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PRESS CONTACT: Phil West, 512.945.7493, phil@austinslam.com

**IMPROV ARTISTS, AIR GUITARISTS, REAL
GUITARISTS, AND BOB BARKER-INSPIRED SLAMMERS
TO RAISE MONEY FOR NATIONAL POETRY SLAM**

*Ruta Maya-hosted fundraising event, on June 30, to help bring 75 teams of poets
from across North America to Austin for five-day competition August 7-11*

(AUSTIN) – Organizers for this year’s 2007 National Poetry Slam in Austin will be holding a fundraising extravaganza on Saturday, June 30, from 7 p.m. to 2 a.m. at Ruta Maya World Headquarters (3601 S. Congress), enlisting an eclectic mix of performers from Austin and San Antonio to help raise the money needed to stage the five-day event. Suggested donation for admission is \$10 per person.

The National Poetry Slam, considered the “Super Bowl” of spoken word, is the annual gathering of top performance poets, representing cities throughout North America in five days of competition. In slam, a panel of five judges selected from the audience gives the competing poets scores of 0.0 to 10.0 based on the poets’ content and performance.

Austin is represented by two teams at the National Poetry Slam: the team from Ego’s, which hosts the weekly Austin Poetry Slam event that has been running since 1994, and the Neo-Soul team, which runs its slam out of Antonio’s Tex-Mex and placed 2nd out of 75 teams at last year’s NPS. The June 30 showcase at Ruta Maya will give local audiences their first chance to see Austin’s two home teams in action.

The event will also include an Improv Slam featuring four local improv troupes, organized by recent New Orleans transplants Coldtowne Theater; a guitar slam, featuring local musicians who will each get three minutes to wow the audience; an air guitar slam, featuring local performers doing their best interpretations of real live musicians; and a Price Is Right Slam, a format developed by San Antonio slammers to pay homage to the popular game show, contributing to the sometimes-irreverent reputation of slam.

“Slam in Austin is not only about giving Austin audiences a chance to see amazing performance poetry,” said Mike Henry, artistic director for the 2007 National Poetry Slam. “Over the years, we’ve partnered with artists and performers from different disciplines who want to make Austin better by creating art with impact, with meaning, and with an emphasis on the audience’s experience. The June 30 showcase is a continuation of that work we’re invested in doing.”

The National Poetry Slam weekly passes (including tickets to the individual finals and team finals, at the Paramount Theater, on August 10 and 11 respectively) will officially go on sale at the June 30 event. The event, being a fundraiser, will also give attendees an opportunity to bid on silent auction items and raffle packages featuring items by local companies supporting NPS.

More information on the fundraising event, and the National Poetry Slam, is available at the official NPS website, nps2007.com.

This year’s National Poetry Slam is being supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts, HLS Technologies, Inc. and Famecast.