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**Cincinnati USA Regional Tourism Network, Lily Pad
And Time Warner Cable Business Class
Announce Nation's First Interstate Wi-Fi Hotspot
Connecting Three Cities In Two States With One Internet Bridge**

CINCINNATI USA, May 1, 2006 – It's now possible for tourists and young professionals to surf the Ohio River in Cincinnati USA. At the click of a mouse, no less.

The Cincinnati USA region – long a bastion of breakthrough innovation in telecommunications, broadcasting, aerospace, medicine, marketing and other industries – today laid claim to the nation's first wi-fi hotspot that connects the assets and attractions of three cities in two states with one Internet bridge.

Through a partnership of Lily Pad and Time Warner Cable Business Class – and led by the Cincinnati USA Regional Tourism Network with support by the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber – the wi-fi interstate hotspot connecting Cincinnati, Covington and Newport was unveiled at a 1:30 p.m. news conference today at the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center. According to RTN officials, the initiative is designed to promote the three-state, 15-county region as a dynamic and progressive place for tourists, young professionals, creative individuals, tech workers and urbanists.

The Cincinnati USA Wi-fi Riverfront was more than nine months in planning among the organizations and utilizes cutting-edge technology, a combination of radios and antennas specifically selected to work in a mesh environment to cover approximately 25 million square feet of the riverfront with 802.11 wireless capability, Time Warner Cable Business Class officials said. The equipment is mounted at strategically mapped points on buildings in Cincinnati and Covington, noted Ryan Rybolt, project leader of Lily Pad, a non-profit initiative.

In a strong showing of regional collaboration, Mayor Mark Mallory of Cincinnati, Mayor Butch Callery of Covington and Mayor Tom Guidugli of Newport shared the podium at the Freedom Center news conference to underscore the importance of innovative thinking and regional marketing to promote the Cincinnati USA region in the global marketplace.

"The Wi-Fi Riverfront is another example that Cincinnati is an exciting city on the cutting edge," Mayor Mallory said. "Lily Pad illustrates the power of creating partnerships between private companies and the public sector to find innovative strategies to tackle tough problems. This is a groundbreaking approach to providing free wireless Internet that is going to serve as a national model."

"We salute the volunteers of Lily Pad and wholeheartedly congratulate you for bringing your innovative concept to our region's front door, the south and north banks of the Ohio River," said Mayor Callery.

Added Mayor Guidugli, "Newport is proud to stand with the cities of Cincinnati and Covington to celebrate the new dynamic spirit sweeping our region, and to congratulate the Regional Tourism Network, Time Warner Cable Business Class and Lily Pad for connecting the attractions of the north and south banks of the Ohio River in such innovative fashion."

Scott Usitalo, RTN president, told the audience of approximately 75 business and community leaders that harnessing the power of technology is critically important to enhancing the image of Cincinnati USA to attract tourists and young professionals as well as elevating the marketing reach of the RTN. The landing page for the Cincinnati USA Wi-Fi Riverfront directs surfers along – and on – the Ohio River to the RTN's home page of CincinnatiUSA.com.

"It's absolutely tremendous that visitors to our riverfront can catch the wave of the latest technology and surf the Ohio River to access information about the very best of what Cincinnati USA has to offer, as well as connecting them to the world," Usitalo said. "That Cincinnati USA is the first region in the nation to utilize this technology to connect three cities in two states, bridging the Ohio, brings to life the spirit of our new brand of 'Cincinnati USA: All together surprising.'

Richard Human, vice president of Time Warner Cable Business Class, said the company has been extremely pleased to partner with the Lily Pad effort over the past year to help power free wi-fi access in diverse neighborhoods such as Findlay Market, the Main Street Entertainment District and Hyde Park Square.

But he added company officials are most excited about helping Cincinnati USA put its stake in the ground – and in the Ohio River — as a national leader for leveraging technology to connect political jurisdictions and community assets across state lines.

"Through the ingenuity, talent and persistence of our Time Warner Cable Business Class team, we are delighted to put an exclamation point on the innovative tech efforts in Cincinnati USA to bridge the region literally and figuratively, and to connect our business community with young professionals, tech workers and the creative class," Human said. "This underscores Time Warner Cable's longstanding commitment to this community."

