



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact: Hugh J. Ralston,  
President & CEO  
(805) 988-0196, Ext. 116**

**SPEAKER, PANEL EXPLAIN HOW MUSEUMS DRIVE LOCAL ECONOMY**

*Session will offer ways nonprofits can adapt outreach strategies used by museums*

**CAMARILLO, Calif. (May 13, 2010)** – Travel industry veteran Richard Peterson of the California Academy of Sciences will be the featured presenter at “Find Your Muse! Marketing Museums for Cultural, Community & Economic Impact” at 2:30 p.m. May 26 at the Ventura County Office of Education in Camarillo.

The ArtsLIVE Initiative of the Ventura County Community Foundation and the Ventura Visitors and Convention Bureau teamed up to offer this seminar, which also includes a panel of local museum professionals.

“The session will explore innovative marketing and collaborations between arts groups and museums to attract tourism to our region,” said Hugh Ralston, president and CEO of the Ventura County Community Foundation. “A wide range of arts and cultural institutions as well as individual artists can adapt strategies developed by museums to their own marketing efforts. And we have seen the tremendous impact of cultural tourism on our local economy, underscoring the importance of these institutions to the cultural life of our communities.”

Ralston points out this topic is particularly timely in Ventura County with several local museums significantly expanding their facilities. The Museum of Ventura County plans to unveil its major renovation on July 4. The Santa Paula Art Museum opened in February to house a major collection of work by local artists. Both the U.S. Navy Seabee Museum in Port Hueneme and the Ventura County Maritime Museum at Channel Islands

Harbor are in the middle of major expansions.

“Many local residents don’t realize there are more than 30 museums in the county,” Ralston noted.

Peterson directs travel industry sales for the California Academy of the Sciences, which Conde Nast Traveler named as one of the new wonders of the world. The Academy combines a natural history museum, aquarium, planetarium and research facility. Opened in September 2008 in San Francisco’s Golden Gate Park with its trademark “living roof,” the Academy has received more than three million visitors.

Through his work with the Academy, Peterson has experienced firsthand the diverse best practices of museums, arts and cultural organizations and heritage sites around the world. In his presentation, he will detail how the Academy and other nonprofit institutions are redefining the tourism sales and marketing norms by harnessing innovation, collaboration and creativity.

Participating in the panel are Tim Schiffer, executive director of the Museum of Ventura County; retired Rear Adm. Benjamin Montoya of the U.S. Navy Seabee Museum; Jennifer Heighton, executive director of the Santa Paula Art Museum; and Bill Conroy, executive director of the Ventura County Maritime Museum.

The Ventura County Office of Education is at 5100 Adolfo Road, Camarillo. A reception will follow the presentation from 4:30 to 5 p.m.

ArtsLIVE in Ventura County is a three-year initiative of the Community Foundation in partnership with the James Irvine Foundation’s *Communities Advancing the Arts*.

The event is free to the public, thanks to underwriting from the Irvine Foundation. Reservations are required and can be made online at [artsliveinvc.org](http://artsliveinvc.org) or by telephone at (805) 988-0196, Ext. 222.

VCCF is a family of charitable funds with combined assets of \$100.5 million. Its mission is to promote and enable philanthropy to improve our community for good for ever, which it does through grantmaking, scholarships and leadership training programs through the Center for Nonprofit Leadership. VCCF has been certified in compliance with national standards by the Council on Foundations, the highest form of peer review in the United States. For more information, visit [vccf.org](http://vccf.org) or contact VCCF at (805) 988-

0196.



