In a time of increasing globalization, when many events are rotating widely, there is truly something to be said for the development and maintenance of venue performance standards that can provide a level of confidence amongst users that they will get what they need and expect. That’s why AIPC has invested a lot of time and effort in developing standards in key areas of centre management and creating an audit process to help members demonstrate their accomplishments. It’s also why we have ongoing competitions that recognize special achievements and encourage centre clients to take these into account when making their venue selections.

But standards don’t mean standardization. The same research that documents the significance of performance reliability also indicates the importance both organizers and delegates are placing on having a unique and satisfying event experience, particularly when so much hard information is readily available through other vehicles than conventions and conferences. A big part of that uniqueness relates to what a venue can deliver in terms of special services and ambiance that reflect what makes their facilities and destination different from everyone else.

By ensuring that they are delivering at least part of what makes their part of the world unique and distinctive, centres can be active participants in shaping the event experience to the benefit of all. This can include anything and everything from centre location and decor to helping facilitate community connections or arrange off-site events that both relate to an events own objectives and at the same time create something unique. And it’s not just event organizers and delegates that benefit – it can also reward the local community itself by helping it realize a greater overall return from the events they are hosting.

Education takes many forms – and travel can and should be one of the most important of these. At the same time, an exciting and distinctive environment is stimulating to delegates, particularly those who may have been attending a particular event for many years. All of these are good reasons for centres and destinations to make the extra effort to deliver a distinctive event – one that not only respects organizational aims but honors the destination and its qualities.

So while we must strive to respond to the international standards that increasingly define client expectations, there’s another important area where centres can distinguish themselves – and that’s helping deliver something unique. High standards don’t have to mean just conformity – they can also open the door to the kind of creativity increasingly valued by participants.

Geoff Donaghy, AIPC President
To most cities in which they are located, Centres aren’t just event facilities – they are focal points for some of the most important activities taking place in their respective communities, and a driver for many of the interactions that will shape the direction that the local economy takes as it evolves into a future that requires a very different mix of skills and priorities from those that shaped the economies of the past. This has always been an important role – but as cities increasingly assume a position of the most important units in the overall economic equation, it is one that is becoming absolutely critical.

This year’s AIPC Annual Conference theme and program are built around an intense look at the convention centre – economic policy interface, with a range of sessions that will explore how centres can work even more effectively with their respective owners and communities to realize the potential for growing business in ways that make them an ever-more critical part of the local economic equation, and to be better recognized for that contribution. Included in session topics will be;

**The Role of Convention Centres as Instruments of City Development and Transition** | With cities further evolving into a role as the primary units of economic and political power, the importance of the role played by convention centres as vehicles to position and facilitate transition becomes ever more important. Understanding how these processes work can facilitate a more productive interface between all the players.

**Brand Redevelopment: How Do We Respond to the New Agenda?** | While destination attractions remain a factor in the event location equation other qualities need to be featured to support the “serious business” image. Where and how do we strike a balance?

**Industry Progress and New Tools for Advocacy** | Advocacy needs measures and actions along with messaging. What’s the status of our progress and what are some of the latest vehicles that can and are being used for this purpose?

**Safety and Security Revisited** | Ten years ago global terrorism was fuelling the security discussion but recent issues have expanded to include home-grown terrorism and health disruptions like pandemics. This session will illustrate how centres dealing with these issues have adjusted their plans and procedures and how to interface most effectively with the local community.

**Crossover Challenges: New Issues Impacting Global Travel** | New Issues are emerging that represent overall challenges for all aspects of the travel equation. What are they and how can we collaborate on responses?

Our program will continue to evolve in the face of rapidly changing events to ensure the content responds to the various latest conditions and issues. Make sure you check in at the AIPC Annual Conference website [http://aipc2015.onetec.eu](http://aipc2015.onetec.eu) to keep up to date on all the latest news as it develops!
Boston Social Program Combines History, Education and Insights!

A destination like Boston creates a huge opportunity for delegates to explore one of North America's most attractive and historic cities, and the AIPC conference program will be taking full advantage of this! Add to that the remarkable timing immediately adjacent to the legendary 4th of July celebrations and you have all the ingredients for an incredible educational and cultural experience to complement you conference participation!

AIPC 2015 Innovation Award is Your Chance to Shine!

