



Members of Southern California hotel union UNITE HERE Local 11 gathered outside the Hotel Maya on August 14 to protest recent alleged violent incidents at rallies at the hands of hotel security and guests.

## Maui Hotels House Displaced Residents Amid Wildfire Aftermath *Temporarily Pause Future Bookings*

By Jordan Bradley

Hotels in West Maui have temporarily stopped taking reservations as they begin to recover from the devastating Maui wildfires and house displaced residents, workers, and incoming emergency response personnel.

"At this time, hotels in West Maui have temporarily stopped accepting bookings of future reservations and are housing their employees and families, evacuees, and first responders working on disaster recovery—well over 1,000 people so far with more to come," the Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA) said.

Maui County officials said more than 4,000 people are in need of shelter following the fires.

As the search for victims and survivors of the deadliest wildfire in a century continues, Hawaii Gov. Josh Green said in an August 13 press conference that 500 hotel rooms have been set aside for impacted residents

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## Workers Call for Boycott of L.A. Hotels Following Violence *Union Files Unfair Labor Practice Suit*

By Jordan Bradley

Members of the Southern California hotel workers union, UNITE HERE Local 11, began calling for a boycott of the Hotel Maya in Long Beach, Laguna Cliffs Marriott Dana Point and Fairmont Miramar in Santa Monica on August 14 following several incidents of violence on the picket lines, the union said.

On August 7, the union filed a federal unfair labor practice charge with the National Labor Relations Board against the hotels' collective bargaining group in an effort to "denounce a pattern of ugly episodes of violence on picket lines at hotels where workers have been on strike," the union said.

Local 11 said among the incidents, protesters on August 5 marched through Santa Monica, ending at the

Fairmont Miramar Hotel and Bungalows where they were "attacked and tackled to the ground by hotel security as they sought to establish a picket line." The union shared video of the incident on its Twitter account, showing Local 11 picketers decked in their signature red attempting to move beyond a barrier before alleged hotel security manhandled several

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## Hawaii State Bar Association Launches Free Legal Hotline for Wildfire Victims

By Julia Stumbaugh

The Hawaii State Bar Association (HSBA) is offering a free hotline where those impacted by the wildfires on Maui and the Big Island can receive legal advice from volunteer attorneys.

The HSBA said it is offering the hotline "as a community service" and the number is available to residents of either island as well as "any others adversely affected."

The hotline was available for those impacted by the

wildfires from August 15–17 and will run again from August 22–27 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Hawaii Standard Time each day. Those dates could be extended "as needed," according to HSBA.

HSBA volunteers can answer questions about "document replacement, insurance claims process, landlord-tenant matters and other issues," the association said.

The hotline is sponsored by HSBA with help from the

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## Firefighters Associations Assisting with Maui Recovery

By Todd McElwee

Firefighters in Maui have tirelessly fought to contain the cataclysmic wildfires, which have killed well over 100 and reduced much of the tropical paradise to ash. They've also not been immune to the devastation levied by the blazes with the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF), Hawaii Fire Fighters Association HFFA Local 1463 and California Fire Foundation (CFF) stepping in to support their brethren in the Aloha State.

IAFF has been on the ground delivering disas-

ter relief assistance to the members in Maui via the [IAFF Foundation's Disaster Relief program](#). On August 14, IAFF said the number of Local 1463 member homes lost to the fires has increased from 14 to 19.

The disaster fund includes immediate financial relief to displaced members, peer support, and assistance with basic supplies and needs.

"The devastation that our Hawaii sisters and brothers have experienced is incredible. Many have lost everything," said IAFF General

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# NEWS

## Federal Judge Recommends Plastics Association, Former CEO Seek Settlement

By Julia Stumbaugh

The Plastics Industry Association (PLASTICS) and former CEO Tony Radoszewski's competing lawsuits regarding Radoszewski's firing in 2022 have been for the most part dismissed by a federal judge who urged both parties to settle.

Neither PLASTICS nor Radoszewski would emerge from a trial "looking good," D.C. District Court Judge Amy Berman Jackson said when recommending the settlement during an online hearing, per *Plastics News*.

Radoszewski worked as CEO for

PLASTICS from September 16, 2019, until he was fired by the association for an alleged breach of his employment contract on March 25, 2022.

The two parties have since been embroiled in a legal battle over what PLASTICS alleges was Radoszewski's neglecting to relocate to the Washington, D.C. metro area, which the association says was required in his employment contract. Radoszewski lives in Dallas, Texas.

Radoszewski filed a lawsuit against PLASTICS in May in a Dallas civil district court arguing the association owes him more than \$600,000 in

severance, benefits, unreimbursed expenses and a year of his salary, which he said he was owed due to his "termination without cause."

