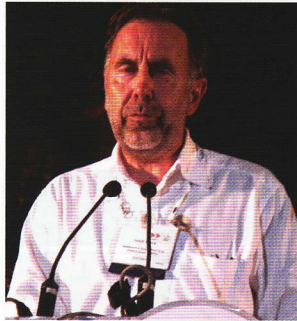


Leigh Harry to lead JMIC



WORLD - Chief executive of the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre and president of the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA), Leigh Harry, assumed the presidency of the Joint Meetings Industry Council (JMIC) at the beginning of the year. He takes over from Vancouver Convention and Exhibition Centre's GM Barbara Maple.

Established in 1978, JMIC aims to represent the collective interests of major associations involved in the sectors collectively

defined as belonging to the Meetings Industry.

"There is more reason than ever to ensure the role of our industry is well understood," says Harry. "We intend to be more aggressive in ensuring our concerns are addressed as part of the overall strategy for economic recovery."

Harry's appointment followed an industry summit held in Barcelona where JMIC members agreed to co-operate on initiatives which deliver a coordinated industry response.

"Our challenge now," says Harry, "is to develop a strategy that will do that."

The JMIC announced Tuula Lindberg as the winner of its 2008 Profile and Power Award. Ms Lindberg is MD of the Finland Convention Bureau. The award was in recognition of Lindberg's efforts in developing tools such as economic evaluation procedures for the industry.

JMIC members include:

AIPC - (the International Association of Congress Centres)

COCAL - (the Latin American Confederation of PCO and Related Companies)

DMAI - (Destination Marketing Association International)

ECM - (European Cities Marketing)

EVVC - (the European Association of Event Centres);

IAPCO (the International Association of Professional Congress Organisers)

ICCA (the International Congress and Convention Association)

MPI (Meeting Professionals International)

PCMA (the Professional Convention Association Management Association)

SITE (the Society of Incentive & Travel Executives).

It is also supported by UFI (the Global Association of the Exhibition Industry) and the CIC (Convention Industry Council).

Toronto leads the way

WORLD - Tourism Toronto and the Metro Toronto Convention Centre have been honoured with the Professional Conference Management Association's (PCMA) 2009 chairman's award.

The award recognised the city's leadership and spirit of partnership. Toronto was ranked number one convention city by North American planners in a 2008 Watkins Research survey.

Visit Florida to get its oranges squeezed?

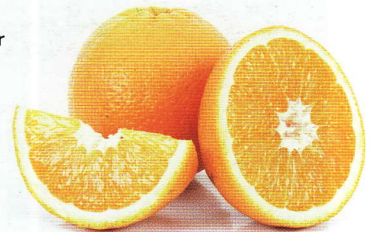
USA - America's sunshine state could see tourist information centres shut and a cutback in Florida's destination advertising campaign, as the authorities struggle with a potential budget deficit of over US\$2 billion. Up to half the state tourist agency's US\$26m budget is thought to be under threat.

Centres that used to dish out free orange juice as part of the marketing campaign could bear the brunt of budget cuts from state lawmakers.

Sources within the meetings industry say the cuts could cost the state millions of dollars, including monies spent by business tourists.

"We don't want to have the programme gutted in such a way that it will create a downward spiral," says Visit Florida's chairman Richard Goldman.

Visit Florida president and chief executive officer Bud Nocera has not ruled out redundancies if the cuts go ahead.



Europe looks east

FRANCE - Europe is looking to China, Russia, Japan and India for growth over the next 10 years, according to research conducted by the WTTC (World Travel and Tourism Council).

The CEO's of 14 City Tourist Offices of European capital cities recently met at the European Cities Marketing (ECM) conference in Paris to discuss ways of adapting

services to target these markets.

"It is a truly challenging situation. ECM is all about sharing: sharing information, intelligence and experience. We all learn from the experience of the others," says ECM president and CEO of Dublin Tourism Frank Magee.

Next year's CEO meeting will take place in Copenhagen, 23 November 2009.

Southern Star turn in Melbourne

AUSTRALIA - An estimated crowd of 15,000 gathered in Waterfront City at Docklands in Melbourne for the opening of the Southern Star observation wheel recently.

Southern Star is the only giant observation wheel to be built in Australia and is the largest in the southern

hemisphere. Its location at Docklands is only 15 minutes from Melbourne's Tullamarine airport.

Southern Star chairman Fred Maybury believes the attraction is "one of Melbourne's 'must do' experiences for locals and tourists alike".