Roger Dow Notes Successes, Identifies Opportunities in State of the Travel Industry Address

By Todd McElwee

Fresh off a fruitful decade Roger Dow, President & CEO, U.S. Travel Association, believes the travel industry is poised for more prosperity. Delivering the State of the Travel Industry Address Feb. 4 during the Spirit of Hospitality Celebration in Washington, D.C. at the National Air & Space Museum.

It’s pretty clear that as we begin this new decade, tremendous opportunities are on the horizon,” said Dow. “We’ve built a pretty ambitious agenda. It aligns perfectly with an industry as ambitious and invigorated as travel. We’re betting big on the future because we know what our industry can achieve if we unite behind a clear vision, join together to advance common goals and put our shared interests first.”

He went on to say: “Mark Twain’s words, in some ways, transcended time: ‘Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness.’

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Destination Showcase Keynote Speaker Sara Ross Explains How to Develop “Leadership Vitality”

By Grant Broadhurst

Ever feel like you’re trying so hard to lead well but just end up exhausted, frustrated, and caught up in emotions of the moment?

That’s the problem Sara Ross, Founder of BrainAMPED, tackled in her keynote on February 5 at Destination Showcase. She gave a lesson on how to avoid “Leadership Fatigue” and instead develop “Leadership Vitality” by using Emotional Intelligence to become better leaders, become better people, and achieve success.

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200+ Expected for AMCI Annual Meeting Concurrent Sessions Aplenty Are On Tap

By Emma Sonneveldt

This year’s AMCI Institute’s Annual Meeting at the Hyatt Long Beach in Long Beach, CA will take place February 12-14. Approximately 200 attendees are expected.

Tina Wehmeir, CEO of AMC Institute, told USAE: “We are thrilled to showcase our meeting sponsor, Hyatt Long Beach and look forward to highlighting Long Beach as an exciting destination for our attendees. In addition, we have an incredible program planned for our attendees this year with numerous interactive sessions and excellent networking opportunities. We can’t wait to see our fellow AMC colleagues, industry partners, and friends in Long Beach!”

On February 12 following preliminary committee meetings there will be a first timers reception followed by what AMCI calls “speed dating.” A welcome reception will follow at the Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center The Cove.

“Sunrise Wellness’ activities will be held at the beginning of each morning of the convention.”

David Nour, CEO of The Nour Group, Inc., will lead the opening educational session February 13 with a presentation entitled: “Your Journey from Now to Next.” Nour is a growth strategist, thought leader, and top speaker, who provides tools for personal and professional growth.

Please turn to page 2

DHS Suspends CBP Trusted Traveler Programs for New York Residents Over Immigration Law

By Todd McElwee

In what is being denounced as a politically motivated move Empire State residents are being shut out from applying for or renewing their enrollment in certain Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Trusted Traveler Programs like Global Entry.

Responding to New York implementing the Driver’s License Access and Privacy Act (Green Light Law), Chad F. Wolf, Acting Secretary, Dept. of Homeland Security (DHS) announced Feb. 6, residents will no longer be eligible to apply for or renew their enrollment in certain Trusted Traveler Programs. DHS said the law prohibits the Dept. of Motor Vehicles (DMV) from sharing information with DHS preventing it from fully vetting New York residents.

U.S. Travel Association and Gov. Andrew Cuomo view the move as politically motivated with New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio’s office condemning it as “childish.”

Tori Emerson Barnes, U.S. Travel Association Executive Vice President for Public Affairs and Policy said: “Travel should not be politicized. Trusted traveler programs enhance our national security because they provide greater certainty regarding a person’s identity, citizenship, and criminal background. Suspending
State of the Travel continued from page 1

Appearing before a packaged room down sporting a crisp gray suit, was buoyant while delivering the address as if coming off the aughts or “Lost Decade” - when the U.S. lost 31% of its global travel market share - the past 10 years or “Comeback Decade” was a gleaming success. He opened by acknowledging the coronavirus public health emergency here in the United States a 10% drop over the previous decade,” said Dow. “We welcomed 724 million international visitors, nearly a 50% increase. Travel spending soared 62%, reaching $1.1 trillion annually. This is a 1.8 trillion for the decade, significantly outstanding growth in the overall economy.

Most importantly, 1.7 million good American jobs—jobs that can’t be outsourced—were added over the decade. So, we start this new decade from an un-questioned position of strength, but that strength isn’t guaranteed.

Dow said travel offers millions the chance to grab the first run on the nation’s great ladder of professional opportunity; launching rewarding careers, inspiring countless entrepreneurs to follow their dreams, and helping workers build the skills they need to succeed, not just on the job, but in life. One in 10 New Yorkers is an American – 15.7 million people: work in jobs supported by travel. The sector currently accounts for 3% of the nation’s GDP and contributes 6% of the 2 million new jobs added last year.

