

# THE BOARD TABLE



## Reflecting on the Year that Was

As we approach 2012, I am amazed at how quickly this year has passed. It has been an honor and a pleasure to serve as Chairman of the IFEA World Board of Directors this year. The IFEA is truly blessed to have awesome leadership in the office as well as on both the World Board and Foundation Board. With so many creative, business-minded people who have a passion for events and this organization, the future of the IFEA is solid.

Reflecting on the year, I think it was a very positive year for the IFEA. The 56th Annual Convention and Expo in Fort Worth, Texas was well attended and had an energy that was electrifying. One IFEA member was telling me that there was a higher level of enthusiasm and energy at this year's convention than he has remembered in recent years. There was a great mix of new industry professionals and long-time members in addition to several industry veterans that hadn't been able to attend the IFEA Convention in several years. It was great to see them and it was encouraging to know that the IFEA is still a valuable resource for them. I am hopeful that the increased attendance this year is a sign that business is coming back and education budgets are being funded again. As a Tourism Director, I was especially pleased to see so many tourism professionals at this year's Convention and Expo. It seems to me that one silver lining in this economic downturn is that communities and destination marketing organizations have gained a new appreciation for the power of

events to drive tourism. As business travel has slowed, people have continued to travel to festivals and events. Let's keep the momentum going and reach out to our tourism colleagues and other events that have yet to discover the power of the IFEA. Recently, I attended another large industry association meeting where several attendees told me they had been to the IFEA Convention for the first time this year, and couldn't wait to come back again. What a success story for the IFEA team!

Speaking of success, the IFEA welcomed VISA as a new Association Partner in 2011. VISA joins Haas & Wilkerson Insurance and Zambelli Fireworks at this highest level of sponsorship with the IFEA. In this new partnership, VISA will be the presenting sponsor of the IFEA World Festival and Event City Award. In its second year, this new global award program recognizes top cities around the world that have created the most positive community partnerships with festivals and events. In 2011, the IFEA also began a new partnership with the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA). Beginning January 2012, the IFEA and NRPA will produce a new Event Management School at Oglebay Resort in Wheeling, West Virginia. This new two year program will cover a variety of topics from "The Business Side of Events" to "Non Sponsorship Revenue Programs" to "Maximizing Technology in Event Planning and Management" and everything in between. Whether you are new to the event industry or a season veteran, you will find that this program is designed to help all levels.

As we wrap up 2011, I want to express my sincere thanks to Joe Vera, CFEE, with the City of Hidalgo/Borderfest in Hidalgo, TX and Johan Moerman with Rotterdam Festivals in Rotterdam, The Netherlands, who are both rotating off the World Board after many years of service to the IFEA. Their level of commitment and dedication to this organization has been exceptional. As I move into the role of immediate past chair, I wish much success to incoming IFEA Board Chair, Bruce Erley, CFEE, APR, with Creative Strategies Group in Denver, CO. Bruce and I have served together on the board for at least six years and I know he will be an excellent Board Chair.

Over the past twenty-two years I have received so much from this organization. I can't think of any other professional association that has even come close to having the impact on my career than the IFEA. I have made numerous friends around the world from whom I have learned so much. This past year alone, I have been fortunate to visit events and speak at seminars in Tennessee, Illinois, South Korea and a few other stops along the way. I have learned so much from these experiences and can only hope that I was able to share something of value to those in attendance.

Again, it has truly been an honor and a pleasure to serve this organization as the 2011 IFEA World Board Chair. I wish you all a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year.

**WRIGHT TILLEY, CFEE**  
2011 IFEA Board Chair

Watauga County Tourism Development Authority  
Boone, North Carolina, U.S.A.

Tel: +1-828-266-1345

Email: [wtilley@exploreboonearea.com](mailto:wtilley@exploreboonearea.com)