

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Building Bridges to Connect Our Global Industry

"We are told never to cross a bridge until we come to it, but this world is owned by those who have 'crossed bridges' in their imagination far ahead of the crowd."

– Anonymous

"I am where I am because of the bridges that I crossed."

– Oprah Winfrey



As I write this, we are in the eye of the proverbial convention hurricane, getting ready for our quickly approaching 58th Annual International Festivals & Events Association (IFEA World) Convention & Expo in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (a city that National Geographic Traveler magazine ranked as "One of the World's 'Must-See' Places").

We thought it fitting to hold our convention in Pittsburgh... "The City of Bridges." Pittsburgh has more bridges than any other city in the world – 446 in case you are quizzed; 3 more than former world leader, Venice, Italy - and perhaps many more while the IFEA is in town September 16th-18th (with CFEI training classes September

13th-15th). In truth, the festivals and events of our industry, around the world, often serve as the bridges that connect people and possibility together. The events that we produce are often the catalyst for bonding our communities, cities, and countries together; for providing invaluable branding and economic impact opportunities; for driving tourism, business and infrastructure improvements; and for inspiring new conversations, about new possibilities.

Like a bridge, our events and organizations succeed through a model of well-planned strength and structure that is, by design, hidden behind an image of quality, creativity, magic and wonder that seems to effortlessly span the distance of differences between people, places, cultures and values.

I hope that you are planning to join us at the convention, for the most anticipated gathering of 'bridge-builders' in the festivals and events industry. Where industry leaders from our eight global regions – IFEA Africa, Australia/New Zealand, Asia, Caribbean, Europe, Latin America, Middle East, and North America – will come together to build their own unique bridges; Bridges of communication and cooperation that connect a world of experience; Bridges that span the limits of our combined creativity and

support our individual dreams and visions; Bridges that provide new routes across our common challenges and onward to unimagined opportunities and successes; Bridges that connect our global industry.

As the world around us continues to grow and change, providing new challenges, new risks, and new opportunities at every turn, professionals in our industry need a credible and trusted source to keep them connected with the latest issues, trends, expectations, conversations and best practices from around the globe. A source to help strengthen and reinforce existing operations; inspire future strategies and visions; and guide critical leadership decisions. For 58 years the IFEA has provided the festivals and events industry with the very best in professional education and networking; a tradition that will continue in Pittsburgh and for many years beyond.

I extend a personal invitation to each of you who can find a way to join us in Pittsburgh and look forward to seeing you in-person as possible; but you can be confident that we will be here for you throughout the year, providing valuable tools, resources, programs and services to help you cross whatever bridges may be in your future.