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The Marine Mammal Center Begins Building the Future at 9th Annual Gala
Fundraising Event will include a “Wall Signing” to kick off The Center’s rebuild project

(SAUSALITO, Calif. – September 8, 2005): The Marine Mammal Center’s **9th Annual Gala Celebration**, “*Building the Future*,” is on Thursday, October 6, 2005, in San Francisco’s historic City Hall beginning at 6:30pm. The Gala celebration has become a Bay Area tradition and is The Center’s annual ticketed fundraising event. During The Gala, guests will have a one-time only opportunity to leave a special message for The Center by signing a signature wall that will become a permanent fixture in The Center’s new facility. Construction of the \$18 million facility begins this fall and is expected to be completed in 2007.

“This year’s gala celebration is an exciting time for us as we begin to build The Center’s future starting with the ground-breaking of our new facility this fall,” said B.J. Griffin, Executive Director at The Marine Mammal Center. “The community phase of our capital campaign is also beginning and that’s where we rely on the generosity of so many people to help us raise the additional money needed to complete the rebuild. To date we’ve raised \$14.5 million.”

The Gala evening begins with an elegant cocktail reception at 6:30PM in the Rotunda. Dan McCall (McCall Associates) will create a special gourmet dinner for the occasion. Afterwards, guests can dance the night away as San Francisco’s own incomparable pianist Abe Battat tickles the ivories with Swing, Latin and Jazz music. New this year, a live auction will keep guests entertained with the chance to out bid one another on some great items including a getaway in San Francisco, a chance to throw out a pitch at an upcoming San Francisco Giants’ game, and a special See’s Candy Factory tour sure to please the sweetest tooth. The Center will also hold a raffle drawing for some fun prizes. Tickets for both the gala and raffle can be purchased online prior to the event by going to: www.marinemammalcenter.org.

Celebrating its 30th year in 2005, The Marine Mammal Center is a nonprofit hospital dedicated to the rescue and rehabilitation of ill and injured marine mammals, and to research about their health and diseases. Volunteers and staff have treated more than 11,000 California sea lions, elephant seals, porpoises, and other marine life, along 600 miles of northern and central California coastline. In fact, The Center treats more marine mammals than any other institution of its kind in the world, uniquely combining its rehabilitation program with scientific discovery and education programs to advance the understanding of marine mammal health, ocean health and conservation.

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