He shared several stories of travel workers highlighting the entrepreneurial spirit of the industry such as Erica Qualls-Battey. “After the birth of her fourth child, Erica re-entered the workforce at the border crossing in her green-light post at the Santa Clara Marriott, which led to her current position as General Manager of the Atlanta Marriott Marquis.” said Dow. “Today, Erica is recognized as one of the top business leaders in the city of Atlanta.”

Emphasizing travel positions cannot be outsourced, Dow welcomed Amazon’s forthcoming Virginia headquarters and the future factory opening in Alabama but noted how travel jobs are tenuous.

“I applaud these new assembly plants and corporate offices—each contribute to the economy,” said Dow. “But to meet the growing demand of travel jobs in this field are available—imagine actually they are essentially “shovel ready,” not requiring the construction of new businesses.

As the industry continues to add significant legislative wins including Brand USA’s seven-year reauthorization and the enactment of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement.

Restarting Brand USA is a vote of confidence in travel’s importance to America’s economy,” said Dow. “It’s a strong signal that the U.S. intends to continue competing strongly in the international travel market, draw more visitors to our country and drive future growth in our industry.”

Our hopes Dow mentioned to expand and strengthen the travel industry included: implementing travel through trade by elevating the sector’s role as a vital U.S. export, and ensuring it has a seat at the table for crucial travel negotiations with Japan, U.K., European Union and China. 

“Enhancing security by leveraging the industry’s already-strong leadership to create a seamless travel experience that improves the REAL ID Act through policy changes, alleviating security checkpoints and expanding successful trusted traveler programs.”

“Every barrier to travel is a barrier to trade,” said Dow. Our nation commits vast investments of time and energy to promote lower barriers to trade in American steel, wheat, pork, tractors, airplanes and many other “Made-in-the-U.S.” goods. But how often do we hear our trade negotiators pushing for lower barriers to travel?

“It’s time to treat travel like the trade powerhouse we are.”

In 2019 international travelers spent $258 billion when visiting the U.S. – generating a trade surplus of $69 billion. That’s because every dollar spent by an international – on a hotel, meal, rental car, or airplane ticket counts as a U.S. export.

“Our industry’s export power has earned us a seat at the table during trade negotiations. Every barrier to travel is a barrier to trade. We will take a leading role in helping U.S. officials secure more agreements with more countries that open more markets to the U.S.”

Trustee Traveler continued from page 7

enrollment in Global Entry and other trust-ed traveler programs only undermines travel security and efficiency. We are in contact with the Department of Homeland Security Dow, survey this message.”

CBP expects the move to affect up to 150,000-200,000 New York residents who seek to renew membership this fiscal year. There are almost 30,000 commercial truck drivers enrolled in the FAST program at four New York-Canada ports of entry.

“New York’s ‘Green Light Law’ is ill-conceived and the Department is forced to take this action to ensure the integrity of our Trusted Traveler Pro-grams. It’s very clear: this irresponsible action has consequences,” said Wolf. “An aspect of the law which I’m most concerned about is that it prohibits the DMV from providing ICE and CBP with important data used in law enforcement, trade, travel, and homeland security. ICE uses the information as they investigate and build cases against terrorists, and criminals who commit sexual exploitation, human trafficking, and financial crimes. Unfortunately, because of this law, they can no longer do that.”

Wolf continued: “CBP also uses that data for national security purposes and to ensure safe and lawful trade and travel. Specifically, CBP is able to offer Trusted Traveler Programs like Global Entry because we are able to use DMV data to make an evidence-based assessment that those individuals who seek this benefit are low risk and meet the eligibility requirements. Without the DMV information we aren’t able to make that assessment. DHS notified New York DMV that New York residents can no longer enroll or re-enroll in these trusted traveler programs because we no longer have access to data to ensure that New York Residents meet the enrollment requirements. We must do our job.”

Cuomo was a guest on WAMC NorthEast Public Radio with Alan Chartock. “This unbridled arrogance is a direct affront to the rule of law, hyper-political government, and this is another form of contempt of the rule of law, hyper-political government, and this is another form of political stunt and the reason we can’t trust the database from New York. They’re just making a political point, a political stunt and the reason why the federal government,” said Wolf.

“Over the last decade Americans hit an all-time high in spending. He opened by acknowledging travel market share - the past 10 years coming off the aughts or “Lost Decade”

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Diversified Management Services
HOTS Opinion: Destination Showcase Needed to Go Smaller to Feel Bigger

HOTS thought Destination Showcase 2020 looked a bit like a nice hors d’oeuvre lost on a gigantic serving plate. That’s certainly true. There was plenty of open space as the accompanying photo illustrates.

Also missing: carpeting in the aisles. HOTS’ feet don’t like hard concrete floors. Between the overly generous space between booths, very wide aisles, and large swaths of emptiness around the trade show area itself, there would have been plenty of room for a street hockey game.

In fact, HOTS can’t fathom why DI didn’t condense the trade show and make the room look smaller — and therefore fuller — via an air wall, tall pipe and drape, or some other technique. HOTS asked, but DI wouldn’t explain their reasoning for the floor plan.

