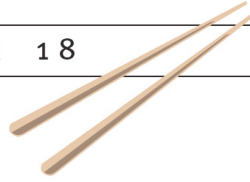


SUSHI MASTERS

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Contact: Elizabeth Horan
Communications Manager
California Rice Commission
Cell: 916/205-5395
bhoran@calrice.org

Over 800 Sushi Lovers Celebrate California's 2006 SushiMaster

*A sold out audience watches as nine chefs go head to head in a live sushi rolling competition;
San Francisco chef completes a virtual sweep*

(SACRAMENTO, CA) – Hundreds of sushi fans converged on the state capital Monday night to watch nine of California's top sushi chefs compete head-on in a live sushi rolling competition. Presented by the California Rice Commission, the 2006 SushiMasters California State Sushi Competition packed the floor of the Memorial Auditorium and ended in a virtual sweep by one San Francisco chef.

Over 750 people turned out for a whirlwind night of live sushi rolling, sake tasting, 4200 pieces of catered sushi and takio drumming. The finalists – hailing from Los Angeles, Sacramento, San Diego and San Francisco – had 45 minutes to make three sushi entries: a Morikomi plate, a Signature roll and a Governor's roll. Chef Shinji Nakamura of Sanraku Four Seasons in San Francisco walked away with awards in the Morikomi plate and Governor's roll categories, and added the title of 'SushiMaster' having accumulated the highest total score for the night. Taking the Signature roll category was the 2005 'SushiMaster' winner, Chef Jerry Warner of Café Japengo in San Diego.

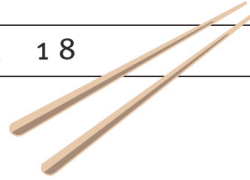
The California Rice Commission is in its second year of hosting the SushiMasters competition. The Sacramento Valley is the heart of the state's rice industry. Over 95 percent of California's rice is grown within 100 miles of the State Capital, and California rice is used in every piece of sushi made in the United States. California is the number one producer of medium grain rice in the US, the rice used to make sushi in the United States and in restaurants around the world.

On a tour of California rice fields and a rice mill the previous day, Chef Nakamura gathered knowledge about how California rice gets from the 'field to table'. He also walked away with a souvenir – a rice panicle that Monday provided the finishing touch to his award winning Governor's roll.

The event also featured a virtual 'who's-who' of the local and statewide culinary community, including emcees Narsai David (Food & Wine Critic, KCBS, San Francisco) and Randall Selland (The Kitchen Restaurant, Sacramento); judges Andy Matsuda (Sushi Chef Institute, Los Angeles), Kurt Spataro (Spataro's/Paragary Group, Sacramento), Toshi Sugaira (California Sushi Academy, Los Angeles), Yoshi Tome (Northern California Japanese Restaurant Association, San Francisco), and Ken Woytisek (Culinary Institute of America, St. Helena); and, the chef finalists from Los Angeles, Sacramento, San Diego and San Francisco.

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SushiMasters celebrates sushi cuisine – from traditional styles to more innovative creations – and features California rice, which is used in every piece of sushi made in the United States. SushiMasters 2006 sponsors include: CALAG LLC, California Sea Urchin Commission, Dow, Geikkeikan Sake USA, JFC International, Hitomebore – Nishimoto Trading Co. LTD, Japanese Restaurant News, Kikkoman International, Kirin Brewery of America LLC, Kleinfelder, North American Food Dist. Co. Inc., Mutual Trading Co. Inc., Page Design Inc., Port of Oakland, Raley's/BelAir, Sacramento Magazine, Syngenta and Takara Sake USA.

The California Rice Commission represents the entire California rice industry, the largest producer of medium grain japonica rice, the variety of rice found in every piece of sushi served in the United States today. For chefs and foodservice professionals, the California rice industry provides high-quality rice used in sushi and a variety of international cuisines. For more information about the California rice industry visit the website at www.calrice.org.

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