But there are two more very good reasons for participating this year;

First, past competitors have found this a great way to “air” their ideas as a way of comparing them with what others are doing in the same fields, which in turn has led to new ways to move further forward. In effect, the discussions surrounding the Award have led people with similar interest to identify each other and benefit from a broader range of perspectives than theirs alone – a kind of a “match-making” process that works to everyone’s advantage.

Secondly, competitors have realized this is truly an Award with a “level playing field” – centre size or amenities don’t convey any particular advantage when the measurement is simply having a good idea and acting on it. This means that the Innovation Award is open to every member and all have an equal chance to demonstrate their capabilities and creativity.

Start now to plan your centre’s entry. The rewards – including industry-wide recognition – are significant, and the opportunity is there for the taking!
Delegates spend more:
It’s simple; if it’s about optimizing economic returns, there’s little question about which travellers spend more. A variety of studies over many years have consistently shown that delegates outspend visitor averages, and for some very obvious reasons: they are more likely to be business or professional people than the average visitor; many are on expenses or being paid by employers, and this is reflected in where they stay and how much they are prepared to spend.

They’re more likely to use established accommodation:
In a time when there are growing (and often worrisome) alternatives for visitor accommodation, including the online rental of private lodging, delegates are much more likely to opt for traditional venues such as hotels than many other visitors, in order to be closer to the action, part of the conference structure and because they don’t have as much need to economize (see above). This is far more consistent with how the visitor economy is structured in most destinations, and far less disruptive than if they were scattered all over the city as are many forms of alternate lodging.

Their benefits are wide spread – and impact much more than just one sector:
When it comes to convention – related revenues, it’s not just about the hospitality sector as many claim. Recent economic studies have shown that over half of the revenues to a community arise from things like staging, organization, technology and event organization – areas far beyond what would traditionally be thought of as visitor services. This is a much more diverse set of benefits, meaning lots more sectors share in the results.

They bring new knowledge, experiences and expertise:
When it comes to community benefits as a whole, the best of all is why delegates are there in the first place: they are attending in order to share and enhance experiences and expertise, which generally rubs off on the local community, leaving a legacy of knowledge and creative experience that both reflects well on the host destination and advances the contacts and knowledge of the local business, academic and professional communities.

They are more consistent with the concerns (and aspirations) of local residents:
Few people like to see “their” city seen as simply a playground for non-resident partiers, but that’s the unfortunate reputation a few heavily visited cities have secured for themselves. How much better to have your home regarded as a venue for events that bring together global expertise for serious deliberations – particularly when these complement your own aspirations for future economic and social development!
The “more is better” approach to the visitor economy is being questioned in many quarters these days, and with good (and growing) reasons. When it comes to securing the most benefit from any given category of visitor, event delegates have a lot to recommend them – and smart cites are beginning to figure that out and use it to their advantage.
With what is now the near-universal agreement that the paramount values arising from business events such as meetings, conventions and exhibitions are those associated with the business, economic, academic and professional advancements they achieve, there is still no generally accepted process for evaluating or even documenting these in a way that can be used to demonstrate their value. This issue is of particular importance to Convention centres, who often have government owners/funders and community stake-holders to satisfy.

The Joint Meetings Industry Council (JMIC) is convening a conference to directly address this issue by establishing the current status of valuing event outcomes, comparing techniques and approaches and proposing new initiatives to help align future activities as a way of moving toward a consistent industry practice.

The conference will address 5 objectives:

- To raise awareness of the importance of meetings, conventions and exhibitions to the broader global economy and society;
- To determine the current state of outcome valuation and documentation by the various organizations that have addressed this issue to date;
- To explore mechanisms that would facilitate better communications amongst such organizations and with the broader industry in the future;
- To identify the potential for a consistent industry “Best Practice” that could be utilized by individual destinations/facilities/organizers to calculate a defensible value for their own specific activities, and
- To review how data arising from these models could be used most effectively for industry advocacy.

Participation will be drawn from three groups: Industry organizations | individuals with applicable expertise and/or who are currently engaged in research in this area; political | professional | academic representatives with a stake/interest in the development of such measures and industry representatives that require such estimates/measure to demonstrate value to members/governments/supporters.