As to attendance, HOTS knows many associations are prone to exaggeration. But DI claimed over a thousand people attended the show. That definitely raised HOTS’ eyebrows. At no point did it ever feel like a thousand people were there — give HOTS a break!

It’s too bad the Destination Showcase attendance was so sparse — the trade show had plenty of destinations for planners’ meetings, the keynote was interesting, and opting for PCMA’s education sessions was only $29 bucks. One would think a deal like that (and free food!) would fill up a room. Of course, a whole lot more promotion of the event by DI and PCMA both production that is truly draws thousands.

Of course, maybe the theme for this year was how events feel in overly large spaces. DI’s Spirit of Hospitality event was held at the National Air and Space Museum — or a corner of it, anyway. About half an hour into the event, HOTS looked across the nearly empty part of the museum to take a peek at the VIP area. It was empty except for a few servers. What’s the point of being a VIP if no one knows it?

HOTS doesn’t think there’s anything wrong with trade shows of varying sizes. Not every show can pull in thousands. But every show should feel big and busy — not like a fourth-grader swallowed up in his dad’s XXL hockey jersey.

HOTS hope is that next year’s iteration of this event — held in the Springtime versus the dead of winter and hopefully properly promoted early and often — draws the kind of numbers everyone would like to see.

U.S. Travel, Chamber and Transportation Organizations Welcome House Infrastructure Plan

Infrastructure investment has been a longtime priority for U.S. Travel.

By Todd McElwee

Late last month, a trio of House Committees released a framework for a five-year, $760 billion investment addressing some of the country’s most urgent infrastructure needs. To put Jan. 29, by Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chair Peter DeFazio (D-Oreg); Energy and Commerce Committee Chair Frank Pallone (D-N.J.) and Ways and Means Committee Chair Richard Neal (D-Ma) the package is being welcomed by U.S. Travel Association, U.S. Chamber of Commerce and a series of other transportation organizations.

“Our country has changed dramatically since the 1950s, yet people and goods are now literally being squeezed on transportation networks first developed nearly 70 years ago,” said DeFazio. “This package for transformational investments to make our infrastructure smarter, safer, and resilient to climate change, or else we will keep throwing money at an antiquated system that is only holding us and our economy back.

The framework we released today is the launchpad we need to move forward on those transformational investments and curb carbon pollution. In the coming months, I look forward to continuing our work to make this framework a reality. The cost of inaction is too great.”

The framework would bolster the Federal role to help communities around the country undertake transformative projects that are smarter, safer, and more enduring. It incorporates major investments in highways, rail, and transit systems, airports, ports and harbors, wastewater and drinking water infrastructure, brownfields, and broadband. Infrastructure investment has been a longstanding priority. DI’s Spirit of Hospitality event was held at the National Air and Space Museum — or a corner of it, anyway. About half an hour into the event, HOTS looked across the nearly empty part of the museum to take a peek at the VIP area. It was empty except for a few servers. What’s the point of being a VIP if no one knows it?

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What's It Like to Run a Hotel That Used to Be an Armory?

By Grant Broadhurst

The 95-room Portland Regency Hotel & Spa in Portland, Maine, did not begin its life as a hotel. It began its life in 1898 as the State of Maine Armory for Maine's National Guard. That simple fact is the source of both headaches and joy for its General Manager of 11 years, David Tamulevich. After nearly a hundred years variously serving as an armory, a U.S. Navy recreation center, a civic auditorium, a public bathhouse, and then a warehouse for a paper company, the historic neo-classical structure opened as a hotel in 1987. A few years later, it became part of Historic Hotels of America. Prior to getting into the fine dining and hotel business, Tamulevich’s background was in construction and his degree is in engineering, which he said “actually couldn’t be a better degree for an old building.”

“Even though it was an armory where you could have troops staying here – you could have 300 people per night – it was a training facility. It had locker rooms, a few different things, but it was never a hotel,” Tamulevich said.

So there’s a lot of maintenance to do and a “multitude of small things” to deal with as General Manager. For one, all the guest rooms are a bit different. “The rooms aren’t [exactly] cookie-cutter. Even though we may have lots of standard rooms, none of them are exactly the same size,” Tamulevich said, adding, “Some of the rooms have concrete floors underneath the tile and carpet. Some have wood floors.”

It’s a challenge, Tamulevich said, saying there is “no doubt” it costs more to maintain a historic hotel like the Portland Regency.

Another challenge?

“Trying to bring all the systems up to the latest technologies being that the building was never intended to be a hotel with all the brick, the steel – getting a good WiFi reception throughout the property,” is a challenge, Tamulevich said.

WiFi obviously wasn’t around in 1898, but it’s an expected amenity today, so the hotel employs more WiFi routers than it may otherwise.

Fortunately, Tamulevich said, the property’s ownership is always reinvesting in renovations and improvements.

