The Toastmasters International World Championship of Public Speaking comes to Orlando August 18

86 contenders from around the world vie for the coveted title

RANCHO SANTA MARGARITA, Calif., July 24, 2012 /PRNewswire/ -- After six months of preliminary competitions, comprising more than 30,000 participants from 116 countries, nine finalists will attempt to speak their way to the top in the Toastmasters International World Championship of Public Speaking. The event, set for Saturday, Aug. 18, from 8 – 10:30 a.m. (EDT), follows a qualifying semifinal round of 86 competitors from which the nine advance. The championship, held on the final day of Toastmasters' International Convention, will be live streamed around the world.

"The World Championship of Public Speaking showcases the powerful talent of Toastmasters' best speakers and gives all members the opportunity to exhibit what they've learned on a grand stage," says Michael Notaro, Toastmasters' 2011-2012 International President.

To be eligible for the competition, all participants must be active Toastmasters members and present a five-to seven-minute speech in English. Judging criteria include content, organization, gestures, style and timing. To reach the semifinals, the contenders advanced through club, area, division and district-level speech competitions.

The convention itself kicks off with opening ceremonies, the traditional parade of member-country flags and a keynote address by business leader Joel Manby. Convention attendees also will take part in international Board of Directors and officer elections, skill-building seminars and networking opportunities. Toastmasters will present its most prestigious honor — the Golden Gavel Award — to leadership expert John Maxwell.

The World Championship of Public Speaking began as an inter-club speech contest held in 1938 in Tucson, Arizona. Winners of this competition often use it as a springboard to launch their professional speaking career. Last year's winner was Jock Elliott, a trainer and speech coach from Bongaree, Queensland, Australia, who won after having competed in the finals a record six times.

To learn more about the Toastmasters International Convention, visitwww.toastmasters.org/convention. Follow Toastmasters International on Twitter @Toastmasters (#TIConv12) for real-time updates.

About Toastmasters International
Toastmasters International is a nonprofit educational organization that teaches public speaking and leadership skills through a worldwide network of clubs. Founded in October 1924, the organization currently has more than 270,000 members in 13,000 clubs in 116 countries. Each week, Toastmasters helps more than a quarter million people of every ethnicity, education level and profession build their competence in communication so they can gain the confidence to lead others. For information about local Toastmasters clubs, please visit www.toastmasters.org.

SOURCE Toastmasters International

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