According to the lawsuit, Radoszewski said he "temporarily" moved to Washington and "took significant steps" to plan his new living arrangements but was prevented from finalizing the move by the COVID-19 pandemic and his firing.

PLASTICS countered with a breach-of-contract lawsuit filed in the District of Columbia District Court in July 2022, which seeks more than \$160,000 from Radoszewski.

That amount includes \$135,000 in relocation expenses, which PLASTICS said it paid to Radoszewski with the expectation he would move from Texas. According to court documents, PLASTICS alleged Radoszewski did not make serious attempts to relocate in two and a half years after being hired.

In the termination letter sent to Radoszewski, which was filed in the D.C. court, PLASTICS alleged the CEO's residency in Dallas led to "significant loss of morale and staff retention, as well as a loss of confidence by staff and Board members in its executive's

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## Hawaii Governor Encourages Visitation to Areas Unaffected by Wildfires

By Jonathan Trager

Travel outside of West Maui in the aftermath of the devastating wildfires is not only safe but encouraged, Hawaii Gov. Josh Green said on July 17.

"Like we saw in the pandemic, decisions we made can affect everyone across the islands," said Green at a press conference. "So what we're saying now is travel should not be to

West Maui. But the other parts of Maui are safe. And the rest of the state, of course, is also safe."

The other areas of Maui that are safe and ready to welcome visitors include Kahului, Wailuku, Kihei, Wailea, Makena, Pā'ia and Hāna. Travelers can also safely visit islands such as Kaua'i, O'ahu, Lāna'i, Moloka'i, and Hawai'i Island.

Green said officials "want people to

travel to the state to the extent that they're not impacting the hard work that these extraordinary people are doing" with disaster recovery.

An emergency proclamation issued on August 13 remains in place, however, with all nonessential travel to West Maui being strongly discouraged through the month of August.

The Hawai'i Tourism Authority also

said it "urges visitors to refrain from going to West Maui (including Lāhainā, Nāpili, Kā'anapali, and Kapalua) as a means of respect to the people and places that have been lost in Lāhainā during this devastating tragedy."

To find the latest Maui emergency management and recovery information, and how you can help the people of Maui, [visit here](#).

## Maui Hotels

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and another 500 were set aside for first responders.

Both the governor and the HTA are strongly urging tourists with travel plans to West Maui during the month of August to postpone their trips due to significantly depleted and limited resources, including clean water and lodging.

In an effort to help relieve some of the hardship, short-term rental company Airbnb's giving arm, Airbnb.org, has partnered with Maui Economic Opportunity, Global Empowerment Mission (GEM) and other nonprofits to house at least 1,000 displaced people.

"We are so grateful for our collaboration with Airbnb.org. We've been on the ground in Maui since day 2 of the historic fires," said Michael Capponi, GEM's founder and President. "The most important need here is housing. This short-term housing program gives families an ability to leave shelters and start the stabilization and healing process for the next phase of their lives."

Kekoa McClellan, a spokesperson for the hotel industry in Maui, told Boston-based news outlet WBUR that hotel and lodging units in West Maui have either been completely destroyed

or rendered non-functional.

"There are hotels in the Lahaina area that have been razed to the ground," McClellan said. "The hotel industry in Maui is crucial to the county and our state's economy. Twenty-six percent of all hotel rooms in Hawaii are in Maui and more than half of those 7,295 Maui-based hotel units are in West Maui."

McClellan went on to explain that because of the fires and the swiftness with which they swept through Lahaina and West Maui, South and Central Maui hotels "absorbed" many of the evacuees. The hotels in those areas were operating at a moderate late summer occupancy rate, McClellan said, resulting in "mostly full" hotels.

Several hotels and restaurants provided relief in the days following the natural disaster, according to posts on the Maui Hotel and Lodging Association's Facebook page. The Kula Lodge and Restaurant supplied snacks and bottles of water to individuals on August 13. The Kaanapali Beach Hotel and Maui Brewing Company worked together to provide free meals to West Maui until they ran out of food on August 11.

The Andaz Maui at Wailea Resort, a Hyatt-branded hotel, has been unaffected by the wildfires and is continuing to operate. The hotel said in a Facebook post the property's



Richard Olsten, Director of Operations for Air Maui Helicopter Tours, captured this photo of the aftermath of the Maui wildfires in a flyover of Lahaina on August 15.

team has been "working around the clock to provide meals and supplies to the community, partnering with local organizations and assisting our Hyatt colleagues that have been affected." The hotel is also asking for donations for its employees of personal hygiene items, baby products, nonperishable food items and pet supplies.

In an August 15 update, the Westin Nanea Ocean Villas in Lahaina shared that many of its employees had lost their homes or loved ones, and the

property is in the process of assessing the damage sustained during the wildfires.

"Additionally, the resort was without power for several days. While power has been restored, this might only be temporary, and power could go out at any time due to the current unstable infrastructure," the hotel said.