“It’s always going on. As soon as you get done renovating one thing, it’s on to the next project,” Tamulevich said. “Just always keep things as fresh and new as possible, but obviously being that it’s a historic property we try to keep everything as traditional too. It’s not like we can change 180 degrees the direction that we’re going. People come here because of the fact that it is a unique property, and we want to keep it with the feeling that it’s historic but yet everything’s new.”

Yet Tamulevich said one of the benefits of running the hotel is how the building’s history as the State of Maine Armory makes it unique whether for leisure travelers or meetings business.

The Portland Regency has six meeting rooms of varying sizes, and Tamulevich said the hotel can accommodate meetings ranging from 10 to 100 people.

“They’re just looking for a unique experience. Want to go somewhere a little bit different than just a standard hotel with meeting rooms,” Tamulevich said. “Throughout the hallways we have different articles and articles and timeframes of the property for people to read and ask: ‘What is my impact right now?’

The hotel doesn’t have its own history, so Tamulevich and the sales staff share historian duties. But Tamulevich said the staff as a whole is engaged with the property’s story and its guests. Added all together, the 130 employees have roughly a thousand years of combined tenure at the hotel, according to Tamulevich.

“It’s interesting because in general a little more leisure travelers than just business and they ask questions and are engaged in the property so gives us an opportunity – whether it’s myself or the front desk or concierge or valets – to have conversations, to talk to people. Good old hospitality.”

Chris Spear, President & CEO, American Trucking Associations, said in Fleets On: “We commend Speaker Pelosi and House leaders for their commitment to revitalizing American infrastructure.”

Each additional day that we short our nation’s roads and bridges of needed funds, more lives are at risk, more hours of the day are lost sitting in traffic and more damage is done to the environment.”

He added: “We look forward to working with Congress and the Administration on a robust infrastructure package that restores our roads and bridges with a cost-effective, fiscally conservative and realistic funding solution in the near-term.”
ALHI and Connect to Partner on Connect Luxury in August

By Todd McElwee

This is turning out to be a big year for Stuart Ruff-Lyon, CMP, President of Events and Executive Director of In- 

surance Management Society (RIMS). Already installed as PCMA’s Chair, in late January, Royce-Moffett was announced as the inaugural recipient of the New York Society of Association Executives’ (NY- 

SAE) Meetings Professional of the Year Award. He’ll be recognized during NYSAE’s Synergy Awards Luncheon on March 15 at the Harvard Club in New York City.

“Recognition like this further cements the meeting professional career as one of tremendous importance to organi- 

zations,” Ruff-Lyon told USAE. “To be named NYSAE’s Meeting Professional of the Year is a tremendous honor and I want to acknowledge that I’m able to receive this award because I have a great team at RIMS that works beside me to ensure that our events are educational, experiential and strategically designed. Receiving this award inspires me to work harder to continue to propel RIMS forward.”

Spending more than 20 years in events and hospitality, Ruff-Lyon joined RIMS in 2012 as Director of Meetings and Events, and was promoted to his current post in 2016. His firm also noted he is the lead liaison to the Exhibits Advisory Committee and the Annual Conference Programming Committee. A certified Digital Events Strategist (DES), he’s worked with business event advisory boards for Denver, Philadelphia, and San Francisco with advisory board service at Destina- 

tions International also listed.

Dominguez said ALHI will help provide the educational content for the show, but the partnership also involves promoting Connect and ALHI throughout the year. “There were a lot of synergies in how we could provide the other, and I’m a strong believer in partnerships, and its easier to do things together than try to launch our own, which has always been one of my initiatives,” Dominguez said, “How do we try to fill that gap of a luxury show within the MICE [meetings, incentives, confer- 

ence, and exhibitions] market?”

According to Derek Rodriguez, VP of Sales at Connect Meetings, Connect Marketplace as a whole brings in about 4,000 attendees a day as a walk around of focuses – the most recent being luxury. “The best way I can describe it is like a spoke and tire,” Rodriguez told USAE. “At the middle you have Connect and each spoke is a different vertical. It’s sports, it’s association, it’s luxury, kind of wrapped around big keynote speakers, big parties.”

Connect Luxury is planned to bring in 100 hosted buyers, but as it gets more established, it could grow beyond that. Dominguez said that he expects it to stay at no more than 150 to 200 buyers, but Rodriguez said a goal down the road could be as many as 300 buyers. Rodriguez said while some elements will be shared with the larger Connect Marketplace ecosystem, much will be exclusive to Connect Luxury. A sort of show within a show. The key thing is that the show will be all about luxury, and ALHI is in on the ground floor.

“It’s a specific luxury show. What you don’t find is the major brands having just a focus on pure luxury. We have a luxury audience that Connect is interested in, so we will help support the show in that regard,” Dominguez said. “And knowing that we were the presenting sponsor or key partner, this basically is a Connect-ALHI show, but it is for non-ALHI members as well. The benefit though for our ALHI members is they’re going to get some advantages that wouldn’t be open to all participants.”

