Oracle Conference Abandons San Francisco for Las Vegas

By Jonathan Trager

A large technology conference that draws more than 60,000 attendees has decided to head to Las Vegas in 2020 after calling San Francisco its home for 20 years.

Oracle’s OpenWorld conference, which debuted in 1996, will remain in Las Vegas for at least three years. The event will take place in October 2020, October 2021, and September 2022 at Caesar’s Forum.

“Oracle is excited to offer a modern, state-of-the-art experience for attendees at Oracle OpenWorld and Code One 2020 in Las Vegas,” said an Oracle spokesperson. “We look forward to working with our longstanding counterparts in San Francisco on future events.”

The San Francisco Travel Association (SFTA) sent an e-mail to its hotel members in the participating room block on Dec. 9, informing them Oracle had reported many attendees thought hotel rates were too high and there were poor street conditions.

The estimated negative impact economically is $64,000,000 for each of the last OpenWorld conferences, according to the SFTA, which represents “a huge loss for our city.”

Despite the size and impact of the conference, Joe D’Alessandro, President & CEO of the SFTA, said the move is a “routine thing in the course of business.”

“Oracle has been talking about it for years,” he told USAE. “It’s disappointing, but we saw the writing on the wall.”

The bureau leader acknowledged that

New York State Attorney General Issues New Subpoena to NRA

By Todd McElwee

Legal pressure continues to mount on the National Rifle Association. Continuing an eight-month investigation, New York State Attorney General Letitia James has issued a new subpoena to the New York chartered organization, which was described to the New York Times as covering at least three issues: campaign finance, payments made to board members and tax compliance.

“Subpoenas issued by the New York Attorney General seek information which the NRA will supply, as necessary,” William A. Brewer III, partner at Brewer, Attorneys & Counselors and counsel to the New York Times as

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Hard Rock Hotel Demolition Now Will Stretch Into Summer

By USAE Staff

Demolition of the partially collapsed Hard Rock Hotel in New Orleans will stretch out into summer 2020, officials said at a news conference December 12.

They laid out a timeline as to how the demolition will proceed, how they hope to recover two bodies of workers trapped when the building fell as well as how it will impact the city’s famous Mardi Gras parades that trek down Canal Street, site of the collapsed hotel.

“It is a painstaking process, but once again the goal is that nobody loses their life, or an injury.” New Orleans Fire Superintendent Tim McConnell said at the press conference. Here’s how officials said the demolition would likely proceed. Crews will install shoring on a “transfer deck” on top of the building’s first eight floors. These are made solely of concrete and are relatively stable. This will likely happen starting the week of December 16 and will allow the safe recovery of the two bodies as well as evidence of the collapse.

Removing the most hazardous top floors of the building will then take place, finishing, hopefully, by the end of summer 2020. New Orleans officials said Thursday they don’t expect

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A California Polytechnic State University at San Luis Obispo team’s proposal to create an annual convention for home share and vacation rental owners was recently selected as the winner of PCMA’s North American Student Competition. Hosted by the PCMA Foundation, the team will present its Home Sharing Experience Convention (HSX) proposal during Convener Leaders next month in San Francisco.

“Most home share and vacation rental owners operate their properties with minimal property management expertise,” the HSX team said. “A convention like HSX would allow an opportunity for home sharers and experience providers to expand their knowledge, network and property-management skills.”

PCMA’s North American Student Competition is an annual event to engage students pursuing careers in business events. Chrsissy Bauer, Morgan Cutter, Luke Haley, Courtney Frickman and Olivia Larsen represented Cal Poly in the December competition. Cutter, Haley and Larsen are in the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences; Frickman is in the Orfalea College of Business; and Bauer is an exchange student from Munich University of Applied Sciences. They were advised by Kevin Lin, Ph.D., a faculty member in the Experience Management Department. He has conducted extensive research in the convention and the trade show industry and has adopted a data-driven, experience-centered approach to identify agency needs and visualize insights generated from data analytics.