Individuals can donate to survivors of the Maui wildfires through the [Maui Strong Fund](#), organized by the Hawai'i Community Foundation.

# HOTS

**HOTS Donair Duel...** A sandwich costume owned by the government of the Canadian province of Alberta just sold for over \$16,000 Canadian dollars (about \$11,800 USD) after a furious bidding war between restaurant chains. That's because the costume is of a donair, a Canadian pita containing shaved meat like beef or lamb, sauce, tomatoes, raw onions—and, controversially, lettuce. Some bidders from restaurants based on Canada's east coast wanted to remove the lettuce, UPI reported, but the winning bidder was an Edmonton-based chain who plans to keep the greens on the pita.

The sandwich, originally a part of a never-aired commercial against marijuana DUIs, will now be spotted walking around Albertan malls, according to CTV News. HOTS appreciates how seriously Canadians take their sandwich toppings, and it would next like to know their thoughts about pineapple on pizza.

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**HOTS Urban Myth Come to Life...** A woman in Tucson, Arizona, returned from a four-day trip to find she was living in an urban myth when she discovered a snake in her toilet. "I'd been gone for four days and was looking forward to using my own restroom in peace," Michelle Lespron told the Associated Press. "I lifted up the lid and he or she was curled up. Thank god the lid was closed." The black and pink coachwhip snake, which was removed by Phoenix-based Rattle-



Delta and Porsche celebrated the renewal of their 12-year partnership this summer, with the German marque loaned the carrier's Elite Services team a 918 Spyder for two weeks. The team ferry's customers between flights at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (ATL). Here, Delta Elite Services Ambassador Dan Lavker waits for a customer.

snakeSolutions, was between 3 and 4 feet in length. HOTS will be sure to be aware while in the bathroom when next in Tucson.the fish apparently

put up a "heck of a fight." HOTS will definitely think twice before jumping into a fresh body of water for the rest of the summer.

## ASAE Research Foundation Announces 2023 CAE Scholarships Recipients

By Todd McElwee

Eight industry professionals have been announced as the recipients of the ASAE Research Foundation's 2023 CAE Scholarship. The initiative provides financial assistance to support a diverse workforce of underserved communities in pursuing the credential.

Through the CAE Scholarship Fund, grants of \$500 are awarded to eight recipients. These funds can be applied to the application fee (\$500) or used for exam preparation materials or courses. Recipients receive the member rate for the CAE exam registration (including non-members), which must be used within one year of award receipt.

"Earning the certified association executive credential is not just a

milestone," said Lowell Aplebaum, FASAE, CAE, CEO, Vista Cova. "It's a journey. Those three letters after your name, they open the door to a world of opportunity and often are a key piece of the path to leadership in our profession. I know, for me, I would not be where I am without having earned the CAE and I hope the scholarship is another key milestone on a professional trajectory of success and impact for all the recipients."

The 2023 CAE Scholarship recipients are the following:

- Kelsey Copeland, Communications and Events Director, Associated Plumbing Heating and Cooling Contractors of Texas
- Dr. Ashley Cross, Sr. Director of Education and Content, Association of Technology Leaders in Independent Schools

• Derrick Johnson, CMP, DES, Convention and Events Director, National Medical Association

• Meda Merritt, Sr. Director of Membership & Chapter Development, American Fire Sprinkler Association

• Rebecca Morgan, Executive Director, Nisha Media Leadership Solutions

• Noelle Parsons, Account Manager, Strategic Association Management

• Shena Seppanen, Assistant Executive Director, Society For Biomaterials

• Patricia Woodley, International Membership Director, Delta Kappa Gamma Society International

ASAE said the program is made possible by contributions to the ASAE Research Foundation from Aplebaum, Matthew Gertzog, FASAE, CAE, Deputy Executive Director, American Society of Hematology; ASAE Business Solutions and additional donors.

## Alaska Travel Industry Association Reserves Board Seat for Tribal Representative

By Julia Stumbaugh

The Alaska Travel Industry Association (ATIA) has for the first time designated a seat on its board of directors for a representative of the Alaska Native community.

One seat on the organization's 24-person board will be held for someone who is either a member of one of Alaska's 231 federally-recognized tribes or a shareholder of an Alaska

Native corporation, the Native organizations with ownership rights to 40 million acres of Alaskan land.

"By creating this designated seat, we are now ensuring that we always have an indigenous voice at the table when it comes to Alaska tourism," Jillian Simpson, President and CEO of ATIA, told USAE.

Three of ATIA's current board members are already Alaska Native, according to Simpson.

"I think that it's always good to have diversity on your board...I think it's been hugely beneficial, and I feel like this board seat is only going to help us grow even more," Simpson said.

The designated board seat is part of a growing push for indigenous perspectives in ATIA.

