



Following more than a year of unprecedented global impact by the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic, on our own industry and many others, we are beginning to see some signs of hope and positivity in many global regions, although others are still in the heat of the pandemic. Globally, we are seeing new signs of spread by the COVID delta variant among the unvaccinated and even some (still rare, fortunately) breakthrough cases among those who are fully vaccinated, that risk taking us backwards; a place that none of us wants to be.

While we are all ready for a full return to normalcy, this is still not a disease that anyone can totally predict or prevent. We are all (including medical experts) learning and doing the best that we can to respond to the realities that surround us, including the unwillingness of so many to get vaccinated. For our industry and so many others, until everyone is protected and vaccinated, and global travel can resume safely across all borders, there are still many challenges to be faced, much support to be provided, and creative new directions to be explored together.

All that noted, as we look ahead to the future, we understand that recovery (likely in gradual steps) for our industry will take time. The analogy of a 'dimmer switch' versus a 'light switch' is a good one. Nice weather and the initial removal of masks by the limited percentage of those who have been fully vaccinated are not the panacea for all of our challenges. Even under perfect scenarios, staffs must be rebuilt; financial reserves must be replenished; new health and safety considerations (and their related impact on both revenues and expenses) must be taken into account; the limited availability and/or rising costs of mandatory/essential insurance coverages, products, services, and volunteers must be considered and planned for; government support is still being sought and waited on to offset future risk and replace current losses; travel restrictions - impacting attendees, performers and others - must be planned for; and the ability to require proof of vaccinations and/or timely negative testing results continue to vary widely across state, province and country borders, as well as selected venues. And above all, short-term risk must be balanced in favor of long-term financial health and sustainability.

Through surveys to access the current realities for our members and industry; consideration of all of the above; communications with other allied partners; and the reality/impact of many postponed 2021 events moving to the later quarters of the year; we have made the difficult decision not to hold our annual IFEA Convention, Expo and Retreat presented by [Haas & Wilkerson Insurance](#), and our [2021 Awards Programs](#), with an eye on protecting the overall health and sustainability of our own organization, as well as all those in our global industry.

That decision noted, we do plan a continued and very full schedule of on-line education; professional networking;

professional certification; and a plethora of invaluable benefits and resources in the months ahead.

With a positive belief that the world (as a whole) and our essential global industry will continue to gain an increased understanding of; further control over; and proactive protection against the COVID-19 pandemic (including newly-identified variants), in the months ahead, we intend to focus our efforts on using our combined experiences – strengthened by fire over the past year and a half - to imagine and lay the foundations for a bright new future for our events, our industry, and the communities and countries that host them.

Coming quickly out-of-the-chute in 2022 (conditions allowing), we look forward to:

- The return of our highly popular [IFEA/NRPA Event Management School](#)
- Our first-ever '[IFEA Leadership 100 Retreat](#)'
- The continuation of our educational [IFEA Webinar Series](#) and [Affinity Groups](#)
- The return of our annual [IFEA Convention, Expo & Retreat](#) presented by [Haas & Wilkerson Insurance](#) in the last quarter of 2022 (Date & Location TBA - but plan for our usual late September/October time frame.)
- And our Award Programs including the [IFEA/Haas & Wilkerson Insurance Pinnacle Awards](#) (with new categories and expanded entry windows to recognize and include the remarkable creativity produced before and during the pandemic, that still must be properly recognized); the [IFEA World Festival & Event City Awards](#); the [IFEA Hall of Fame](#) and the [IFEA Volunteer of the Year Award](#).

Additionally, we also have a busy second half of 2021 in store for you, including:

- [Webinars on Demand](#) available free to IFEA Members this July & August
- A new CFEE Student led Webinar Series presented by [Kaliff Insurance](#), coming September & October (Details available soon)
- Our '[Certified Festival & Event Executive \(CFEE\)](#)' Professional Certification Program presented by [Kaliff Insurance](#), with classes offered this November
- Our continued monthly [IFEA Affinity Groups, including a new one focused on the critical area of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion \(DEI\)](#)
- Continued quarterly issues of "[ie](#)" Magazine sponsored by [Kaliff Insurance](#) (the next one coming in October)
- Our new '[IFEA Fan Favorite](#)' competition and fund-raiser, and
- The IFEA Foundation Auction & Ultimate Experience coming this Fall (details available soon)

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Not to mention access to our ongoing every day member benefits and resources including:

- Staying up-to-date on industry news in our [IFEA Event Insider](#) and [Important Information Emails](#).
- Discovering new and creative vendor partners in our [Event Resource Marketplace](#)
- Searching and Posting in our [IFEA Job Bank](#) (Free to members)
- Our [COVID-19 Task Force Findings](#) and [Industry Templates](#)
- Plus, so many more [benefits & resources](#).
- Remember, the value of your IFEA membership is multiplied exponentially when you participate directly with your industry peers - from close to home and around the world - and take advantage of the many professional resources available to you.

We invite you to be a part of the exciting and much brighter future that lies ahead; an active member of the IFEA; a

recognized and respected player among your professional peers; and a mentor (now more than ever) to all those new professionals who look to join our industry and bring their own expertise and experience to the global table.

I thank you all for your continued and highly appreciated support and industry leadership. As we look to the future, as uncertain as it can seem on any given day, I never doubt that our industry and events will continue to be there for our communities, our world, and each other, morphing creatively, reliably, and responsibly into whatever format is required to meet the challenges before us.

Stay safe and healthy. If you have not yet, please get vaccinated for us all.

Steven Wood Schmader, CFEE

President & CEO