



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 6, 2011

For more information:

Krista Hildebrand
503-467-4686
khildebrand@frause.com

**VANCOUVER, WASHINGTON, SITE FOR FIRST NORTHWEST
140 CHARACTER CONFERENCE**

***Up to 900 people from around the country expected to attend the internationally
renowned social media event***

VANCOUVER, Wash. — On May 19, 2011, Vancouver, Washington, will be joining the ranks of such cities as Barcelona, Tel Aviv, London, Los Angeles and New York as the site for a 140 Character Conference, one of just 10 that have been held throughout the world since 2009.

The primary focus of the one-day conference will be how real-time technology (such as Twitter and Facebook) is changing business, government, health care, social services, media, and education.

“Vancouver is becoming a well-known venue among businesses and organizations that want to attract young trendsetters to their events,” said Kim Bennett, president and CEO of the Vancouver USA Regional Tourism Office. “With two colleges and a myriad of innovative entrepreneurial and high-tech companies, the city is making a name for itself. Plus we are centrally located for Northwest conferences.”

In addition to sharing the latest wisdom surrounding social media, the fast-paced format for the event is a vast departure from typical business conferences. Approximately 70 speakers will be given 10 to 20 minutes to tell their stories and engage in conversations with attendees; all without the aid of Power Point presentations and breakout sessions. The unique format allows as many people as possible to share their stories.

Unlike previous 140 Character Conferences, the Vancouver event is the first to actively engage the public sector in addition to private businesses and organizations. Clark County Public Health and the Clark Regional Emergency Services Agency are overseeing the conference, which is being funded through a grant awarded by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to enhance social media understanding throughout the public sector. Public sector speakers will include:

FEMA Director Craig Fugate; Vancouver City Councilor Jack Burkman; Portland Mayor Sam Adams; Mark Jamieson from the Seattle Police Department; among many others.

The conference will be held Thursday, May 19, at the Vancouver Convention Center at the Hilton Vancouver Hotel located in the heart of the city. There are two sessions running from 8:00 a.m. to noon and 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Aside from the in-person attendees for this conference, speakers will also be live-streamed over the Internet, which will provide world-wide reach. The conference is free but tickets are required and available online at <http://nw.140conf.com>. However, conference organizers are asking that all attendees, in exchange for the free tickets, donate either a lap-sized stuffed animal or bag of aquarium rock to help the Children's Center in Clark County. These donations will be used to create heavy stuffed animals used in therapy sessions.

About Vancouver USA Regional Tourism Office

Vancouver USA Regional Tourism Office (formerly Southwest Washington Convention & Visitors Bureau) is an economic development organization responsible for competitively marketing Vancouver and the surrounding area as a destination for meetings, conventions, and group and leisure travelers. The organization's mission is to promote Vancouver and Clark County by increasing convention and visitor business. For more information call 360-750-1553, or log on to www.VisitVancouverUSA.com.