"It's definitely been a conversation that has been brewing for a while," Simpson said. "Before COVID, there  
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WEEKLY NEWS  
OF ASSOCIATIONS  
CYBS AND  
HOTELS

# USAE

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# NEWS

## Iowa Association of Black Journalists, Ron DeSantis Super PAC Clash at Rally

By Julia Stumbaugh

The Iowa Association of Black Journalists (IABJ) said it was “incensed” over the association’s president being turned away from an August 11 rally in Harlan, Iowa, in support of Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis’ presidential bid.

The IABJ, an affiliate chapter of the National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ), is led by President Ty Rushing, who reported facing conflict as he attempted to enter an event hosted by Never Back Down, a super PAC supporting DeSantis.

In a two-minute video on social media, shared by Rushing and recorded by The Gander journalist Kyle Kaminski, law enforcement is seen turning

Rushing away from what they called a “private event,” despite Rushing repeatedly saying he was “registered.”

IABJ said in an August 13 statement that Rushing had “complet(ed) the credential process with the DeSantis campaign for this event,” and called the law enforcements’ actions “intimidation towards an experienced political reporter doing his job.”

“We all suffer when public figures are not held accountable for their words and actions, especially when public law enforcement is seemingly used for private intimidation,” the IABJ said. “We stand behind Mr. Rushing and all journalists who will never back down in the pursuit of truth and transparency.”

In a statement shared with Florida Politics and the *Des Moines Register*, the DeSantis super PAC said Rushing, who reports for the Iowa Starting Line, and Kaminski were not properly registered for the event.

“These individuals registered as attendees and not press and did not identify themselves as such,” the PAC said. “Press are encouraged and welcome to attend all open press Never Back Down events but must follow appropriate protocols to ensure equal access to all reporters and safety for the principals.”

Kaminski’s video shows Rushing wearing a green press badge with his name and photograph on it.

Rushing claimed on social media

that the poor treatment by the PAC extended to other events, including a previous Never Back Down rally in Atlantic, Iowa.

“At the last event in Atlantic, we noticed that security kept following us around when we were trying to cover the photo ops and snapped our pics as we left,” Rushing wrote. “Naturally, we expected something when we went to Harlan, but not armed deputies barring members of the press from covering an event that was billed as open press, according to pool reporters.”

Rushing said the incident marked “the first time I’ve ever been banned from covering an Iowa Caucus event” in a decade of covering Iowa news.

The NABJ declined to comment to USAE by press time.

## Jennifer Nagle Tapped as Vice President of Philadelphia CVB

By Jonathan Trager

Jennifer Nagle has been appointed Vice President of Special Projects for the Philadelphia CVB (PHLCVB), the organization announced on August 16.

Nagle will play a pivotal role in leading strategic initiatives related to the PHLCVB’s focus on citywide conventions, sporting events, and international tourism. She’ll serve as a liaison throughout the planning and execution of projects and events related to the organization’s lines of business.

The Philadelphia native most recently served as interim president and CEO and executive vice president of the Philadelphia Visitor Center Cor-



Jennifer Nagle

poration. Nagle starts in her new role on September 11.

“I am honored to take on this new role at the PHLCVB and be a part of the team that continues to secure global events while elevating the visitor experience,” said Nagle. “I look forward to collaborating with our partners and stakeholders to create memorable and successful programs that will showcase the city’s vibrant culture and hospitality.”

Nagle, who also held a previous position with the PHL Sports division of the PHLCVB, has played an instrumental part in a variety of initiatives such as acquiring and growing the Philly PHLASH Downtown Loop program and opening the LOVE Park

Visitor Center.

Nagle holds a bachelor’s degree in business administration from the University of Massachusetts at Lowell and completed her MBA at Saint Joseph’s University.

“Jen knows the PHLCVB well, and her deep-rooted connection to the city makes her the ideal choice to spearhead our strategic initiatives as we prepare for 2026 in earnest,” said Gregg Caren, President & CEO of the PHLCVB. “Jen’s leadership will undoubtedly contribute to our mission of promoting Philadelphia as a premier destination for meetings, conventions, sporting events and international tourism during America’s Semiquincentennial year.”

## LA Boycott

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individuals to the ground. At one point, a uniformed police officer intervened when a security guard became especially rough with a protester.

The same day at the Hotel Maya, hotel security personnel attempted to remove striking workers with a chain link fence, the union said. During that time, a guest punched a protester and pushed two others, the union said.

Housekeeper and Local 11 member Emilse Pineda had been picketing at the Laguna Cliffs Marriott Dana Point when a hotel guest allegedly punched her in the head.

“I was in shock as the punch came out of the blue,” Pineda said. “I reported the incident to hotel security, but they did nothing to help identify the man or remove him. I felt almost

drunk and woozy and had headaches over the next several days. The day after the punch, I passed out and the paramedics were called. As far as I know, the hotel has done nothing about this incident.”

