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**RATINGS JUMP 21 PERCENT FOR
44th ANNUAL ACADEMY OF COUNTRY MUSIC AWARDS**

*Telecast Propels Triple-Digit Increases in Record Sales,
Spurs #2 Album on iTunes and
Drives 6.9 Million Hits at www.ACMcountry.com*

ENCINO, CA (April 17, 2009) – The 44th Annual Academy of Country Music Awards, produced by Dick Clark Productions, increased its ratings by significant proportions for the second consecutive year. The show, which aired live, Sunday April 5, had ratings that were up 21% overall from 2008, drawing nearly 15 million viewers and earning the top spot for the night for the CBS Television Network during every hour of the telecast on Sunday, April 5, 2009.

The Awards brought in the largest audience since 1998, with about 3 million more viewers than last year. Based on the average number of people who watched a program from start to finish for the entire week, according to Nielsen Media Research, the Awards placed seventh—behind “American Idol” and the series finale of “ER.”

The Awards earned a 3.8 rating/10 share in the key 18-49 demographic, an increase of 31% from 2008. Last year’s broadcast brought in 11.7 million viewers and was the second-highest rated program throughout the full three hours it aired on CBS—an increase of 26 percent from 2007.

“We’ve virtually doubled our audience, reaching 47% more viewers in 2008 and 2009 combined,” said Bob Romeo, Executive Director of the Academy of Country Music. “And I believe we still have room to grow. We are already planning next year’s show and considering how to elevate viewership.”

Romeo also attributes much of the success to longtime partners and to the artists and labels who support the show.

“We could not have reached 15 million people without the support of the labels and the artists who have been so generous with their time and talent,” said Romeo. “We’ve been very lucky to have partners including Dr Pepper, Great American Country (GAC), The Home Depot, and Westwood One, who help support reaching new audiences and existing fans of country music.”

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“This great increase in viewership is a testament to a unique marketing campaign that crossed multiple media platforms, including online and wireless,” said Orly Adelson, President of Dick Clark Productions. “We will continue to find innovative ways to bring country music to new audiences.”

Consumers and viewers were more engaged this year than ever. For the second year, fans were invited to vote for Entertainer of the Year from a ballot shaped by the Academy’s professional membership, and for the first time, fans also selected the Top New Artist from the winners of all three newcomer categories (Top New Female Vocalist, Top New Male Vocalist, Top New Duo or Group). Carrie Underwood took the trophy for Entertainer of the Year and Julianne Hough won Top New Artist, after having already been named Top New Female Vocalist.

Industry averages have shown sales increases of more than 20% during the week that precedes the Easter holiday, but the 44th *Annual Academy of Country Music Awards* had an even greater impact on record sales for artists who performed at the event.

According to Nielsen Soundscan, Lee Ann Womack’s sales increased 117%, Sugarland’s sales increased 112%, ACM Entertainer of the Year Carrie Underwood’s sales increased 99%, Album of the Year winner and Crystal Milestone honoree Taylor Swift’s sales increased 98% and ACM Artist of the Decade George Strait’s sales increased 94%.

Julianne Hough, who won Top New Artist, had sales increase 110%. Kellie Pickler showed an increase in sales this week of 174%, boosted by her participation as a presenter on the Awards and her performance on “American Idol” the same week.

Trace Adkins’ sales increased 98% for “American Man: Greatest Hits Vol. I & II” and a whopping 110% for “X,” featuring “Til The Last Shot’s Fired,” which he performed on the Awards with the West Point Glee Club, in a poignant moment that brought the audience to its feet and some to tears.

Adkins’ live performance was immediately made available for download at iTunes with all proceeds going to the Wounded Warrior Project, through a partnership put together by ACM Lifting Lives™, the Academy’s charitable arm. In the first 48 hours following the telecast, downloads of Adkins’ performance generated more than \$20,000 for the philanthropy and even 10 days after the telecast, the video and song bundle of the performance is the #2 “album” on iTunes, appearing alternately on iTunes “What’s Hot” and “What We’re Listening To” lists.

Additionally, Wounded Warrior Project has received almost \$50,000 in direct contributions through its dedicated ACM Lifting Lives donation page and from live audience viewers who made donations on-site following the Awards. More than 300,000 viewers have watched Adkins’ performance on YouTube.

Other key figures the Academy is celebrating from The Week Vegas Goes Country®:

- GAC’s exclusive “ACM Orange Carpet Live” pre-show special in conjunction with the 44th *Annual Academy of Country Music Awards* reached more than 1.3 million viewers on show day, up from 1.1 million in 2008.

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- ACM Weekend on Fremont Street Experience was attended by more than 44,000 fans that turned out for two nights of free concerts featuring Jason Aldean, Top New Female Vocalist Julianne Hough, Top New Male Vocalist Jake Owen, Kellie Pickler, LeAnn Rimes, Top New Vocal Duo or Group Zac Brown Band and newcomers Gloriana and Matt Stillwell.
- More than 6.9 million hits were logged at the Academy’s newly relaunched website, www.ACMcountry.com in the 96 hours surrounding the telecast—including 1.5 million hits on the day of the Awards.
- Approximately 60 fans participated in VIP trips—priced between \$2,300 and \$8,000—as part of the Academy’s first foray into offering a high-end experience to consumers, a success in any economy but particularly noteworthy right now. The trips were executed in partnership with What A Trip! Entertainment.

For more information:

ACM Lifting Lives

www.acmcountry.com

Wounded Warrior Project

www.woundedwarriorproject.org

About the Academy of Country Music

Founded in 1964, the **ACADEMY OF COUNTRY MUSIC** is an artist and industry-driven organization, providing the financial resources to ensure the on-going philanthropic work of ACM Lifting Lives, the charitable arm of the Academy which works to improve lives through music. The Academy is comprised of more than 4,200 professional members and more than 80,000 associate members and is headquartered in Encino, Calif.

About dick clark productions

Since its inception in 1957, dick clark productions (dcp) has been a leading independent producer of television programming. dcp produces perennial hits such as “Dick Clark’s New Year’s Rockin’ Eve,” the American Music Awards, the Golden Globe Awards and the Academy of Country Music Awards. dcp also produces popular weekly television programming, including “So You Think You Can Dance,” and owns and maintains one of the world’s most unique and extensive entertainment libraries, which includes more than 30 years of “American Bandstand” footage.

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