Haley said Lin asked the group if they would represent the school. This year’s theme was to create a convention or meeting encouraging “face to face interactions in a digital era.”

After brainstorming, and hitting a roadblock in the fact that the travel and tourism trade show market is one that is saturated, they pieced together the idea of creating a convention highlighting the ever-growing home-sharing economy.

“The digital home sharing economy includes platforms like Airbnb, VRBO, and HomeAway, an exponentially growing market, with nearly 80 million room nights booked on Airbnb in 2016 alone, meaning that HSX will be hitting the market at just the right time,” Haley told USAE.

He continued: “Now we had to formulate this idea within the theme of the competition. After doing much research, we found that within the home sharing industry, property owners often never interact with their customers or with other rental property owners. HSX is a convention with the intent of providing everything that rental property owners could need to create the perfect homeostay, by engaging in face to face conversations with other rental property owners, as well as with exhibitors who are there to help improve their rental properties.”

Haley concluded: “We were all elated to receive the news that we had won the competition, and we look forward to presenting our proposal at the PCMA Convention Leaders Conference in January.”

Among the documents sought by the New York State Attorney General’s office declined to comment. The New York State Attorney General’s office declined to comment.

Among the documents sought by the subpoena are records related to transfers among NRA-controlled entities, including its foundation, the Times reported, adding recent tax filings show the association diverted $36 million last year from the foundation in various ways, far more than ever before and raising concerns among tax experts. Transfers came amidst financial strains and challenges from gun-control groups, which outspent the NRA between 2010 and 2017.

“While both the NRA and its foundation are exempt, only donations to the foundation are tax-deductible, the Times reported. “Tax experts say the foundation has become a back door for tax-deductible donations to the NRA itself. Karl Racine, the attorney general of the District of Columbia, where the NRA Foundation is headquartered, is also investigating.”

“This should raise, and should have raised, red flags,” Norman I. Silber, a law professor at Hofstra University and a senior research scholar at Yale, told the Times. “Last year, the NRA also changed how it accounted for money flowing from the foundation, reporting that a far greater proportion than in previous years had gone toward staffing costs.”

Documents related to internal communications about NRA’s filings with the Federal Election Commission (FEC), as well as communications related to two intertwined political consulting firms, Starboard Strategic and OnMessage, collected by the Times, were also released. The Times said a FEC complaint filed by Giffords, a gun-control group, alleged NRA paid millions for work “as a way to divert money to Republican candidates advised by OnMessage, circumventing laws restricting how much groups like the NFA can donate to political campaigns.

NRA Continued from page 1

The NRA, said in a statement provided to USAE, “Of course, the financial records of the NRA and its affiliates were audited and reported in tax filings, in accordance with state and federal regulations - a fact that underscores the Association’s commitment to good governance.”

Brewer continued: “It is easy to understand why the NRA believes that the NYAG’s zeal with respect to this inquiry reflects the investigation’s partisan purpose - not an actual concern that the NRA is not effectively using its assets to pursue its members’ interests. Regrettably, the NYAG seems to credit hollow rant s by a handful of actors who are no longer associated with the NRA.”

The New York State Attorney General’s office declined to comment.

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Giffords, which subsequently sued the FEC for failing to act, alleges Starboard and OnMessage are “functionally indis-tinguishable.”

James is also seeking documents related to NRA’s IRS filings. Responding to an article from The New Yorker and The Trace, on April 18, Everytown for Gun Safety filed an IRS complaint about the NRA’s tax-exempt status calling for investigations into its operations and leadership. “We’re confident we’ll be able to place that business, even though we’re sorry to see them go,” he said.

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HOTS reads that destination-marketing organization Visit Jersey has teamed up with a New Jersey dairy farm to outfit their cows with festive Christmas sweaters, according to UPI. The effort has drawn a lot of attention online, as intrigued viewers see the bovines Carol, Holly, Mary, Noelle, and Mariann donning their artful attire. "We couldn't resist at the farm," said Becky Houze of Lodge Farm in St. Savour. "This year we took the opportunity to 'cast off' an all-new look for the girls to help get into the festive spirit by creating matching Christmas jumpers."