Those advantages could include things like pricing and positioning, according to Dominguez. Additionally, Rodriguez said some programming will take place at ALHI’s member hotels in the area, and perhaps most importantly ALHI will be front and center in the education. He said ALHI will work with Connect to “help create the overall agenda and education flow for the show.”

Dominguez said it’s a partnership that helps both Connect establish Connect Luxury and ALHI cement itself as a lead- 

ing player in the luxury market. “It was important for Connect to have us as a part of this because they see us as the leading authority on luxury in our industry because much of the lux- 

ury is independent today,” Dominguez said, adding, “It was important for us to anchor the first luxury MICE [meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions] show because it’s kind of our state in the ground that ALHI is the leading authority on luxury and the luxury experience. That’s important for us for people contin- 

ue to understand what ALHI is and what it represents.”

ASA&E and Its Foundation Issues Call to Fill Board Positions

By Emma Sonneveldt

ASA&E is seeking association profes- 

sionals and industry partners for open positions on the ASA&E Board of Directors. The positions are as follows: one Secretary-Treasurer, one Industry partner, and four At Large Directors. All four directors will serve on the ASA&E Board and two of the four will additionally serve on the ASA&E Research Foundation Board. Why? It’s a passion for associations. I strongly encourage you to apply or nominate a peer. Joining the ASA&E board provides an opportunity for professional growth, but you will also be able to use your experience to advance the association industry,” said Stefanie Reeves, MA, CAE, ASA&E board member and Executive Director of the Maryland Psychological Association.

Applicants will be selected based on a number of desired attributes, including but not limited to engagement with ASA&E and the ASA&E Research Foundation, relevant expertise in organizational management, and commitment to par- 

ticipate in 3-4 board meetings a year. Additionally, applicants are expected to have positive leadership attributes such as collaboration and engagement with peers as well as being a strategic thinker, among other traits. Once selected as a board member, individuals are asked to provide financial support to special events and campaigns.

In a release ASA&E stated: “ASA&E and the ASA&E Research Foundation value the opportunity to serve in diverse leadership as defined by race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, sexual orientation, nationality, disability, appearance, geographic location, and professional level. It seeks leaders from all types and sizes of eligible organizations.” If interested, contact Jenna Worley, CAE, at jw@ase.org. The nomination deadline is April 24, 2020.
Charles Harris has been promoted to Chief Marketing Officer & Executive Vice President Public Affairs at Visit Anaheim. He previously was Sr. Vice President, Marketing and as an Anaheim Transportation Network Board Member. Harris has also been at Long Beach State for 16 years as a professor in the Graduate School of Sport Management.

Markham McGill has been named Domestic Sales Manager for the Monroe County Tourist Development Council, the agency that executes tourism promotion for the Florida Keys & Key West. McGill, a 26-year Key West resident, has more than 15 years experience in sales, marketing and publishing with an emphasis in the tourism industry. He also worked as a captain and dive master with Key West watersports outfitters.

Mike Sophia has been tapped as Vice President of Sports Business Development at the Greater Fort Lauderdale CVB. For more than 25 years, Sophia has been involved in the sports, events and entertainment business at a variety of levels. Most recently, he served as Director of the Sacramento Sports Commission. He was the first Executive Director of the Miami-Dade Sports Commission and also worked in Atlanta.

Megan Coccitto has been named Director of Sales and Marketing at the Kimpton Key West. She’s worked in hotel sales since 2011 and previously served as the Director of Sales for Hampton Inn Jacksonville Beach. Coccitto joined Kimpton after an eight-year stint at Highgate South Beach Southmost Beach Resort and Marker Waterfront Resort in Key West as Complex Director of Sales and Marketing. She graduated from Purdue University.

MPI Taps Human Behavior Expert David Allison to Present WEC Keynote

By Todd McElwee

Asking World Education Congress (WEC) attendees to “Forget demographics. Focus on your audience’s shared values,” MPI has booked human behavior expert and the Founder of The Valueographics David Allison to present a keynote at the conference. Grapevine, TX’s Gaylord Texan Resort and Convention Center will host the conference from June 6-9.

“I love speaking to the association community because collectively they represent every sector of the economy,” Allison told USAE. “My research shows that we all crave various kinds of belonging more than anything else. Associations help us - all of us - with that value.”

He added: “Anyone listening to me speak can expect to walk away understanding what their audience, in this case association membership, truly cares about. Based on rigorous scientific data that we’ve collected from around the world we will be able to share exactly what their audience, in this case association membership, truly cares about.”

Allison told USAE. “As we dive into the importance of authentic behavior change in the workplace and the role in a meeting professional’s ability to design authentic experiences,” Jessie States, CMP, CMM, Director, MPI Academy, MPI, told USAE. “As a behavior expert and the Founder of The Valueographics Database will help us - all of us - with that value.”

The Valueographics Database is the world’s first global dataset that can change the behavior of any target audience eight times more effectively before, said MPI. The firm said its database is, informed by almost a half-million surveys from around the world in 152 languages, about what people value, want, need and expect. Metrics include 40 core human values like belonging friendships, money, authority, and family, as well as answers to another 370 questions covering a broad range of contextualizing topics.