The Laguna Cliffs hotel, which is managed by Aimbridge Hospitality, has been the site of a number of incidents, the union said. This includes one that involved celebrity chef John Tesar, who leads the hotel’s Knife Modern Steak restaurant. A video of the confrontation between the chef and striking workers shows Tesar yelling profanities and broke a protestor’s drum. Aimbridge told union representatives that Tesar has been removed from the property and the incident was under investigation.

“We will not be bullied at the negotiating table and we will definitely not be bullied on the picket lines,” said Kurt Petersen, Co-President of Unite Here

Local 11, to a crowd of striking workers at an August 7 rally.

A spokesperson from the California Hotel and Lodging Association, Peter Hillan, told the *Los Angeles Times* the association was most concerned with their members’ safety and called the union’s tactics “extremely aggressive and unlawful.”

“Union representatives are blaring sirens and alarms at odd hours that not only disturb the peace and neighboring residents but also clearly create a safety risk,” Hillan told the *Times*. “Hotels have made law enforcement as well as the Mayor’s office aware of these increasingly aggressive actions by picketers aimed at guests, employees and our communities. We’ve asked that the police take concrete steps to ensure the safety of all.”

The Westin Bonaventure was the first hotel to reach a tentative agreement with the union to avoid a strike,

agreeing to the union’s demands for wage increases for all workers and better health care. Still, it is the only one to reach an agreement to date, as 60 hotels remain with open contracts.

## Plastics

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good faith and willingness to fulfill his duties.”

After months of back and forth over whether these cases should be tried together, and if the trial should take place in Dallas or Washington, D.C., Jackson recommended both parties settle outside of court.

Radoszewski took the helm of PLASTICS following the death of former CEO William Carteaux. Previously, he served as president of the Plastics

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# NEWS

## Nonprofit Executives Discuss Board Challenges at NYSAE Roundtable

By Julia Stumbaugh

The Women Presidents Organization (WPO) is comprised of small groups of business leaders who share ideas about advancing their organizations in a noncompete context.

Kirsten Wynn, Chief Innovation & Programming Officer for WPO, looked to instill a similar sense of collaboration when she facilitated a roundtable for women nonprofit executives hosted August 15 in Manhattan by the New York Society of Association Executives (NYSAE), sponsored by Forest Hills Financial Group.

During the roundtable, executives leading nonprofits, trade groups, professional associations, association management agencies and political organizations discussed difficulties they encounter while collaborating boards of directors.

Several attendees mentioned complications in engaging board members in nonprofit fundraising efforts.

Rachel Celentano, an account executive at Kellen, an association and trade organization management company, recommended using concrete fundraising goals and tangible evidence of progress toward goals as “fuel” for those engaged in fundraising efforts.

Angela Moore-Stephens, CEO of the American Group Psychotherapy Association, said she had found success delegating “bite-sized chunks” of work in order to keep from overwhelming committees and board members.

Nylissa “Ny” Whitaker of the Manhattan Democratic Party advised nonprofit leaders to remember the groups gathered for their events are a “sellable commodity.” Association events bring together groups of people with similar expertise or interests, which can be of interest to organizations seeking to market to a certain demographic.

Amy Werner, COO of the Harry Walker Agency, a business management consultancy group, recommended putting together program packages prior to reaching out to potential sponsors, rather than customizing events or initiatives after securing sponsorship deals.

The gathered executives also spoke about the challenges and rewards of working with culturally diverse boards. Both Mary Lynn Halland, Executive Director of the International Federation of Societies of Cosmetic Chemists, and Camille Burns, CEO, WPO, discussed the need to be sensitive to cultural differences when interacting with boards



Women executives gathered for NYSAE's Executive Women in Nonprofits discussion on August 15. In back row, left to right: Holly Koenig, Camille Burns, Anna McManus, Kirsten Wynn, Nicola Bain, Nylissa “Ny” Whitaker, Mary Lynn Halland, Lauren McNally, Kimberly Jaffe, Kim Chhabria, Chandler Robertson, Claire Rosenzweig, and Lindsay Potter. In front row, left to right: Angela Moore-Stephens, Maria Roman, Diane Neustadt, and Rachel Celentano.

of directors and leadership groups spanning across the world.

Attendees also discussed how they have expanded the scope of their organizations' boards through diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) efforts. Claire Rosenzweig, President and CEO of the Better Business Bureau of Metropolitan New York, said

she had benefitted from expanding board recruitment searches from solely top executives to include other organizational members with relevant experience.

This roundtable was the first in a series of discussions between women CEOs, executives and managing directors hosted by NYSAE.