Human noted Time Warner Cable Business Class created custom mapping and design tools to aid in the selection and placement of the radios and antennas to increase riverfront coverage. Proprietary "back office" software was employed to enhance the users' experience and ease of connection to the vast network, affectionately referred to by the organizers of the project as the World's Largest Virtual Lily Pad.

Clearly, the announcement was an opportunity for Lily Pad volunteers to bask in the spotlight for leading progressive thinking and marketing in Cincinnati USA.

All three mayors praised the work of the Lily Pad project, led by a core group of nine young professionals and supported by Give Back Cincinnati, an organization of 2,400 young professionals. The mayors noted the importance of the work of Lily Pad to help market the region progressively and reverse the outward migration of talented young single workers, the No. 1 challenge for the regional economy according to area economists.

Lily Pad co-founder Rybolt said the day marked a turning point for Cincinnati USA. "The partners and volunteers in Lily Pad have demonstrated the commitment and vision necessary to put Cincinnati USA on the national map as a dynamic and vibrant place," Rybolt said. "With our unique adopt-a-highway approach to providing free wi-fi access, Lily Pad has earned the status of a national business model while other cities have lagged behind with outdated thinking relying on taxpayer dollars and municipal support. By embracing wi-fi in this unique way, Cincinnati USA has proved the courage to say, 'Why not?'"

Rybolt noted Lily Pad has launched 28 free hotspots in the region with as many as 50 more in the pipeline, funded through tax-deductible sponsorships by area corporations and philanthropists.

To celebrate the wi-fi riverfront announcement, the RTN and the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber will stage a special edition of Light Up Cincinnati USA the evening of May 1. Both Great American Ball Park and Paul Brown Stadium will be aglow for the evening. According to RTN and Chamber officials, this event is believed to be the first time both stadiums will be illuminated at the same time on Cincinnati USA's new billion-dollar riverfront.

The 2006 Light Up Cincinnati USA will feature a photo contest with cash prizes in two categories: best photo of the skyline illuminated, and, new for this year, best photo of people enjoying the illuminated skyline. All photos must be taken the evening of May 1, 2006. Cash prizes of \$1,000 and \$500 will be offered in both categories, as the discretion of a panel of judges.

Prizes may not be awarded if judges feel the submissions do not merit award recognition. Photos that earn award recognition become the property of the RTN and the Chamber for future promotion of the region.

Submitted photos must be between 8 by 10 inches and 11 by 14 inches, color or black and white, and must be submitted by 5 p.m. Friday, May 12, at the Chamber offices, 300 Carew Tower, 441 Vine St., Cincinnati, OH 45202.

For more information on the photo contest, the public is encouraged to visit the RTN's Web site at CincinnatiUSA.com.

Other organizations who lent support to the Cincinnati USA Wi-Fi Riverfront at the news conference included: the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, CincyTechUSA, the Cincinnati Bengals, Cincinnati Parks, Downtown Cincinnati Inc., the Southbank Partners, Vision 2015, the Cincinnati Center City Development Corp., the Web team of Cincinnati.com, the Flying Pig Marathon, the Purple People Bridge, the Tall Stacks Music, Arts & Heritage Festival and the BB Riverboats.

Cincinnati USA's riverfront boasts a nationally acclaimed renaissance of arts, culture, shopping, dining, recreation and major league sports that has formed one of the largest waterway investment projects in the nation, with an economic impact exceeding \$5.4 billion.

The Cincinnati USA riverfront offers the best of the old and the new: baseball's oldest professional team, the Cincinnati Reds; the resurgent Cincinnati Bengals of the NFL; romantic riverboat cruises; world-class shopping, dining, nightlife and music; and dramatic vistas so inspiring Winston Churchill called Cincinnati the most beautiful inland city in the United States. In November, 2004, Travel + Leisure Magazine reported, "This is a town of best-kept secrets, where the thrill of a new discovery lies around every corner."

For more information, contact:

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