HOTS hopes the colorful clothing helps the costumed cows have a very dairy Christmas!

*****

Voices often must be muffled in a museum, but HOTS just read of one where I can scream, and you can scream, we all can scream as USA Today recently reported on the Museum of Ice Cream’s new permanent flagship location in New York City. Included in the fun is guests picking their “ice cream name,” with inspiration from a wall of already named celebrity names including: “Anderson Scooper,” “Kanye Zest,” “Justin Timbershake” and “Oprah Winfeeze.” Ahead of the New York opening, the Museum of Ice Cream opened a permanent location in San Francisco, and has had pop-ups in Los Angeles, Miami and two pop-ups in the Big Apple. The new museum features 13 installations, but HOTS wonders if it has 31 favors.

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ASAE Letter

By Jonathan Traeger

The Palo Alto City Council has decided the city will remain part of the San Mateo County/Silicon Valley CVB as it pursues more information from hoteliers about whether to stay in the fold. On Dec. 2, council members voted 5-2 that they’d renew the tax for a year that funds the bureau, allowing the city to conduct its own poll before they decide whether to withdraw. John Hutar, who only became President & CEO of the bureau in June, said any cause for hotelier dissatisfaction preceded his tenure. “My feeling is that much of what’s going on is a miscommunication,” Hutar told USAE.

The CVB collects more than $300,000 a year from Palo Alto hotels and motels, according to the Palo Alto Daily Post. Hutar told USAE that he didn’t think there was overwhelming opposition among hoteliers to sticking with the CVB based on his personal conversations at the council meeting. “There were some disgruntled and some are upset, but obviously with the way the vote went it was a positive result,” he said.

However, according to the Palo Alto Hotel Council, 19 out of 27 hotels in the city want out of the agreement. The Daily Post reported. The group didn’t respond to a USAE request for an interview.

One of those owners is the Copper Inn’s Hugo Santos, who said the CVB’s efforts aren’t benefiting his property enough. “I don’t want to pay for a service that I’m not getting,” said Santos, according to the Daily Post.

Hutar said that immediately after the city council meeting he set up appointments to get specific feedback about what Palo Alto members want. In addition, Hutar said the bureau has already started attending to concerns by changing the website domain name from www.visitsanmateocounty.com to become www.visitsmcv.com, which avoids a problem of exclusivity.

Palo Alto Sticking with CVB for Now

City Council Will Conduct Poll of Hoteliers

By Jonathan Traeger

The CVB provides economic and marketing benefits to subscribers via e-mail. To receive paid subscribers online. Log onto www.usaenews.com and enter your e-mail address in order to verify authenticity.

ASAE Letter

Continued from page 1

For repeal.

“We’re obviously short on time for Congress to act before the end of the year but Congress is overwhelmingly in support of repealing the Cadillac tax,” Chris West, CAE, Director of Public Policy, ASAE, told USAE. “The House passed a bill over the summer to fully repeal the tax by a 419-6 vote so this has broad bipartisan support and we are urging lawmakers to act swiftly to keep health care affordable for the more than 178 million Americans who receive coverage through employer-provided plans.”

The letter, which counted the U.S. Chamber of Commerce amongst its signers, stated: “The consequences of this tax are serious for hardware and technology American families. Employers are making decisions today to avoid this looming tax. Many millions of working Americans will pay more out of pocket for medical treatment or face reduced health coverage in narrower networks. According to Kaiser Family Foundation 2018 data, since 2010, health care deductions have risen 89%, while wage growth has remained comparatively flat.” It concluded: “The 40% “Cadillac Tax” on employer-provided health coverage is widely opposed by both Republicans and Democrats. Along with the 419 members of the House that voted to fully repeal this tax, there are 63 bipartisan Senate cosponsors of S. 684, the Middle-Class Health Benefits Tax Repeal Act of 2019.