## IMEX Group See's “Appetite for Business” Prior to IMEX America

By Todd McElwee

People appear to be hungry for IMEX America's October 17–19 at Mandalay Bay, Las Vegas. Seeing an “appetite for business,” organizers said in the first seven weeks of registration more than 3,000 global buyers had already signed up. More than 40 new exhibiting companies had also contracted.

Numbers for last year's show are the following: 4,339 total buyers (all hosted buyers and buyer attendees), 62,000 meetings (one-on-one, group appointments and booth presentations), and 12,068 total participants including exhibitors.

“Increased engagement from previous and new North American exhibitors means the area of the show dedicated to the USA is set to be bigger than ever,” IMEX said. “Arizona, Boston, Chicago, LA, Miami, New Orleans, San Francisco and Seattle have all expanded their booth space and Denver will have its largest ever booth. MGM Resorts is also increasing its presence with the MGM Grand Las Vegas recently recognized as the largest single hotel in the world. California, Detroit, Orlando, Omaha and Montreal are among the U.S. destinations investing in sponsored activations at the show.”

Concerning Europe, Asia Pacific and the Middle East, organizers said Wales

is among the destinations exhibiting for the first time. The Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Malta, Monaco, Spain, Dubai, Seoul, Tokyo and Taiwan are confirmed to appear.

After noting all the major hotel groups, including Accor, Hilton, Hyatt, Four Seasons, Marriott, Radisson and Wyndham, will be present, IMEX said tech exhibitors include Cvent, Event-Mobi, Fielddrive, RefTech and STOVA.

Carina Bauer, CEO, IMEX Group, had this advice for rookie participants: “We know that face-to-face events are where some of the most significant and valuable business conversations take place, so we carefully design both the online and IRL aspects of IMEX

America to facilitate that. And, from the demand we're currently seeing from both buyers and suppliers, the appetite to meet and do business together is quite remarkable.

“As well as welcoming returning friends and industry colleagues from around the globe, we recognize that our sector has evolved, bringing with it many new faces, in particular. So, this year we're helping first-timers come together. We're offering support, advice and ideas covering everything from how to plan meetings at the show, how to dig into education or decide what to wear, where to eat and who to meet!”

Find more information on IMEX America [here](#).

## Board Seat

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was definitely a push for ATIA to do more and have more indigenous representation with our tourism marketing program.”

Over the past few years, ATIA has formed a “cultural enrichment committee” to consult indigenous leaders on tourism initiatives and created an “Alaska Native Culture Guide” to teach tourists about Alaska Native culture. ATIA is also hosting an upcoming tour for indigenous content creators to promote cultural tourism on social

media.

According to the ATIA, 15% of the state's population is Alaska Native. That's the highest percentage of indigenous residents in any U.S. state, making Alaska an ideal location to serve as an example of indigenous inclusion in tourism marketing.

When asked if she hopes ATIA's des-

ignated tribal board will inspire other destination marketing organizations, Simpson said she hopes so. “We think it's a great idea,” she added.

The designated Alaska Native board seat will be filled following association elections in September. Multiple interested parties have already submitted applications, Simpson said.



# NEWS

## Court Upholds Passage of 2020 Measure to Expand San Diego Convention Center

By Jonathan Trager

Three years after a ballot measure to fund an expansion of the San Diego Convention Center went before voters, a court has ruled the measure was approved with a majority—but not super-majority—percentage of the vote.

The California Fourth District Court of Appeal issued the ruling on August 11 about Measure C, which received 65.2% approval from voters in the 2020 election cycle. That number is just shy of the two-thirds required for government-imposed taxes, sparking a legal challenge from opponents of the initiative.

However, recent court cases have found that tax measures brought by citizens require only a simple majority. The court said its ruling was “based on the assumption that Measure C is a citizens’ initiative” while acknowledging the “record is not sufficiently developed” to determine if that assumption is valid, the *Times of San Diego* reported.

The case has been sent back to San Diego Superior Court to determine whether the measure was in fact a citizens’ initiative. Opponents maintain it wasn’t because San Diego Mayor Kevin Faulconer and other public officials campaigned for it.

Opponents also say ballot materials

indicated that a two-thirds majority was necessary and cited a delay in certifying the outcome of the vote.

“Once the Appeals Court decided the vote threshold issue, it discounted the due process issue,” said Dr. Isidro D. Ortiz, President of opponent group Alliance San Diego, according to the *Times*. “In a dangerous ruling, the court determined that the ends justify the means.”

The measure would raise the hotel occupancy tax in order to generate \$4 billion for the convention center, \$2.1 billion for homelessness programs, and \$700 million for street repairs over a 42-year period.

The effort to expand the convention center has been long underway, with the San Diego Tourism Authority (SDTA) arguing it’s necessary to continue to host growing conventions such as Comic-Con. That convention took place at the convention center from July 20-23 this year and is scheduled to be held there next year from July 25-28.

