



Communiqué

ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONALE DES PALAIS DE CONGRÈS
INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CONGRESS CENTRES
INTERNATIONALER VERBAND DER KONGRESSZENTREN

Our Special Annual Conference Issue: AIPC 2002 in Tenerife



AIPC concluded its 2002 Annual Conference and 44th General Assembly in Tenerife with participants referring to it as one of the best AIPC Annual Conferences ever. Over 130 members enjoyed both an excellent educational programme and an exciting set of social activities in a spectacular setting.

Coming as it did at the end of a critical year for the meetings industry, the educational component was organized by Conference Chair Warren Buckley with a sequential series of presentations that began with a global overview of the state of the travel industry and an industry panel on specific meetings industry impacts and opportunities. This was followed by a series of educational sessions on relevant issues and a facilitated session for members to share strategies for the future.

Special guests included a number of prominent industry speakers and a senior level delegation from IAAM (International Association of Assembly Managers) including the IAAM President, Past President, First Vice President and Executive Director.

Said AIPC President Barbara Maple: "This has been a challenging year for the industry, and our intention for the Annual Conference was to not only review the impacts and opportunities that we're facing but provide tools for moving ahead

over the coming months and years. The conference program was designed to not only provide information but also help members define their own conclusions and strategies, and I think we achieved that successfully. The challenge now will be to put all these thoughts into action".

Details of both the Annual Conference and the 44th AIPC General Assembly are provided in the accompanying articles. Speaker presentations are also available on the AIPC web site www.aipc.org. These include;

- **Keynote Presentation** by Jean-Claude Baumgarten, WTTC

- **Panel presentations** by:
 - Didier Hespel - Conference Unit, European Commission, Brussels
 - Peter Osborne - Chairman, Haymarket Exhibitions, UK
 - Frank Poe - Past President, International Association of Assembly Managers
 - Mary Power - President, Convention Industry Council, USA
 - Vincent C. van Wulfen - Council Member, International Association of Professional Congress Organizers
- **Workshop presentations** by:
 - Carol Whitaker - Director HR, NEC Group, UK (Human Resources as a Partner)
 - Rod Cameron - President, Criterion Communications, Canada (Crisis Communications)
 - Michael Brähler, ICS and Gerrit J. Beuzel, Philips Communication, Security and Imaging (The Latest in Telecommunications and Presentation Technology).

The KPI presentation by Professor Helmut Schwagerman of ConEcon Management and Marketing is available online to AIPC members only. Copies of the AIPC Strategic Business Plan are also available to members only via request to the AIPC Secretariat.

Keynote, Panel Define Key Industry Issues and Prospects

A high level international keynote and panel began the 2002 AIPC Annual Conference with a broad look at the impacts of last year's events on business and an analysis of a number of factors that are determining the rate of recovery. Led by Jean-Claude Baumgarten as keynote speaker and followed by six panelists representing a variety of industry and geographic sectors, the group defined the challenges that members were able to address throughout the balance of the conference program.

In introducing the session, Conference Chair Warren Buckley said it was only by taking the broadest view that the true impacts and prospects of the meetings sector could be determined. "If people aren't traveling, we don't have delegates for our events, and that affects everyone", said Buckley. "We're not an island. We depend on a lot of factors, from the confidence and interest people have in the travel experience to the state of the economy and the health of the airline industry, and we

need to be aware of all of these as we make our plans for the future".

Jean-Claude Baumgarten, who is President of the World Travel and Tourism Council,



Jean-Claude Baumgarten, President, World Travel and Tourism Council,

presented estimates generated by WTTC's Satellite Accounting Research in order to track overall tour and travel impacts as a baseline for impacts on the meetings sector. Referring to 2001 as "Annus Horribillius", he indicated that they had estimated a

7.4% decline in overall travel post-9/11 and a loss of some 10,450,000 jobs worldwide.

Hardest hit in economic terms was the U.S.,

with an estimated loss of \$92.3 billion in revenues during this period. China topped the list of job losses with an estimated drop of 1,775,000 jobs from the travel sector. In Europe, figures showed that the UK and Germany were impacted the most in terms of both lost revenues and industry related jobs.