Michael O’Callaghan Retiring as COO of Detroit CVB

By Jonathan Traeger

Michael O’Callaghan, Executive Vice President & COO of the Detroit Metro CVB, has decided to retire after serving in the role for 21 years. O’Callaghan, 66, will leave at the end of the year to spend more time with family and friends. He added that his wife has had health challenges for years, but that seems to have straightened out.

The former hotelier said he certainly has “mixed feelings” about his retirement. “This has been a really great experience watching it go through the rebirth,” O’Callaghan told USAE. “I think more than anything I’m going to miss the staff. We’re a closely knit crew here, and they’re my second family.” That rebirth includes a revitalized downtown area, O’Callaghan said, with new retail, office space, and residential space. In addition, the Cobo Center has recently been renamed the TCF Center in partnership with the bank. Local officials had sought to erase the name of 1950s Detroit Mayor Albert Cobo, who had expressed racist sentiments.

“Know the people at TCF; they are engaged in the community and invested in the community, and they are great partners,” said O’Callaghan. “It’s a great marriage.”

O’Callaghan, who formerly managed a Westin hotel and a Hilton hotel, said he first came to bureau because of “a lot of friction between the bureau and hotel community.” At the same time, he also served as the treasurer on the board of the CVB.

Many people have had a negative perception of Detroit from its reputation from “way back when,” said O’Callaghan, but during his tenure, visitation from outside communities has increased by 55%.

Please turn to page 7
Events Industry Council Announces 2020 Board, CMP Governance Commission Leadership

MP’s Paul Van Deventer Named Chair

Johnson & Johnson Vision, and Vice-Chair and Immediate Past Chair, respectively. Connell told USAE: “The CMP is the most recognized and respected designation in the meetings industry. Its impact on individual careers and the integrity it represents is renown; individuals strive to attain this designation as an important milestone in one’s career development. Having the opportunity to work with EIC to grow the designation on a global scale and embrace professionals in other countries is bold and invigorating. Likewise, we are hoping to expand the relevance of the designation to those who have maintained their commitment for many years by looking at ways to keep the CMP fresh and current.” She added: “My involvement in EIC has been most rewarding; the CMP Commission is comprised of professionals committed to keeping the designation prominent and coveted. Our research work, combined with the current strategic visioning for the organization, will move the Council to a stronger position in the meetings industry. I’m proud to be part of a forward-thinking and pivotal group.”

The 2020 commission members are: Michelle Alligaur, CMP, CAE, CMM, Financial Services Institute; Sathyia Darsh Chinni, CMP, Eventsource; Christine Faiman, CMP, Marriott International; Jessica McLean Gann, Inteleos; Tim Glanzer, CMP, Elevated Event Solutions; Deanna Griffith-House, CMP, CMM, Spectrum Reach; Cornelina Horner, CMP, American Land Title Association; Leslie Jones, CMP, CAE, American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc.; Steven Lorenz, CMP, Takeda; WeeMin Ong, CMP, CEM, Marina Bay Sands; Tyra Warner, CMP, College of Costal Georgia; and Robert Webb, CMP, ASCD.

Hard Rock

Continued from page 1

to recover two bodies trapped on the site until March. Contractors won’t finish demolishing the building’s severely dam-
aged top floors until at least the end of the summer. As to the building’s concrete-only base, Mayor LaToya Cantrell said it has to come down as well.

Fire Superintendent McConnell said he recognized the pain the extended pro-
cess has caused for family members of the collapse victims but said he couldn’t send in recovery crews without shoring up the building first.

“It’s just simply not acceptable at any time that you would get someone killed or hurt trying to recover the remains. If it could be done, we would have done it.”

Regarding the impact on Mardi Gras and the city’s famous parades down Canal Street, it appears unlikely any pa-
rades will roll through the block this year. City agencies are preparing alternate plans, Collins Arnold, the city’s homeland security director, said.