When *USAE* reached out to the SDTA for comment about the ruling, the news outlet was told President & CEO Julie Coker was unavailable at the time and all questions are being directed to the lawyers involved in the appeal process.

## JW Marriott Hotel Becomes First Autism-Friendly Hotel in Greater Palm Springs

By Jordan Bradley






The JW Marriott Desert Springs Resort and Spa on August 14 announced it had become the first Greater Palm Springs hotel to earn its Certified Autism Center (CAC) designation. It is also the first JW Marriott branded hotel to earn the certification.

When the Greater Palm Springs CVB—which received its CAC last year—issued a call-to-action to inspire area hotels to get their certification, Jan Hulahan, the hotel’s Director of Sales and Marketing, said she and others at the hotel were excited to pursue the certification.

“We actually had a resident manager a number of years ago that had two children that had autism. And

then I had a sales manager before the pandemic that had autism,” Hulahan said. “And a number of years ago, we did an event for the local Autism Society here, so we were familiar with it...We thought it would be great to get certified.”

As part of the certification, 80% of the hotel’s staff needed to take a course on the best practices for assisting individuals with autism spectrum disorder from the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES). Part of the training helps hotel staff to understand what a high-sensory environment is—an area with a lot of stimuli, like a hotel lobby before check-out—as well as ways to identify an overstimulated child and best ways to respond to help

IBCCES Sensory Guide™				
Sensory Levels (1= Low Sensory Stimulation, 10= High Sensory Stimulation)				
JW Entertainment Zone		Palm Desert, CA		ISD#9189
TOUCH	TASTE	SOUND	SIGHT	SMELL
				
4	1	7	6	1
<b>PARTICIPANT GUIDELINES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some arcade games have steering wheels, seats to sit on, multiple buttons and/or interactive features</li> <li>Visitors have the option to play duck bowling</li> <li>Low impact on this sense</li> <li>Audio track played in enclosed space</li> <li>Sounds can be heard from multiple games in all areas</li> <li>Potential for close proximity/shared space with other visitors</li> <li>Bright colors, videos, and flashing lights in some areas</li> <li>Indoor lighting</li> <li>Low impact on this sense</li> </ul>				

The JW Marriott Desert Springs Resort and Spa in Greater Palm Springs, California, has created several sensory guides to help guests with autism plan and enjoy their visits.

that child calm down.

“With all core staff trained in sensitivity awareness, the hotel aims for its guests to feel welcome and taken care of,” the hotel said in the CAC designation announcement.

“We at IBCCES are elated to collaborate with esteemed partners such as the JW Desert Springs Resort & Spa, who not only understand the significance of fostering inclusive and accommodating environments but also recognize the immense value it holds for millions of autistic and sensory-sensitive travelers and their families seeking suitable options,” said Myron Pincomb, Chairman of the IBCCES Board. “The remarkable strides made in the Greater Palm Springs area are truly inspiring, and we are enthusiastic about our ongoing efforts as this community initiative flourishes.”

In addition to staff trainings, with help from IBCCES, the hotel now offers sensory guides of key areas of its more-than-50-acres of property, Hulahan said. The guides are given to guests at check-in and help them plan their time during their visit by

rating different areas of the hotel. For someone with autism, an area with a high sensory score—such as the hotel’s teppanyaki restaurant, the Mikado Japanese Steakhouse, with its open flames and made-in-front-of-you meals—might be overwhelming, she explained.

“We created the map so that guests could see that, actually, there’s a lot of spots that they could go and relax,” Hulahan said.

The hotel also has a collection of weighted blankets, sensory bags, fidget toys and headphones available for guests with sensory processing challenges. Guest rooms are now all equipped with mini fridges for preferred foods, and the hotel’s Rockwood Grill and room service offer special children’s menus with vegetarian and gluten free options.

One of the biggest benefits of the training has been a new sense of awareness, Hulahan said.

“I think more of the awareness is really the biggest piece,” she said. “Just understanding that one in six people have a sensory need or sensitivity.”



# NEWS

## Hotline

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Maui County Bar Association and the Legal Aid Society of Hawaii.

Volunteer HSBA attorneys participate by agreeing to two-hour shifts answering questions on the phone. The work can be done from anywhere thanks to a downloadable app, the HSBA said.

The association said it provides these volunteers with disaster relief information, including briefings on the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), document replacement and insurance claims, as well as summary sheets of frequently asked questions.

Three wildfires began burning on August 8 on the Hawaiian island of Maui, destroying an estimated 4.45 square miles of the island and still partially burning a week later. Several

more wildfires spread across the Big Island, due in part to strong winds brought by Hurricane Dora farther south in the Pacific, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Maui County officials reported the official death toll from the wildfires surpassing 100 on August 15, while hundreds of other missing people remaining unaccounted for. According to the National Fire Protection Asso-

ciation, the wildfires already rank as one of the top ten deadliest fires in recorded U.S. history.