On a more positive note, Baumgarten said the WTTC saw 2002 as a year of stabilization and recovery, with the rate of recovery varying by region. By 2003, their projections suggest a return to growth with global increases of 6% in travel related revenues and 6.8 million new jobs.

The pattern of decline and rebound was echoed by industry panelists but with significant variations depending on geographic and industry sector.

- **Didier Hespel of the Conferences Unit, European Commission** said that as both an owner of conference facilities and responsible for technical compliance in facilities wherever EC

...Cont'd on page 2

NEW MEMBERS:

AIPC Welcomes the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre...

The award winning Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre has been widely recognized for its operational excellence and quality of service. It can accommodate several large conferences and exhibitions at the same time and under one roof; alternatively it can provide an intimate, friendly venue for small to medium sized meetings and events of any type or complexity.

BCEC provides cutting edge technology, internationally acclaimed food & beverage, dedicated and experienced event management, superior service and operational excellence. It features 20 meeting rooms of varying capacities and configurations, including a

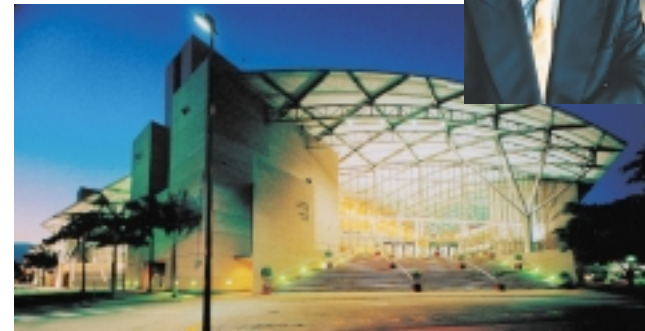
Great Hall auditorium with a 4000 seat capacity, a grand Plaza Ballroom with city and skyline views, luxuriously appointed Boardrooms and four air conditioned, column-free exhibition halls totaling 20,000 square meters of exhibition space.

It is located in downtown Brisbane, the

capital city of the State of Queensland, in the heart of South Bank, the city's popular recreational, cultural and educational precinct with its range of attractions, including restaurants, cafes, boutique shopping and even a sandy beach with palm tree parklands.

Brisbane's reputation as a delegate-friendly city is enhanced by its easy access to some of the world's greatest natural attractions and eco-tourism destinations as well as its sun soaked golden beaches and palm fringed tropical islands.

General Manager Mr Robert O'Keefe is representative of many of his staff who have been with the Centre since it opened seven years ago. 67 members of the Centre's pre-opening team provide continuity and extensive facility knowledge to clients. ■



...and Harrogate International Centre!

Third in the "top 20 UK destinations", Harrogate International Centre offers facilities that include 8 exhibition halls totaling 16, 500 m2 and a 2000 seat conference auditorium. A major expansion was completed in August 2000; at the same time, its partnership with award winning Crown Venue Catering goes from strength to strength with continued investment including the completion of a new banqueting kitchen.

HIC Director Paul Lewis notes that Harrogate prides itself on a high level of client service. A dedicated HIC Event Manager works alongside exhibition organizers to ensure events run smoothly with added support from the whole of the Event Services Team, and HIC has 'Investors In People' status indicating a long term commitment to invest in HIC staff and services.

HIC delegates can book accommodation online with HIC's Accommodation Booking Service based at Harrogate's Tourist Information Centre. It has

also just entered into a new partnership with 'The Platform', which enables delegates to do a number of things over the Internet, including booking their place at a conference, specifying workshop or seminar choices, indicate dietary requirements or many other choices depending on the particular event.

The in-house Technical Production Team provide all the technical requirements for a wide variety of events in a 'one stop shop', from lighting and sound to set design and build. Says Lewis "Our experienced and professional staff are always able to meet the expectations of organizers in a fast changing technological climate." ■



To keep in touch with AIPC, visit www.aipc.org

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Fall Education Offerings Expand

A range of training courses will be available this fall reflecting the ongoing interests of AIPC members in upgrading employee skills.

First on the list is the highly rated AIPC "Excellence in Customer Service" course offered by the Edinburgh International Conference Centre. This will be the second edition of the ECS program this year, and will take place at the EICC from October 6-11.