“We’re going to continue those conversations and have a good viable plan, very shortly, for how we’re going to address not having the 1000 block of Canal avail-
able during Mardi Gras.”

“Shields, CAE, President & CEO, National Business Officers Association; and O’Neill. Benton was unable to attend.

By Todd McElwee

The collection of industry leaders tasked with piloting the Events Industry Council (EIC) into the next decade has been announced by the organization. Paul Van Deventer, President & CEO, MPI, has been elected 2020 Chair, with Mark Cooper, CEO, IACC, tapped as Chair-Elect. EIC also announced its CMP Governance Commission. Appointments are

“Our incoming and reappointed board and commission members are accomplished leaders who bring diverse perspectives, insights and experiences that will elevate our organization’s efforts in championing the global events industry,” said Amy Calvert, CEO, EIC. Van Deventer, who joined MPI in 2013, has also chaired the Meet-
ings Mean Business Coalition (MMBC).

“As Muhammad Ali observed, ‘service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on earth.’” Van Deventer told USAE: “I am privileged and blessed to be part of such an innovative and impact-
ful industry and see my role in EIC as an opportunity to pay a small dividend back to all the profession-
als who have made this industry what it is and have done so much as volunteers to support other industry organizations such as MPI. Bottom-line is that giving back is both fun and rewarding.”

He added: “I am very excited to con-
tinue to advance the great work of my predecessors in reshaping the Events Industry Council to be the global voice of the business events industry on advo-
cacy, research, professional recognition and standards. As an organization, EIC is uniquely positioned to take the lead on critical social issues for our industry, such as gender equality, human traf-
ficking, sustainability and professional recognition.”

Cooper took on his role at IACC in 2012. He previously worked for Dolce Hotels & Resorts, Sundial Group, ConferenceDirect and Warwick Conferences. Board officers and directors are nomi-
nated by the membership which is com-
prised of more than 30 organizations in the events industry.

The 2020 directors are: David Audrain, CEM, Society of Independent Show Organizers; H.S. (Vicki) Bedi, International Exhibition Logistics Association; Steve Bova, CAE, Financial and Insurance Conference Professionals; Cathy Breden, CMP, CAE, AEE, Sherrit Kar-
amat, CAE, PCMA; and Didier Scalalet, Society for Incentive Travel Excel-
cence. Tina Wehmer, CAE, CMP, CEO, AMCI, transitions to Immediate Past Chair.

As the governing body of the CMP cre-
dential, EIC also ap-
points the CMP Gov-
ernance Commission, which includes organiz-
er and supplier repre-
sentatives from across the events industry.

“The Certified Meeting Professional continues to be the most important cre-
dential for recognizing and maintaining a high level of experience and knowledge among event organizers,” said Calvert. “We are fortunate to have such a talent-
ed group of individuals to advance and promote the standards of excellence attributed to those who hold the CMP.”

Barbara Connell, CMP, CAE, CEO, American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy, is Chair. Alisa Peters, CMP, CMM, Sr. Global Account Manager, Ex-
perient, A Maritz Global Events Company; and Aleksa Garcia, CMP-HC, CMM, Mar-
keting Manager, Conventions & Events, Johnson & Johnson Vision, are Vice-Chair and Immediate Past Chair, respectively. Connell told USAE: “The CMP is the most recognized and respected des-
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ASAE recently honored Peter J. O’Neil, CAE, CEO, ASSIS International; and Barbara Benton, CAE, Vice President, Government Relations, Ohio Society of CPAs; during an APAC recep-
tion at its Washington, D.C. headquarters; $25,000 was raised. Left to right: Thomas W. Shields, CAE, President & CEO, National Business Officers Association; and O’Neill. Benton was unable to attend.

