces from the savage tornadoes of April 27, at least one industry is largely unaffected.

The state's largest meeting facility, the Birmingham-Jefferson Convention Complex, escaped damage during the deadly storms, as did all major convention hotels in the Birmingham area. To date, no scheduled conventions or tradeshow have been cancelled. Likewise, area attractions received little or no damage, and the Birmingham-Shuttlesworth International Airport is undamaged and running on a regular schedule.

"So many of our neighbors in outlying communities and nearby cities suffered unimaginable loss," said James H. Smither, president of the Greater Birmingham Convention & Visitors Bureau. "Our greatest hope for them is peace and recovery."

Many area hotels are booked to capacity with workers from FEMA and other relief organizations as conventions and meetings take place as scheduled. Restaurants, particularly in the downtown area, are adjusting their operating hours to better serve relief workers and out-of-town volunteers.

The Convention & Visitors Bureau is tracking hotel availability regularly. People looking for accommodations are urged to call the CVB at 800-458-8085 for current information.

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