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BATTLE OF THE MARIACHIS FESTIVAL A SUCCESS

SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO, CA. – May 23, 2011 – Mission San Juan Capistrano held its seventh annual Battle of the Mariachis Festival on Saturday, May 21. This popular event, attended by approximately 4,000 enthusiastic fans, featured talented Southern California mariachi bands, plus one from Idaho, which competed for cash prizes before a panel of judges.

The Festival was made possible thanks to the generous support from the Thomas J. and Erma Jean Tracy Family Foundation.

"With the Tracy Family Foundation's continued support, this year's event was the most successful yet," said Mechelle Lawrence-Adams, Executive Director of Mission San Juan Capistrano. "We had so many bands we needed to turn some of them away! The community came together in this incredible landmark to celebrate mariachi music and leave with a lifelong memory. The performers were inspiring, and our emcee was both gracious and welcoming. Our entire team worked tirelessly to deliver a community program to be proud of and to represent San Juan Capistrano well on its occasion of its 50th birthday."

Battle of the Mariachis Festival winners were:

First Place (\$2,000)

Mariachi Chula Vista (15 performers, ages 14-27)

Second Place (\$1,500)

Mariachi de Uclatlan (12 performers, ages 18-31)

Third Place (\$1,000)

Plaza de la Raza Youth Mariachi Ensemble (16 performers, ages 9-16)

Honorary Mention (\$750)

Mariachi Juvenile Azteca (San Diego)

Tom Tracy Award (\$500)

Vanessa Sanchez of Palmdale, CA: Soloist on the Ranchera, Mariachi de Uclatlan (Los Angeles)

Held in the Mission's Central Courtyard, festivities included performances by Genesis Codina and Mariachi Capistrano. Throughout the day a Mariachi-inspired bilingual marionette show by Franklin Haynes Marionettes was performed in the front courtyard along with the usual Panning for Gold experience offered each weekend. The historic Mission bells rang in revelry at 10:30 a.m. to mark the start of the Festival.

The event was emceed Laura Garciacano Sobrino, who was first dubbed the "Mariachi Queen" in 1995 by the Los Angeles Times. In 1996, an NBC national morning show featured a segment on her as a pioneer female mariachi and as a positive role model for the new generation of mariachi musicians. This year marked her second return as the Festival's emcee.

About Mission San Juan Capistrano:

Known as the "Jewel of the Missions," Mission San Juan Capistrano is a historic landmark and museum that boasts of quality permanent exhibits featuring original artifacts as well as traveling and temporary exhibits on a wide variety of topics.

The site itself serves as a living outdoor museum with original buildings constructed by Native Americans in the 18th century including the Serra Chapel, Great Stone Church, and the original padres' quarters of the South Wing.

The Mission was founded on November 1, 1776 by Padre Junipero Serra as the seventh in the chain of the twenty-one California missions established by Spain, and is Orange County's only mission. Every year, over 50,000 students visit the Mission and engage in an inspirational learning experience via the Mission Matters programming, as part of their State required California history studies.

Mission San Juan Capistrano is owned by the Diocese of Orange and is supported by the Mission Preservation Foundation, which is comprised of business and community leaders committed to ensuring the long term preservation and viability of Orange County's only Mission. The Mission receives no funding from either the Church or the State of California and charges admission funds as a means of providing public access.

Mission San Juan Capistrano is located at 26801 Ortega Highway, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675. Open Daily 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Good Friday afternoon. Admission is \$9 adults; \$8 seniors (60 years or over); \$5 children (ages 4 to 11); and children ages 3 and under are admitted free. Free audio guide with senior and adult admission. For more information, call (949) 234-1300 or visit www.missionsjc.com.

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Editor's Note: Photos are available upon request