Paul Van Deventer

Mark Cooper

Barbara Connell, CMP, CAE

Alisa Peters, CMP
PCMA Offering Engaging Convening Leaders Networking Slate

By Todd McElwee

Many are known to have left their hearts in San Francisco, but PCMA has created a Convening Leaders networking slate it hopes allows attendees to take with them new friends and re-established connections when departing the Bay Area. Prominent on the conference’s online agenda is Party With A Purpose. Benefiting the PCMA Foundation the event regularly attracts more than 1,500 and raises north of $25,000. Tickets are $125.

Kicking off the networking slate on the morning of Jan. 5, PCMA is inviting attendees to San Francisco-Marin Food bank to help end hunger during Hospitality Helping Hands. Participants will be working on a variety of projects including separation and packaging of food to be distributed the next day at one of the food bank’s 271 pantry sites, where low-income families, seniors and individuals receive 25-30 pounds of groceries. The association also noted 30,000 households count on the San Francisco-Marin Food Bank for food assistance. Tickets are $85.

For most, Convening Leaders officially tips Jan. 5 at 6:30 p.m. during the Opening Reception at Pier 48. Set against the backdrop of the Bay Bridge, Oracle Park and San Francisco’s skyline, the party will feature authentic cuisine from the city’s distinctive neighborhoods including the Mission, Chinatown and Castro. Wellness is emphasized during the Foundation Fun Run/Walk and Na-maste with PCMA. Both events benefit the PCMA Foundation with the former Jan. 6 and tied to the “Get Fit with the Foundation” wellness initiative. Tickets are $40. Na-maste with PCMA is Jan. 7, with tickets $125. Locations for both are being determined.

Putting a bow on Convening Leaders Jan. 7, the Tuesday Networking Recep-tion features Grammy Award-winners Maroon 5 at the recently opened Chase Center. PCMA gave a special thanks to San Francisco Travel Association for the event. For more visit conveningleaders.org/schedule/networking-activities/

Three Teams Targeted for Morial New Orleans RFP Process

By Jonathan Trager

Three teams are in the race for developing a 39-acre mixed-use project that will remake the area around the Morial Convention Center in New Orleans. The NOEHA announced on Dec. 6 that it had vetted five candidates and selected the following three groups to compete in the RFP (Re-quest for Proposal) process: Woodward, Leventhal, Carpenter (JV); The Domain; and River Park Neighbor-hood Investors.

“We are extremely gratified by the in-terest shown by five well-regarded and highly-experienced development teams, and believe the three finalists demon-strate the kind of vision, experience, and capabilities necessary to bring this trans-formative project to life,” said Michael Sawaya, President of the New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center. The NOEHA was expected to issue the RFP by Dec. 13, with an established final submittal deadline of Feb. 28.

“These three finalists represent the best and brightest we’ve seen in imagination and design,” said Stephen Perry, Presi-dent & CEO of New Orleans & Company. “We’re expecting to see some spectacular imagination put to paper.”

An initial RFP (Request for Qualifications), issued on Sept. 6, stipulated that submittals should outline each respon-dent’s vision for creating a “[mixed-use] development that will lead to a vibrant economic driver for the State of Louisiana and City of New Orleans, develop a competitive value proposition that will attract visitors and uses to the site, and build a consensus among public and private stakeholders.”

The mixed-use development is part of a $557 million, five-year plan that also includes a 1,200-room headquarters hotel along the riverfront and a pedestrian park that is currently under construction and expected to be complete in January 2021.

Melvin J. Rodrigue, Chairman of the NOEHA, said leaders are “confident that any of the three finalists can help the transformational vision of the Authority to be realized.”

“In addition to their outstanding track records as developers of other highly successful projects, we are especially pleased that all three finalists exhibited a commitment to inclusion of Small and Emerging Business (SEB) and Disad- vantaged Emerging Business (DEB) participation in their responses,” he said.

Sindy Bohada Named Convention Sales Manager for Miami CVB

By Jonathan Trager

The Greater Miami CVB has appoint-ed Sindy Bohada as Convention Sales Manager for the West Coast Market for both corporate and association business. Bohada, 26, will build new client rela-tionships, explore data-mining opportu-nities at Convening Leaders every year to allow participants the chance to make the connections they need to achieve professional and personal success.