The course is aimed at event planners and sales persons as well as other congress centre staff whose jobs bring them into contact with clients. Eight ECS courses have taken place already, with 76 delegates from 34 different centres. Participants represented a wide range of job responsibilities from chief executives to heads of department and team leaders, and more than 90% of the graduates said the course met or exceeded their expectations!

The fee for the course, including all course materials, accommodation, social program and meals during the day is € 1200 for AIPC Members and € 1999 for non-members.

The second slate of courses are being offered in partnership with the National Exhibition Centre Birmingham. These courses, which cover a range of topics relevant to facility management and marketing, are;

- **Advanced Influencing Skills/Coaching Skills:** a 3 day course that can be attended in separate modules aimed at those with staff management responsibilities. The course will take place on the 14th, 15th and 16th of October 2002 with arrival Sunday 13 October. The cost will be € 620 for AIPC Members and € 1220 for non-members, and includes all course materials, 3 nights accommodation, refreshment breaks and lunch &

dinner each day. A 2 day version will cost € 400 for AIPC members and € 800 for non AIPC members.

- **Understanding the International and National Association Market:** a 3½ day course that will allow the delegate to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the International and National Association Market, how to develop a marketing plan to attract this vital sector of the meetings industry and how to develop a budget. It is directed primarily at Sales Directors, Sales Managers and Marketing Managers. The course will take place on the 5th, 6th 7th and 8th of December 2002 (with arrival on December 5). Cost will be € 1250 for AIPC Members and € 2350 for non AIPC Members, and will include all course materials, 3 nights accommodation, refreshment breaks and lunch & dinner each day.

- **Behavioural Interviewing / Supervisory Management / Emotional Intelligence and Leadership:** a 3-day course that can be taken in separate modules. This course will be of benefit to anyone who is responsible for the management, selection and recruitment of staff. The course will be offered on the 14th, 15th and 16th of October 2002 and 5th, 6th and 7th of December 2002. Cost will be € 620 for AIPC Members and € 1220 for non AIPC Members, and includes all course materials, 3 nights of accommodation, refreshment breaks and lunch & dinner each day. A 2 day version of the course will cost € 400 for AIPC members and € 800 for non AIPC members.

Please note that all AIPC member prices apply to these dates only. For further information contact the AIPC Secretariat office. ■

New Member Elected to AIPC Board of Directors

Following a highly contested election from a slate of four strong candidates, the AIPC Board of Directors welcomed its newest member: **Antti Vihinen**, Managing Director of Sibelius Hall Congress and Concert Centre in Lahti, Finland.

Antti was born in Tampere, Finland, and subsequently studied and worked in both Scandinavia and Germany. He is fluent in four languages: Finnish, Swedish, German and English and considers himself "a typical North-European; a product of its history and culture".



As Managing Director of the Sibelius Hall Congress and Concert Centre, Antti is responsible for a national treasure. The Hall, which bears the name of the great Finnish composer Jean Sibelius was opened in March 2000, and has been a great success both in congress and concert business.

Antti regards AIPC as an important international organization and forum for the congress business and meeting industry - an organization that should have an important role as a political pressure group on both national and international level. "Many AIPC members come from the Scandinavian or northern part of Europe, so it is only natural that this area is my immediate concern as a board member. However, I do think that a global way of thinking is needed on all international and multicultural forums", he says. ■

From Crisis Management to Human Resources

Educational sessions at this year's Annual Conference covered a diverse range of topics, ranging from Human Resources to New Technology and Crisis Communications.

Titling her session "HR as a Business Partner", Carol Whitaker of the NEC Group, UK, distinguished between "strategic and tactical HR management" as a day to day requirement and "Brand Management" as an HR tactic that will differentiate an organization in the market. Said Carol "Connecting marketing and business strategies to a people strategy is critical to delivering the brand promise".

Crisis communications is an essential element of a management plan, yet one that few organizations take the time to develop, said Rod Cameron of Criterion Communications, Canada, in introducing his topic. Cameron outlined the key components of a crisis management plan along with related media handling techniques on the basis that "If you wait for a crisis before developing your strategy, you're already too late."