“We use this data to profile your target audience, and to influence their behavior and decision-making,” said the firm.”

For years Allison has worked with a team of university researchers to launch, collect and analyze a half-million surveys about why groups of people behave the way they do. The data was immediately clear on two points: demographics were a shocking ineffective way to understand how groups behaved; and leveraging shared values turned out to be the most powerful way to trigger behavior.

Further data analysis revealed we waste 90% of our time and money trying to engage target audiences using demographics.

“Breaking down stereotypes and discarding what we believe about ‘demographic-based’ behavior plays a key role in a meeting professional’s ability to design authentic experiences,”

The Michigan-based human behavior expert and the Founder of The Valueographics, David Allison, is speaking at the World Education Congress (WEC) in Grapevine, TX, on June 6-9. Allison’s presentation, titled “Forget demographics. Focus on your audience’s shared values,” aims to help association professionals understand their audience’s values and decision-making behaviors.

“Allison told USAE. “As we dive into the importance of authentic behavior change in the workplace and the role in a meeting professional’s ability to design authentic experiences,” Jessie States, CMP, CMM, Director, MPI Academy, MPI, told USAE. “As a behavior expert and the Founder of The Valueographics Database will help us - all of us - with that value.”

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He added: “Anyone listening to me speak can expect to walk away understanding what their audience, in this case association membership, truly cares about. Based on rigorous scientific data that we’ve collected from around the world we will be able to share exactly why people join associations, what keeps them there, and how Association leadership can deliver the most value.”

Visit Pensacola Narrows CEO Search to Two Candidates

By USAE Staff

Seven candidates vying to become CEO of Visit Pensacola in Florida have been narrowed to two. Both Pamela Johnson, deputy director of the Lee County Visitor and Convention Bureau in Fort Myers, and Darrin Schaefer, CEO of Visit Big Bear in Big Bear Lake, California will interview again in the coming weeks.

They are replacing Steve Hayes who has become President and CEO of Visit St. Pete/Clearwater and whose last day with Visit Pensacola was Dec. 12, 2019. Jack Brown, the former Escambia County (FL) Administrator is serving as interim CEO while the CVB is in the midst of the selection process.

Johnson previously worked for Lee County Economic Development in Florida and the American Cancer Society. Schaefer has worked at Visit Lake Geneva in Wisconsin and Wausa/ Central Wisconsin Convention and Visitors Bureau.

SearchWide Global is assisting the CVB in finding its next CEO. According to local media costs for the search total just over $60,000 with fees for the firm at an estimated $48,000 and an additional $12,000 for items such as travel and background checks.

DC Reeves, chair of the search committee said “It’s a great time in Pensacola right now with the growth that we’ve seen in tourism and really in everything,” adding it’s important the tourism organization find a president/CEO who can continue that momentum.

Commenting on the final two candidates, Reeves added: “We feel fortunate that we have that caliber of talent that is looking to help our community continue to grow and thrive in tourism.”
Destin-Fort Walton Beach Florida New Name for Emerald Coast CVB

By Us4E Staff

The CVB previously known as Emerald Coast located in the Florida Panhandle has rebranded itself to become Destin-Fort Walton Beach Florida.

According to Jennifer Adams, director of the CVB, the rebranding "goes far beyond unveiling a new logo and website. It's inspired by the people who visit, live and work here." A spokesperson said the rebranding was done by BooneOakley Co. of Charlotte, NC and research took place over 2019.

In a release the CVB said it rebranded to heighten its recognition in the travel industry and to attract families from near and far. The CVB is a part of the Okaloosa County Tourist Development agency.

Also, inspired by a recent global study of 12,000 families with children aged 5-12 initially commissioned by the Real Play Coalition that showed 56 percent of children spend less time outdoors than maximum security prison inmates, the destination announced a commitment to getting visitor's children out on the water, giving their adventur- ous parents time to enjoy the marine life.

In this regard, as part of the new brand platform and commitment to make childhood an adventure, the destination has launched an interactive adventure builder titled Little Adventures where families can explore a collection of activities curated by local residents and build itineraries that best suit their children's ages, skills and interests.

The CVB said children even as young as -three can enjoy an afternoon with their parents splashing and discover marine life in crystal clear waters. The budding marine biologists will find themselves an arm's reach away from marine life on, and in some instances under the water. Teens can chart a course of exploration via kayak, or challenge themselves to take a lesson out on the water and learn a new skill.

"We're incredibly lucky to live and work in a destination that has welcomed so many wonderful visitors for decades, but recognized it was time to do something more with the platform we've been given," said Adams. "While many may think they know our destination, we see this as an opportunity to help enhance a stay, introducing all to experiences that are transformational and go far beyond a check list of where to go and what to do."

For details see www.destinfwb.com.

Evansville-Vanderburgh County CVB Issues RFP for Master Plan and Economic Study

By Grant Broadhurst

The former head of Meet AC is hitting the ground running in his new job in Evansville, Indiana.