Convening Leaders’ biggest party is Jan. 6’s aptly named Party With A Purpose at SF Masonic Auditorium. Benefiting the PCMA Foundation the event regularly attracts more than 1,500 and raises north of $25,000. Tickets are $125.

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“Even though the hotel is smaller, I would provide whatever rooms I could to allow participants the chance to make the connections they need to achieve professional and personal success.”

Convening Leaders’ biggest party is Jan. 6’s aptly named Party With A Purpose at SF Masonic Auditorium. Benefiting the PCMA Foundation the event regularly attracts more than 1,500 and raises north of $25,000. Tickets are $125.
Dr. Chandra P. Belani has been appointed Chief Science Officer (CSO) at the International Association for the Study of Lung Cancer (IASLC). Dr. Belani will direct, guide and support the IASLC scientific strategy and will also serve as a spokesperson for IASLC. Dr. Belani is currently Professor of Medicine in the Division of Hematology/Oncology in the Department of Medicine at the Penn State Hershey Medical Center.

Jochem-Jan Sleiffer has been appointed Area President, Middle East, Africa & Turkey by Hilton - effective Jan. 1. Sleiffer takes on the position following a three-decade career at Hilton, where he most recently was Sr Vice President Operations, Continental Europe, overseeing a portfolio of 57 Hilton-managed hotels across 26 countries and territories. Previously he held a variety of leadership roles across 26 countries and territories. Previ- ously he held a variety of leadership roles in Belgium, U.K, France and Greece.

Jill McClure, CAE, has been named Executive Director of the Association of Progressive Rental Organizations (APRO). She served as COO, Colorado Oil & Gas Association, for seven years and worked for the Texas Association of School Boards. She belongs to ASAE, and the Texas Society of Association Executives and is a former adjunct professor in marketing and convention & trade show management at Austin Community College.

David Kelly has been appointed Sr. Vice President, Operations, Continental Europe, for Hilton. Joining Hilton’s Euro- pe, Middle East and Africa region from his current position overseeing Greater China and Mongolia, Kelly will oversee operations of 57 hotels across 26 coun- tries. Kelly will assume his new position on Jan. 1, and be based in Barcelona. He will relocate to the region with his wife, Carol, and son, Jayden.

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Taylor Lockard has been promoted to Destination Services Manager at Louisville Tourism. She was Registration Services Manager. She joins three other Destination Services Managers respon- sible for working with booked convention groups in various markets. Lockard joined Louisville Tourism part-time in 2012, becoming a full-time staff member in 2013 as Destination Services Assistant and transitioning to Registration Services Manager in 2017. She graduated from Indiana University.

Milena Maksimova has been pro- moted to General Manager at the Inn on Fifth & Club Level Suites in Naples, Fl. Maksimova will oversee the day-to- day operations of the boutique property, which completed a $5 million renovation in October. Maksimova first joined the property 2012, and prior to her new position, worked her way up from Front Desk Agent to Reservations Manager, and recently, Front Office Manager.

Matthew Mariconda has been ap- pointed Controller for the Outrigger-man- aged OHANA Waikiki Mala by Outrigger and Embassy Suites by Hilton Waikiki Beach Walk by Outrigger Hospitality Group. He joined Outrigger in 2018 as Sr. Financial Analyst and previously was with Morgan Stanley Wealth Management serving in several positions. Mariconda holds a Bachelor of Arts in economics from the University of Hawaii and is Treasurer of Bluewater Mission.

Eduardo Fernandez has been named General Manager of the Royal Sonesta Boston. He joins from the Sonesta Fort Lauderdale Beach where he was Gen- eral Manager for six years. A hospitality professional with more than 30 years of experience, Fernandez began his career at Le Centre Sheraton Hotel and Towers in Montreal before managing numerous properties for Sheraton Hotels and Re- sorts in New York, Delaware and Miami.
Amy Nichols Exiting as Head of Wilson County CVB

By Jonathan Trager

Amy Nichols is departing as Tourism Director of the Wilson County CVB in Tennessee after taking on a role as an account manager with travel publisher Lonely Planet. Nichols, who has held the post for just two years, is resigning effective Jan. 3. Wilson County is located just east of Nashville.

