



International Festivals & Events Association

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **WATAUGA COUNTY TDA DIRECTOR ELECTED AS CHAIR OF THE INTERNATIONAL FESTIVALS & EVENTS ASSOCIATION WORLD BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Boise, Idaho** – The International Festivals and Events Association (IFEA) is pleased to announce that Wright Tilley, CFEE, Executive Director of the Watauga County Tourism Development Authority, has been elected as the 2011 Chairman of the World Board of Directors. Tilley was welcomed as the new chair at a ceremonial passing of the gavel during the IFEA's 55th Annual Convention & Expo in Saint Louis, Missouri. His term will officially begin on January 1, 2011.

Founded in 1956 as the Festival Managers Association, the International Festivals & Events Association (IFEA) today is *The Premiere Association Supporting and Enabling Festival & Event Professionals Worldwide*. In partnership with global affiliates under the umbrellas of IFEA Africa, IFEA Asia, IFEA Australia / New Zealand, IFEA Europe, IFEA Latin America, IFEA Middle East, and IFEA North America, the organization's common vision is for "A Globally United Industry that Touches Lives in a Positive Way through Celebration." The Association offers the most complete source of ideas, resources, information, education and networking for festival and event professionals worldwide, in addition to global industry advocacy. IFEA serves a broad industry partnership of festivals and events, municipalities, government and tourism agencies, media, sponsors, educational institutions and product and service suppliers.

When asked about the position, Tilley said, "I am extremely honored to have been elected by my peers to serve in this leadership role." He also stated that he is excited to be the first tourism professional to serve as chair of the IFEA. "I think it emphasizes the major impact and importance of festivals and events on the tourism product," said Tilley.

Tilley has been involved with the IFEA since 1989 and previously served as Chairman of the IFEA Foundation Board in 2002. He has been on the 15 member World Board of Directors for 5 years. Tilley has more than 22 years of experience in the event and tourism industries. He has served as Executive Director of the Watauga County TDA since January of 2009.

Prior to his current position with Watauga County, Tilley served as President of the Macon, Georgia International Cherry Blossom Festival and the Keep Macon Bibb Beautiful Commission. During his career he has also served as Vice President of RCS Productions in Atlanta, a full-service entertainment and event production company; as Recreation and Events Manager for the Jekyll Island Authority Convention & Visitors Bureau; and as an Adjunct Instructor for the Department of Recreation, Parks and Tourism at the University of Florida.

"Wright Tilley has played an active and important role in the success and strategic direction of our association and our industry for many years," noted Steven Wood Schmader, CFEE, President & CEO of the IFEA. "He has earned the respect of his professional peers and I am personally excited to work more closely with him over the course of the next year, in his role as IFEA World Board Chair."

## End ##

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