The dates and location of the conference are May 14-15, 2015 in Paris, France, with event logistics in the process of being finalized now. As members of a prominent JMIC member Association, AIPC member centres are welcome to join this event, which will take place immediately prior to IMEX in Frankfurt; however, there are strict limits to participation so those wishing to attend should contact secretariat@aipc.org to indicate their interest and ensure they get the latest information as it develops.

The AIPC Sales and Marketing Summit: an Enduring Tradition at IMEX

This will be year 10 for the AIPC Sales and Marketing Summit that takes place immediately in advance of IMEX in Frankfurt, and for good reason:

AIPC President Geoff Donaghy. “Knowing what the big issues are enables us to select the best resources to bring into this session, whether they are topic experts, client representatives or our own members with specific experiences and observations to share.”

This year’s Summit will be no exception to that well established rule. Amongst the topics to be addressed are the most current issues relating to things like crisis communications and marketing in the face of global travel issues; the implications of new compliance pressures and better tools for measuring performance. As has become a new and highly popular tradition, the program will also provide for in depth discussion sessions on hot topics, in order to optimize the opportunities for sharing experiences and strategies from around the world.

Registration is open and keep an eye out for program information on www.aipc.org. Make your plans now to attend this highly successful and relevant event at IMEX!
**PORTAVENTURA CONVENTION CENTRE**

The versatile PortAventura Convention Centre, flagship facility of PortAventura Business & Events, offers 18 multifunction venues with 13,000 m² of function space with a capacity to accommodate up to 3,000 visitors along with full facilities offering 2,000 four-star rooms and more than 30 group-owned restaurants with star ratings to match. Visitors also have access to PortAventura Park, a top leisure facility, along with other attractions including golf, team-building activities and great entertainment, all within the enchanting ambience of the Mediterranean coast. Thanks in part to its privileged location near Barcelona, PortAventura is Europe's second most visited resort destination and the first located on the Mediterranean Sea. Since opening in October 2009, the PortAventura Convention Centre has hosted more than 400 events with over 70,000 participants in conferences, seminars, sports events and corporate incentives, on both a domestic and international level.

Says Laura Valdeolivas | Head of Business & Events, “Business & Events is a sector that has maintained a steady rate of growth in recent years, even during hard times for the economy as a whole. PortAventura Business & Events has been busy throughout this period, transforming itself into a benchmark-setting organiser of major events for clients such as Nike, L’Oreal, Sharp or Dow. PortAventura has now set itself, as a key objective, the task of acquiring new clients in countries such as France, the UK and Germany, while breaking into the markets of the United States, Russia, Scandinavia the Benelux countries and elsewhere.”

**INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE SYDNEY**

International Convention Centre Sydney (ICC Sydney), Australia’s premier and first fully integrated convention, exhibition and events precinct opens in December 2016. Featuring a striking contemporary design, leading technology and world class, flexible meeting spaces, ICC Sydney boasts Australia’s largest exhibition space, (totaling 35,000 sqm) and links directly to a 5,000 sqm open air event deck, and Australia’s largest ballroom with a pre-function area that breaks out to spectacular water and city views. It will be capable of hosting three fully separated, self-sufficient, concurrent events as well as larger plenary sessions in an 8,000 seat red carpet theatre.

“Unique to its vibrant Sydney harbourfront setting and smartly positioned at the heart of its very own dynamic precinct, ICC Sydney will feature the high calibre of service clients expect of an AEG Ogden managed venue; consummate customer service and attention to detail, world class dining and a team of professionals that understand what it takes to deliver successful events,” said ICC Sydney Chief Executive Officer and AEG Ogden Group Director of Convention Centres Geoff Donaghy. “For ICC Sydney, AIPC provides an excellent channel to keep informed of global trends and developments and an ideal forum to meet and network with our venue peers and colleagues from around the world. In fact, all AEG Ogden venues are proud and active members of the association.”

**SANDS EXPO AND CONVENTION CENTRE**

The Sands Expo and Convention Centre offers more than 120,000 square metres or 1.3 million square feet of meeting space, making it one of the largest and most flexible locations in Asia and the biggest in Singapore, with the largest ballroom in Southeast Asia capable of hosting up to 11,000 delegates. Beyond those facilities, delegates can enjoy luxurious accommodation at Marina Bay Sands Hotel, take in Broadway shows, dine at the finest restaurants, enjoy world-class shopping and be part of the integrated resort’s Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives to give back to the community.