"I just believe it's time for me to move on," Nichols told USAE. "I feel like I did what I needed to do, and I want to pass the torch to someone else."

By working for Lonely Planet, Nichols said she'll be able to work for a large, well-known brand and destinations across the world. This fits with her experience with the Walt Disney Company, where she worked in a variety of roles, Nichols said. A graduate of Indiana University Southeast, Nichols' accomplishments during her tenure include creating a new website; the Torch to someone else...

U.S. Travel Association Forecast Shows Market Share Decline Through at Least 2023

By Todd McElwee

The U.S. continues to struggle in claiming its share of the global long-haul travel market.

"Worldwide business is projected to reach an average of 4.8% annually through 2023, the pace of American growth is projected to be just 2.4%, according to the latest forecast released by the U.S. Travel Association.

"International inbound travel is the No. 2 U.S. export, and making its pace of growth a national priority could be a difference-maker in helping to keep the country out of a recession," said Roger Dow, President & CEO, U.S. Travel.

"Right now, the country is not capturing the full economic potential of overseas travel, but there are some turnkey policy solutions that could help to address that—starting with congressional reauthoriization of the Brand USA tourism marketing organization."

"U.S. Travel said the gap will further diminish the nation's share of the total long-haul travel market to 10.4% by 2023 - continuing the steady slide from its high of 13.7% in 2015. The 2019-2023 decline in market share would translate to an economic loss of $78 billion in visitor spending, and our share of the global long-haul travel market.

The organization added: "Equally worrisome is projected soft growth in the normally strong domestic travel market, which the U.S. travel report forecasts will increase by just 1.4% in 2020, the slowest pace in 36 years - further stoking fears of an economic slowdown and under-scoring the importance of bolstering the international side."

"Brand USA reauthorization is para-mount to U.S. Travel and the Visit U.S. Coalition's agenda. It's authorization and public funding source is set to expire Sept. 30, 2020. Brand USA's marketing efforts over the past six years have brought 6.6 million visitors - along with the U.S., generating $47.7 billion in economic impact and supporting nearly 52,000 American jobs annually. Making its way through Congress, the Travel Promotion, Enhancement, and Modernization Act of 2019 extends funding for Brand USA through fiscal year 2027. Christopher Thompson, President & CEO, Brand USA, and Tori Barnes, Executive Vice President, U.S. Travel Association, appeared before a House subcommittee Oct. 29, championing Brand USA reauthorization through passage of the bill.

After the subcommittee markup Barnes said: "The Brand USA legislation is fundammentally a U.S. jobs and exports bill, and today the House took another huge step toward boosting both by advancing the reauthorization measure closer to passage.

"International visitation to the U.S. is flat at a time when global travel is booming, which means that we are leaving a huge opportunity for economic growth on the table. The situation would be far worse without Brand USA's demonstrated effectiveness at bringing lucrative international visitor dollars to our shores, and House and committee leaders are to be commended for recognizing the urgency to renew Brand USA this year."

"The American travel community ex-tends its deepest thanks to full committee Chairman Frank Pallone and Ranking Member Walden, and to subcommittee Chairwoman Jan Schakowsky and Rank-ing Member Cathy McMorris Rodgers for prioritizing this issue in an incredibly crowded legislative agenda. We add our thanks to Speaker Pelosi and Leader McCarthy for working in tandem with Leader McConnell and Leader Schumer—to include this strong bipartisan measure in must-pass legislation before the end of 2019."

More on the forecast can be found at www.ustravel.org/research/travel-fore casts.
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*PCMA and Marriott International's year-long research project: The Future Trends of Meetings & Events