

Draped Durban greets Indaba

SOUTH AFRICA - Durban's R460 million International Convention Centre development has helped land the Indaba tourism event for the coastal town for the next three years.

Although the ICC renovation will not be complete until March 2007, Indaba delegates were allowed in, as contractors temporarily handed over the Arena for the 6-9 May show. Unfinished seating sections were concealed by drapes.

The ICC says it has been turning away R1 million of business a month and reports a strong order book. Seven major events booked for both the ICC and ICC Arena between May 2007 and 2013 are set to bring in nearly 30,000 delegates. Events for spring/summer 2007 include the International Federation of Fertility Societies



ICC Durban Arena, opening up early for Indaba

meeting, the Southern African Aids conference, and the World Library and Information Congress.

And, what is now the largest conference centre in South Africa claims to have already generated R4.4 billion of additional income for the region, having hosted 125 international conferences.

The ICC Arena will, when

complete, offer raked seating for 6,000 and total space for 10,000 spectators.

The external venue of 'African Square' is being developed and paved and it will have capacity to host a further 20,000 visitors for concerts and events.

The ICC Arena will integrate with the central business district and surrounding areas, including the Hilton Durban.

Honoured in Ontario

CANADA - Metro Toronto Convention Centre president and chief executive Barry Smith has been made a Fellow of the Ontario Hospitality Institute in honour of his contribution to the province's hospitality industry.

OHI president J Charles Grieco praised Smith as, "a man who understands the requirements of the market and

of those who are planning meetings and conventions".

Meanwhile, MTCC, ranked among the top 10 convention centres in the world, has been hosting the world's biggest gathering of trademark specialists. More than 7,000 from 130 countries attended the 128th annual meeting of the International Trademark Association, 6-10 May.

A bigger BMW World

GERMANY - BMW is to open a new events venue at its Munich headquarters next spring.

Known as BWW Welt (World), its auditorium will be able to cater for events with up to 800 delegates. There will also be a business centre with facilities

for smaller meetings, plus a full range of catering.

The company has also been enlarging the adjacent BMW Museum, which will reopen next summer. Both venues are located in the Milbertshofen district of Munich.

Reed links up with Beijing bureau

CHINA - Ahead of next month's China International Business and Incentive Travel Mart event, organisers Reed Travel Exhibitions is to partner with the local tourist office, to boost conference business to

Beijing. The Municipal Bureau of Tourism is to take on responsibility for attracting top government and association buyers to the event, in a move which Reed group exhibition director Paul Kennedy claims is

a major endorsement.

"CBITM already has the support of MPI, SITE and ICCA and will develop into an important international event and major part of our growing portfolio," he says.

News in brief...

New 4-star option for Lisbon

PORTUGAL - A new hotel four-star hotel, Olisippo Oriente, opened last month near to the Lisbon Expo site. It was built specially with conferences in mind and offers three meetings rooms with capacities from 90 to 450 delegates and all equipped with Wi-Fi.

Nato delegates' strike force

LATVIA - Con-ex has been appointed the official agency for accommodation reservation in Latvia for the NATO Summit's official delegation, media and NGO representatives.

Up to 4,000 participants will come to the event, 28-29 November 2006.

Ladies first in Florence

ITALY - The Grand Hotel, Florence has a brand new package for its travellers, including a welcome drink upon arrival, a buffet breakfast the next morning and more facilities for looking good. These include more convenient mirrors for doing make-up, professional hairdryers, spacious and well-lighted wardrobes, Etno and Acqua di Parma amenities and a Comfort Zone beauty spa kit. The package also includes free internet access for a day.

Public ownership

BELGIUM - A survey carried out by the International Association of Congress Centres, which had a 100 per cent response rate from members, showed that 67 per cent of congress facilities were publicly owned. While 27 per cent are in private hands and the balance, six per cent, are in some form of public/private combination.