Gerrit J. Beuzel of Philips Communication, Security and Imaging and Michael Brähler of Brähler ICS delivered a team effort in laying out the latest presentation and telecommunications technology and the ways in which they can be used to advantage by congress facilities. On the principle that "what once was a luxury is now a necessity", they provided participants with a guidebook to the rapidly evolving world of new technology.

All three presentations are available at www.aipc.org. ■

It's a Tree; It's a...

Art, theatre and song met with such serious topics as staff training, convention centre financing and technology overload as AIPC delegates engaged in a session entitled "Moving Forward" at this year's Annual Conference. The interactive workshop was facilitated by "Creative Connection" out of the UK, and utilized what facilitators referred to as "the oldest forms of communications" amongst humans.

In introducing the session, Conference Chair Warren Buckley pointed out that the knowledge and expertise of AIPC members is amongst its best resources. "After all the information we've received over the past two days, it's time to learn from ourselves – and sometimes that works best if we're challenged by an unusual approach".

Unusual it was. Work groups utilized everything from performances in song and dance to imagery like a tree to illustrate their conclusions, while facilitators recorded key points in giant murals that ended up covering the walls. Amongst the topics discussed were destination image, in-house catering, direct marketing and the role of culture in centre positioning.

Delegates voiced mixed reactions to the format, but all agreed that the ability to learn through interaction was a critical part of their education and that if anything, the role of interactive sessions where delegates can learn from and get to know each other should be enhanced. Suggestions for future years included the need for more active facilitation of such sessions and a means of recording and documenting the results so that they can be used by others.

Meanwhile, we have a lot of murals.....! ■



Cont'd from page 1

meetings are held, they are sensitive not only to the impacts but to future challenges. He indicated that there were only limited impacts in the period following 9/11 but that these were confused with the effects of the collapse of Sabena Airlines which occurred around the same time and impacted air access to Brussels.

Ongoing challenges seen by Hespel included the impacts of more stringent security measures, limited and more costly air access and economic restrictions. Citing the need to "do more with less", he referenced the demands of supplying sufficient interpreters for the rapidly increasing range of required languages for EC events as being one of their greatest issues.



A different perspective was provided by Peter Osborne of Haymarket Exhibitions UK.

Speaking from the perspective of the exhibitions sector, Osborne said there were distinct differences in the impacts felt depending on sector and geography, with UK domestic events affected far less than those in other areas. He indicated that there was also an overall economic impact, with visitor numbers already off by 10.8% in 2001 prior to 9/11. Combined with a post-September drop of 16.5%, overall attendance numbers for the year were down by 12%.

To illustrate sectoral differences, Osborne compared the state of events associated with the IT and Internet areas, which were already in decline, with autosport. The IT area was off by some 21% in 2001 while the impact on their flagship autosport show was negligible. He concluded that the driving factors on participation for trade shows were a combination of the stature of the show, the importance of the business to be done and the seniority of attendees. "Under these conditions, senior executives travel; junior executives don't" said Osborne.

Delegates Sample the Mannheim 2003 Experience

A multi-media presentation including live music and video elements gave AIPC delegates a preview of the exciting program awaiting them at next year's Annual Conference and 45th General Assembly in Mannheim. Congress Centre Mannheim's Michel Mauge, Chairman of the Mannheim 2003 Host Committee, alternated elements of his message with images and sounds of the city provided by entertainers representing a part of the Mannheim experience, and a "pre-pre" Announcement was distributed with key elements of the program already identified.

Mauge referenced the need to link with the corporate objectives and strategies of the client in an age of "digital media mediation" and indicated that conference themes would address this agenda. "The often quoted "Emotional Intelligence" comes into play because emotions, feelings of solidarity and the personal exchange of experience are even today the most enduring forms of communications," he said.

The conference program as now planned will run from Saturday July 5 to Wednesday July 9, 2003. First-class accommodation has been arranged in adjacent hotels, and an array of activities is planned to fully exploit the wide range of cultural, entertainment and recreational activities available in the Mannheim area. ■



Frank Poe, Past President of the International Association of Assembly Managers, stated that the impacts in the U.S.

were severe but that much of the decline had been coming for some time. Second quarter hotel occupancies in the U.S. were the worst since 1991, and 77% of US companies surveyed had already imposed travel restrictions prior to September.

