

Fresh faces for MPI global vision

WORLD - Meeting Professionals International (MPI) has announced its team of global volunteers who will lead the association's vision of a global meeting industry community forward for the fiscal year to June 30, 2009.

New appointments include Larry Luteran, vice-president –

group sales and industry relations for Hilton Hotels Corporation, who will assume the role as the 2008-2009 chair of the MPI Board of Directors.

Rita Plaskett, CMP, CMM, and president of ASSET, will lead the 2008-2009 MPI Foundation Board of Trustees.

2012 team warms up

UNITED KINGDOM - Visit London and VisitBritain, supported by the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games (LOCOG), are to create a dedicated industry group to capitalise on the opportunities for business tourism in the UK in the lead up to the Olympic Games in 2012.

The industry group will develop a range of initiatives designed to maximise the opportunities that the games provide, such as the already announced Fair Pricing – Fair Practice Charter, while providing a forum for the industry to share knowledge.

Visit London commercial director David Hornby says: "We want to engage with the wider industry at a senior level

as early as possible to build on the work we have already done and to create a lasting legacy for the entire business tourism industry; not just in London, but throughout the UK."

The team will be headed by David Sharpe, MD of the London Eye and divisional director of London midway attractions, Merlin Entertainment's Group. There will also be a 'thought leader' group, made up of senior figures from across the industry, which will advise on areas of strategy and develop further projects. Other plans include an annual industry conference, the first of which will be held in 2009 during International Confex, and a series of knowledge workshops and networking events.

AIME 2009 offers more to hosted buyers

AUSTRALIA - AIME, focusing on the Asia Pacific's meetings and incentives industry, is offering hosted buyers increased education and more pre-and post-event touring options in 2009.

Applications for hosted buyers for AIME 2009, to be held 17-18 February at the Melbourne Exhibition Centre, Australia, have now opened.

Organisers, Reed Travel

Exhibitions, expect to attract more than 850 exhibitors from 50 countries and more than 500 hosted buyers from 30 countries.

A new initiative for AIME 2009 will be a special Master Class for buyers only, more touring options and a dedicated buyer e-newsletter.

Buyers wanting to participate can apply online at: www.aime.com.au

IAPCO offers blueprint

WORLD - Developers planning to build a convention centre will now have a set of guidelines to follow thanks to a new publication by IAPCO, the International Association of Professional Congress Organisers.

IAPCO members found there were no current guidelines for the construction or upgrade of existing facilities for a convention centre.

The reference document takes into account the rapid changes in communications technology which impact on the way meetings are planned.

For the user of convention centre facilities, the document is a guideline for what to look for when choosing a venue.

The document is available free of charge on the IAPCO website. Visit www.iapco.org and take the 'Publications' link.



Vancouver the first to take AIPC crown twice

CANADA - The Vancouver Convention and Exhibition Centre has beaten 18 other finalists to be crowned the winner of the 2008 AIPC Apex Award for 'World's Best Convention Centre' – the first time a convention centre has won the award twice.

The award – now a bi-annual competition given the investment of time required to evaluate the centres – was presented at the International Association of Congress Centres (AIPC) 50th Anniversary Annual Conference in Singapore.

The AIPC Board also recognised two runners-up for 2008: the Brisbane Convention Centre and the Cairns Convention Centre, both in Australia.

AIPC President Edgar Hirt says: "This is the first time in the history of the AIPC Apex Award that it has been won by a previous AIPC Apex Award winner. We therefore want to particularly commend the Vancouver Convention and Exhibition Centre for what is an unprecedented achievement."

Vancouver previously took the title in 2002.

The AIPC Apex Award recipient is identified through a comprehensive performance and customer satisfaction analysis carried out by event organisers and meeting planners.

The win comes at an exciting time for Vancouver, with an expansion at the centre scheduled for completion in early 2009 which will triple the centre's capacity to cover four city blocks.

The combined total of 473,523 square feet of pre-function, meeting, exhibition and ballroom space will offer the ability to hold simultaneous events each with their own separate access and function space.