Centre highlights include five floors of exhibition and convention space; up to 2,000 exhibition booths and 250 meeting rooms which can accommodate up to 45,000 delegates. It features a comprehensive one-stop event and exhibition solution with services ranging from technical requirements such as audio visual equipment, stage set-up and logistics and an 8,000 square metre ballroom with a capacity for up to 6,600 for banquet or 11,000 delegates for a theatre-style event. Other creative venues include the Sands SkyPark for cocktail parties or intimate dinner receptions; an event Plaza for large-scale outdoor carnivals or festivals; theatres for product launches, presentations or conferences and a unique ArtScience museum for opening ceremonies, keynote addresses or cocktail parties.

Says Ong Wee Min, Executive Director of Sales, Sands Expo and Convention Centre “It is a privilege to be part of the AIPC family. Being an iconic destination, Marina Bay Sands plays an integral role in positioning Singapore as a leading MICE destination globally, and AIPC provides us with the ideal platform to learn from and share best practices with key opinion leaders in the industry and to do what we do best - deliver service excellence and bring in new and exciting shows to Singapore and Marina Bay Sands.”
AIPC Partner

Eilon Engineering – Ron StageMaster

Load monitoring in convention centers safeguards your visitors, protects your facilities and increases revenues:

More convention centers worldwide and particularly in Germany have been equipping their convention centers with load monitoring systems. Hanging heavy loads over visitors’ heads is risky business, and the only way to prevent unpredictable load distribution and overloads is to install a load cell on each and every hanging point. By adding usage fees and transforming each point into a source of revenue you can also protect your visitors and your facilities.

This can all be achieved with Ron StageMaster Load Monitoring Systems which offers wireless technology based on more than 30 years of experience with large projects and repeat customers like NASA, Boeing and other high profile customers in projects that often took place at industrial sites and required reliable wireless transmission in spite of harsh environmental conditions. Overcoming such challenges has made the Ron StageMaster especially suitable for large shows where a reliable transmission is crucial and must be ensured in spite of similarly harsh environmental conditions.

The laptop-based Ron StageMaster (RSM) safety system features real-time monitoring of all load points from a single screen and from any location. For simple integration with the rigging plan, the RSM system software allows for overlay of the load map right onto the rigging plan on screen, making it easy to see where motors and loads are on the rigging plan. This enables the rigger to immediately identify the location of a potential overload and take swift preventative action.

Ron StageMaster Load Cells are made of aerospace quality, high-strength alloy steel and fatigue rated to withstand unlimited load cycles without the risk of failure or damage to the steel. The RSM system features continuous monitoring up to 10,000 hours (with extended battery life option), and has absolutely no standby or sleep modes, which are unacceptable from a safety perspective. The result is a quick-to-install plug and play system that offers major advantages including:

> Safeguarding your riggers’, performers’ and audience’s lives
> Protecting your venue from the heavier and more complex equipment that is becoming the norm, enabling users to suspend heavier and more dynamic loads while never exceeding the limitations of your venue’s infrastructure.
> Generating revenues by renting your load cells or charging users a usage fee of around $20-$30 per day per load cell. This enables the system to pay for itself usually within 50 to 70 rental days, after which load cells add about $500,000 revenues per hall per year on average.
> Protecting expensive equipment and reducing insurance premiums by preventing overloads and better managing risks, and
> Enabling safe involvement in larger, heavier and more dynamic projects

Leading innovators in load monitoring systems since 1976, Eilon Engineering’s Ron crane scales, dynamometers, load cells and overload detectors have gained international recognition for their high quality, reliability, compact dimensions and unique safety features. Ron systems are the preferred choice for load monitoring in the world of entertainment, with RSM systems in use in venues like the Sydney Opera House, Hong Kong Cultural Center and Royal Shakespeare UK. RSM systems are used by top rigging and rental companies and have been utilized on tours the world over such as Rammstein, Blue Man Group, AC/DC and many others, and many German convention centers including Dusseldorf, Nurnberg, Hannover, Munich Olympia Park have chosen the RSM to protect their venues. In the US the RSM has been chosen by the Orange County Convention Center and others.

Eilon Engineering products combine the best materials and components with the latest technology. Visit www.craneloadcells.com to learn more.