Under the leadership of Jim Wood since mid-January, the Evansville-Vanderburgh County CVB has issued an RFP seeking a firm to produce a "Ten Year Tourism and Destination Manage- ment Master Plan" that will include an Economic Impact Study. The RFP was issued jointly with the Evansville-Van- derburgh County Convention and Visitors Commission. Proposals are due February 28.

"The objective is to figure out: What does Evansville need next in terms of growing its tourism industry?" Wood told USAE, adding, "It's just kind of analyzing all the assets that we currently have and projecting Evansville ten years forward so that it can continue to grow the tourism industry. It's really about growth and economic development in a nutshell."

Wood said development is about long-range planning, and so while adjustments can always be made, it's important to have a plan in place for the new decade that can be shared with leaders in the city.

Evansville itself is the third-biggest in Indiana with a population of about 120,000 – although the Evansville metro- politan statistical area's population is of about 360,000 people. The Evansville CVB serves 27 hospitality properties representing nearly 3,000 rooms, ac- cording to the RFP.

Wood said the expectation is that the study itself will take about 6 months once started, but he said it's not yet known how long it will take to choose a consultancy firm. The study is a priority, however.

"This was something that the board had talked about last year, and this is something the board wanted to move forward with quickly, and so I made it a priority because it was a priority of the board's, so that's why it was done so quickly," Wood said.

No specific budget has been set yet because the CVB wants to see what the quotes are first, according to Wood.

"This isn't where the lowest bid gets the award. It's the firm that provides the best bid that we think can do the best job for us," Wood said.

Additionally, the CVB is filling four vacant roles: Directors of Sales, Market- ing, Manager, Sales Manager, and Convention Services Manager. Wood said these roles opened up before he started at the CVB.

IACC Introduces “Committed to Brilliance” Certification

By Grant Broadhurst

IACC has introduced “Committed to Brilliance,” a certification that indicates a meetings venue has passed the IACC Global Quality Standards. But IACC’s member properties already had to pass the checklist of standards to get membership in IACC.

What it didn’t do, of course, is tell the story to the industry of what makes an IACC venue different and how it impacts the world – meet the standards.

“With what is going on and what is going to be coming out of the industry, it is very exciting to see in this checklist of standards to get membership in IACC,” Mark Cooper, CEO of IACC, told USAE.

According to Cooper, all IACC mem- ber venues, therefore, get the Commit- ted to Brilliance certification from IACC because all IACC member venues – of which there are more than 400 around the world – meet the standards.

According to Cooper, it’s not just a "badge of honor." Committed to Bril- liance is meant to pull back the curtain on what goes into earning IACC mem- bership. The standards address every- thing from sustainability to acoustics to ergonomic chairs to customer service.

Cooper said new web content ex- plains the “why” behind the “what” of the standards so that it’s clearer for planners.

The IACC Global Quality Standards previously were in place as a checklist, as just a checklist membership, but they were never available to the wider industry or meeting planners, Cooper said.

"Rather than replacing the quality standards, they still exist."

Additionally, Cooper said he wants planners to be able to use the princi- ples behind the standards when evalu- ating any venue.

"It’s explaining to them not what just what separates an IACC property from others, but it’s also training them to look out for these standards wherever they go," Cooper said.

The detailed checklist is available for venues applying to IACC, which only has members with an average meeting group size of 150 people or fewer, and that the application process involves a written application, and then – if the venue looks good on paper – a physical inspection and board approval. He said only about 5 in applicants are generally accepted.

"The goal of the association isn’t to be bigger and bigger," Cooper said. "It’s to be best at all times."

Unscheduled Disaster Recovery Test - A True Story presented by Jim Booth

Storms and,tornadoes, hurri- canes, floods, fires, and more can cause a disruption in your operation. Failure to plan or properly respond to those disruptions can result in financial losses and damage to the company’s reputation.

This testing was done to ensure the organization was prepared to handle an event, and that the plan was ready to roll out when needed.

Many organizations conduct tests to ensure their plans are effective. The IACC’s annual testing is an important part of the recovery planning process.

If you are interested in learn- ing more about this plan, please contact your local IACC office or visit www.iacc.com.
Hugh Jones Named CEO of Reed Exhibitions

By Todd McElwee

On Feb. 1, Hugh Jones officially took the helm of Reed Exhibitions after his promotion to CEO. Based in the U.K., Jones joined the firm’s parent company, RELX, in 2011 and most recently was Global Managing Director for Accuity, Cirium, Estates Gazette (EG) and ICIS – all part of Risk & Business Analytics, a division of RELX. He succeeds Chet Burchett who is retiring and will serve as executive Chairman through 2020.

“I’m looking forward to bringing more increasingly sophisticated data-driven analytics and technology to more customers around the world,” said Jones. “Exhibitions is an exciting, entrepreneurial industry, and the fundamentals of the business are excellent. Combining the best of face-to-face connections with technology and rich data analytics will provide new value to our more than 7 million exhibitors and visitors. This ensures that their investment of time and resource in their exhibitions becomes even more valuable, efficient and relevant to their individual needs, ensuring that they grow their business.”