In addition to the losses of life, at least 2,200 buildings were destroyed or damaged, according to data published August 12 by the University of Hawaii's Pacific Disaster Center. At least 1,890 of those buildings were residential, leaving approximately 4,500 people in need of shelter—and potentially of legal help.

The HSBA, originally founded in 1899 and classified as an association in 1989, is the professional trade association for lawyers licensed to practice in Hawaii. The organization has more than 8,000 members, according to the HSBA website.

Those interested in seeking information from the legal hotline can dial (888) 533-2773. The association encouraged active HSBA member attorneys interested in volunteering to reach out to [webinfo@hsba.org](mailto:webinfo@hsba.org).

## Firefighters

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Secretary-Treasurer Frank Lima, who is serving on the relief team. "But even as their own homes were in danger and burning, our members remained on duty to protect their community. This IAFF has the same level of commitment towards our members. Just as our members there for their community, the IAFF is and will always be there for our members providing disaster relief. Taking care of each other is what we do as fire fighters and as a union."

HFFA Local 1463 joined with CFF to establish the [Maui Wildfire Relief Fund](#), with 100% of proceeds aiding Maui firefighters who have been injured or lost their homes and to survivors of the wildfire.

The Hawaiian organization's web-



The IAFF Disaster Relief Team organizes assistance in Hawaii.

site also houses the [Mālama Maui page](#), which features a variety of resources available. Those who responded to the

fires are urged to sign up at the California Professional Firefighters (CPF) Personal Exposure Reporting.

## Plastics

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Pipe Institute from 2006 to 2019.

Two months after Radoszewski's firing, PLASTICS promoted former COO Matt Seaholm to CEO. Radoszewski, who has more than 40 years of experience in plastics, has not yet returned to the industry in an official capacity.

## Robert P. Imperata, Longtime Pittsburgh Executive, Dies

### — OBITUARY —

By Todd McElwee

Robert (Bob) P. Imperata, who spent 40 years with what is now VisitPITTSBURGH, died on August 15 from a brain tumor. He was 84.

A true son of Pittsburgh, Imperata, if nicked, would have surely bled black and yellow. Information provided to *USAE* by his daughter, Lisa, noted that he went to work for the Pittsburgh CVB in 1968, retiring in 2008 as COO and vice president of sales and marketing.

An unwavering champion of the city, his daughter said he capped off his career by taking a leadership role in the design and construction of the David L. Lawrence Convention Center, which opened in 2003. Before joining the bureau, he worked at the Omni William Penn.

Jerad Bachar, President & CEO, VisitPITTSBURGH, had this to say about Imperata: "Bob proudly served Pittsburgh's tourism and convention industry for nearly 40 years. He was instrumental in the development and prosperity

of many of our region's greatest tourism assets, including the David L. Lawrence Convention Center, and dedicated his life to telling Pittsburgh's story on the national stage. On behalf of the entire hospitality community, he will be deeply missed, but I'm confident we will continue to see and experience the impacts from his decades of service now and for years to come."

Craig Davis, President & CEO, Visit Dallas, was hired by Imperata at VisitPITTSBURGH in 2001 and regarded him as a mentor and very close friend. He told *USAE* that Imperata always believed in Pittsburgh and his vision helped reinvent the city.

VisitPITTSBURGH honored Imperata by initiating the Bob Imperata Passion for Pittsburgh Award. The honor has been presented to individuals, groups or organizations who display a passion for Pittsburgh, a passion for the travel and tourism industry, and a passion for bringing visitors to the region.

Retired Hilton executive and

Meetings Industry Fund board member David Giger was a longtime friend and recently visited with Imperata. A fellow Yinzer, Giger commended his friend's passion for Pittsburgh, spirit, and work throughout the meetings industry. He said he'll be truly missed.

Imperata's daughter said her dad traveled to Italy any chance he got and loved all things Italian, most especially the food and wine.

She added: "And of course, he loved all Pittsburgh sports. He attended Pirates games with his father going back to Forbes Field and Steelers games going back to Pitt Stadium. He almost never missed a Steelers home game, a chance to visit training camp, or a Pirates home opener. He carried this tradition on with his family through the 2022 season."

He is survived by wife Connie Del Signore; daughter Lisa (Matthew) Moses and Robert M. (Autumn) Imperata; grandchildren Caroline and Eleanor Moses; and other family members. He was the son of



the late Frank and Betty Imperata; brother of the late Frank Imperata; and husband for 46 years of the late Kathleen A. Imperata.

Schellhaas and Sons Funeral Home in Sewickley, Pennsylvania, is hosting visitation on August 21 with a Blessing Service held the following day.

Donations in Imperata's memory can be made to the [Meetings Industry Fund](#).