However, the feeling was that meetings and exhibitions were seen as both resistant and resilient, having survived similar events and even improved their position as a vehicle for doing business. His view was that "relationships are more important than ever", and that this would lead to more face to face interaction. Key challenges for the future included the rise in Internet commerce and the growing success of virtual trade shows. IAAM's key priority is now to address the increased security expectations that have arisen over the past year and to that end they have created a Safety and Security Task Force which is defining Best Practices in this area.



Panelist Mary Power of the Convention Industry Council presented the results of an industry-wide survey of

meetings executives carried out December 21, 2001 with some 594 respondents, largely in North America. According to Power, 68% reported no event cancellations while 25.5% reported between one and five cancellations and 6.5% six or more. Of those canceled, 31% never rebooked. The same survey indicated that only 33% of respondents felt things in the industry were "getting back to normal" while 40% were looking at expanding their meeting technology to include technical options such as virtual meetings, teleconferencing and web-casting.

Power pointed to four new trends that the CIC felt would dominate the agenda for meetings in the near future. These were "change and opportunity in the industry.

comfort", meaning a renewed emphasis on time and family; "communication", particularly among different elements of meeting support systems; security, which was seen as a big priority but which should be low profile and technology, as a way to enhance meetings. She also referenced a major CIC initiative to promote the value and profile of meetings and present a "solid business case" for face to face meetings.

Another perspective was provided by Vincent van Wulfen representing the International Association of

Professional Congress Organizers (IAPCO). Van Wulfen differentiated among government, corporate and scientific meetings and stated that while initially they all reacted the same, distinctly different patterns emerged based on their different characteristics. He observed that government meetings continued to be held, while corporate meetings tended to cancel with little notice. Scientific meetings, on the other hand, tended to be postponed, often for a year, or relocated to another location. Business diversification, or "spreading your portfolio" was seen as the best route to survival for many members of the industry, he said.



In summarizing the panel presentations, Panel Chair Rod Cameron said that this was clearly a time of both

change and opportunity in the industry. "There is a better appreciation of the value of the industry, and a recognition of the need to create a higher profile for it through some of the new industry alliances that have developed. At the same time, there are technical and operational issues to be addressed. If these opportunities can be acted upon, the industry can emerge even stronger and better prepared to meet the demands of a rapidly changing future." ■

And the Winner Is...



The closing lunch of the Annual Conference was the venue for announcement of the 2002 Apex Award for "World's Best Congress Centre". After announcing second and third positions as the Belfast Waterfront Hall and Austria Centre Vienna, AIPC Treasurer Edgar Hirt called upon Barbara Maple to set aside her role as AIPC President in order to accept the Apex Award for the Vancouver Convention & Exhibition Centre, of which she is General Manager.

"This is probably the best example I could imagine for keeping the Apex Award winner a secret until its presentation, and for why we use an independent "blind" evaluation process", said Hirt. "Professor Jaworski ensures an objective analysis of the data which is based on a series of factors including congress facilities, project management, catering and technology, and that means even our President can compete and, as we see today, win!"

The award to Vancouver marks the first time the Apex Award has been made to a North American facility. It is also the first occasion on which the award recipient has been a member of the AIPC executive. "AIPC is delighted that this year's winner is the Vancouver Convention & Exhibition Centre, who are also the winner of a previous AIPC Best Marketing award," said Marianne de Raay, Secretary General of AIPC. "We are particularly pleased by the fact that it demonstrates the personal commitment to convention centre excellence embraced by the members of our AIPC executive, in this case our current President".

In responding to the Award, Maple said she hoped that it would underline the point that AIPC is above all committed to the pursuit of excellence in facility management. "In a time when our industry is facing the kinds of challenges we face today, excellence is an extremely valuable commodity", she said.