Jones also told USAE: “It’s thrilling to see the re-invigorated engagement and buy-in as I continue making changes, empowering the incredibly talented management team and engaging staff members at all levels of the company. I am honored to carry this company into its future and keep the strong legacy alive of exceptional people providing exceptional services to our clients.”

Hugh Jones

Jennifer Rzepka, CAE New Owner of Association Resource Center, Inc.

Rebrands Company as ARC

By Emma Sonneveldt

After working with Milwaukee-based Svinicki Association Management, Inc. (SAMi) for twenty years, Jennifer Rzepka, CAE has recently purchased and rebranded the company as Association Resource Center, Inc. (ARC).

For the past five years Rzepka was a 50% owner. She has now purchased the firm from former business partner Jane A Svinicki. CAE. ARC has over a dozen employees serving nearly twenty state and national non-profit associations.

As the President of ARC, Rzepka has already begun modifying workstations to encourage a more flexible and collaborative environment. Along with a community work station and close seating arrangements, Rzepka has incorporated “break areas” to offset the intensity of client work and fun group games and activities, further challenging a traditional workspace. Rzepka told USAE: “It’s thrilling to see the re-invigorated engagement and buy-in as I continue making changes, and will deny boarding to any individual who recently traveled from or through the affected area consistent with prevailing circumstances demand. Furthermore, CLIA members implement outbreak prevention and response measures and their ships must be fitted with medical facilities, shipboard and shore side medical professionals available around the clock, 24/7, to provide initial medical care in the event of illness and prevent disease transmission.”

By Todd McElwee

Cruise Lines International Association Issues Coronavirus Outbreak Statement... In late January Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) issued the following statement in response to the 2019-novel coronavirus outbreak and the World Health Organization’s (WHO) declaration of a global health emergency.

“The safety and health of passengers is the number one priority of CLIA members. CLIA and its member lines maintain close contact with health professionals and regulators around the world, including the World Health Organization (WHO), and are continually assessing and modifying policies and procedures as developments emerge. This includes the modification of itineraries, where needed, in light of evolving circumstances, as well as health, travel and contact screening where appropriate, for guests and crew who have recently traveled from or through the affected area consistent with prevailing guidance from global health authorities. Screening protocols allow for informed decisions on a case-by-case basis whether a guest or crewmember will be denied boarding.

“CLIA Members have suspended crew movements from mainland China and will deny boarding to an individual, whether guest or crew, who has travelled from or through mainland China within the previous 14 days to prevent disease transmission.”

By Todd McElwee

Airlines for America Notes REAL ID Deadline and Debuts Website... Super Bowl Weekend marked eight months until the REAL ID Deadline, noted Airlines for America (AFA) Feb. 1. To help raise awareness and educate travelers of the new rules the association has unveiled a 30-second video and website, www.realidfacts.com. Beginning Oct. 1 travelers will need a REAL ID to pass through airport security. Every day, 2.4 million passengers board U.S. airlines. In just eight months, passengers who do not have approved identification will not be allowed through TSA checkpoints.

“U.S. airlines are advising all travelers to plan ahead,” said Lauren Bayer, Vice President for Security and Facilitation, AFA. “Do not wait until the last minute to get a REAL ID. Make your plans now. We want to ensure you have a smooth and enjoyable journey.”

Around Associations

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Nashville’s Music City Center Receives Two “Green” Awards

By Emma Sonneveldt

Nashville’s Music City Center (MCC) has received two leadership awards from the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) at the 2020 IMPACT Leadership Conference on January 30. The two awards are the Overall Highest Score Award and the Carbon Emissions Reduction Award.

“We have an amazing team that is committed to prioritizing sustainable practices in our day to day operations,” said Charles Starks, President/CEO of Music City Center. “We are honored to have earned these awards from the USGBC and greatly value our partnership.”

Using the Arc performance platform and data analytics, MCC reported over a 12 month period, MCC reported its energy, water, and waste through the USGBC’s Arc platform. Participants entered an initial set of building performance data in February 2019 and a final set in December 2019. During this time, participating buildings worked to improve their scores through operational upgrades.

“We offer a robust sustainability program within MCC, working closely with the team as well as with partners and the community to educate and empower them on sustainable practices,” said Everett Davis, sustainability coordinator of Music City Center. “We thank USGBC for its ongoing commitment in providing the resources to create and maintain green buildings.”

The USGBC promotes sustainability in building design, construction, and operation; annually recognizing exceptional organizational leaders that lead the green building community. The USGBC TEN reporting tool and Arc platform encourage buildings to reduce their energy, water, and waste through tracking usage on the Arc performance platform. Participants entered an initial set of building performance data in June 2019 and a final set in December 2019. During this time, participating buildings worked to improve their scores through operational upgrades.
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