"Excellence is what can distinguish our members from the competition, and awards like this help demonstrate how serious we are in our mission as an organization. Because the determination of the Apex Award winner is made by clients who can compare the performance of facilities from many different parts of the world, the winner represents a truly international standard of excellence, and we're extremely proud to be a part of this tradition." ■

MEMBER UPDATES:

Development Award for Belfast



Belfast Waterfront Hall has just won its thirteenth major accolade – a highly prestigious Joint Award (with Lagsanside Corporation) for Best Practice in Regeneration from the British Urban Regeneration Association (BURA). The Award acknowledges the transformation of Lanyon Place into a vibrant and cultural commercial centre of excellence and boosts Belfast's bid for European Capital of Culture 2008 status.

General Manager Tim Husbands is confident that Northern Ireland's leading convention centre will set the pace once more in 2002. "As we celebrate our fifth birthday, it's with immense pride that I can look out over the once barren landscape surrounding the Hall and witness how this building has been a catalyst for the Lanyon Place development, he says. "It is

MECC Recognized for "Australia's Best Convention Food"



A past recipient of Industry national awards for 'Best Purpose-Built Centre', the Melbourne Exhibition and Convention Centre (MECC) has now become the first venue in Australia to be awarded the Meetings Industry Association of Australia (MIAA) award for Catering and Banqueting. The MIAA Awards recognize excellent business practice in the Meetings and Events Industry in Australia and rewards those who achieve outstanding results; as well as providing recognition, it also raises the overall standard of practice within the industry.

As a strong advocate for perfecting banquet dining, Executive Chef David Mercer was thrilled to receive the award and congratulated his team on their commitment and hard work. "We all know that Melbourne is the restaurant and food capital of Australia and now

New Chief Executive at QE II



Kirk Albrow has been appointed as Chief Executive of The Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre (QEICC). In his new capacity, he will assume responsibility for the overall management of one of the UK's most prominent conference centres.

Kirk most recently was General Manager, UK & Ireland, for Swissair/Sabena. Prior to that appointment he worked for United Airlines as Brand Manager in Chicago, and General Manager for Taiwan. He also held overseas posts for British Airways in the Middle East and Asia.

Sydney Restructures Management Team



Sydney Convention & Exhibition Centre Chief Executive Ton van Amerongen has announced a restructure of his management team. In making the announcement, Mr van Amerongen said the changes are designed to ensure that Australia's leading convention and exhibition facility continues to meet the needs of its international and local customers as the business events industry grows.

Among the changes are a move by former Director of Finance Paul D'Arcy to the position of Director of Operations, where he will have responsibility for all operational functions at the Centre. Information Systems Manager Ross Horlyck will

already home to the Hilton Hotel, BT Headquarters, Fujitsu and luxury living accommodation across the river, with more developments in the pipeline.'

Over 130,000 delegates have now attended every conceivable type of business event, says Husbands. Recent major events included the Congress for European Agriculture, the Institute of Designers in Ireland Awards and the International Development Research Council. High profile national and international events in the diary for 2002 include visits by the British Dental Association, the Chartered Society of Physiotherapists, Co-op Union, Society of British Neurological Surgeons, European Cystic Fibrosis Association and Chartered Institute of Environmental Health. Conference bookings now extend to 2006. ■

this recognition demonstrates that we, as a venue, are also leading the way in the catering arena," he said. "Banquet food has long suffered under the misnomer of being unimaginative and bland, but we have changed all that. This award reinforces our principle that catering for large numbers of people doesn't mean you have to compromise on quality, style or creativity."

Over 90% of events held at the Centre have some form of catering included, and last year alone more than 428,000 meals were delivered at over 800 functions. The award submission showcased the many and varied activities undertaken by the Centre during the past year, including the introduction of seasonal menus which allow the same flexibility as a restaurateur to source the freshest produce and create innovative and contemporary menus for a range of different events. ■



Kirk Albrow

Kirk replaces Marcus Buck CBE, who for the past 10 years has successfully developed the Centre into its current highly valued and profitable state. In announcing his successor, Marcus Buck said "Kirk's extensive experience in global management and marketing and development will be of enormous benefit to our customers and the staff of the Centre." ■

Former Senior Events Manager Tamara Kavalec has been appointed Manager-Exhibitions, overseeing event managers and event services managers for exhibitions. The appointment reflects the continuing strong growth in the exhibition market and the popularity of the Centre for these types of events. ■