



FIESTA<sup>®</sup>,

# MEDALS AND THE IFEA



It is FIESTA<sup>®</sup> time in San Antonio, TX. Fiesta<sup>®</sup> San Antonio is an 11 day, city-wide “party with a purpose.” What started as a one-parade event in 1891 has grown into a city-wide celebration of over 100 separate events benefiting just as many local non-profit organizations. Originally created as an occasion to honor the battles of the Alamo and San Jacinto, Fiesta<sup>®</sup> San Antonio is now the city’s signature event, bringing in millions of dollars and thousands of visitors to San Antonio just in the next several days.

One of the most recognizable

Fiesta<sup>®</sup> traditions is the collection of colorful pins and medals. Various people, businesses, and organizations create medals to sell, trade, or give away each spring. An attendees’ goal is to collect as many as possible, displaying them on an array of sashes, vests, and stoles. Fiesta<sup>®</sup> events create medals for officers and royalty, while many charitable organizations sell them to raise funds. Businesses build brands through the distribution of medals, and individuals design unique medals to exchange.

As I started pinning the first of my 2017 Fiesta<sup>®</sup> medals onto my sash, I realized that the first three medals on my sash all belonged to IFEA member organizations: the medal for Fiesta<sup>®</sup> Commission President, Irwin De Luna, the Fiesta Flambeau Association, and the King William Fair. Over the years, these three organizations have sent dozens of staff members and volunteers to IFEA Conventions. As Fiesta<sup>®</sup> San Antonio has evolved into a mega-festival with an economic impact of more than \$284 million annually, I can’t help but think about how the IFEA has helped teach, train, grow, and connect so many involved with this event.

Fiesta<sup>®</sup> hasn’t even officially begun, and I have already seen the benefits of the IFEA in action. I spent the last two days onsite at St. Mary’s University setting up for Fiesta<sup>®</sup> Oyster Bake. The event’s Assistant Director, Fred Meyer, was in my CFEE Fast Track class held at the San Antonio Fiesta<sup>®</sup> Commission, and Bro. Mike Sullivan who runs St. Mary’s Fiesta Jazz Festival was an IFEA Foundation scholarship recipient. CFEE program sponsor, Kaliff Insurance, insures many Fiesta<sup>®</sup> events and has helped raise the bar within Fiesta<sup>®</sup> by providing workshops and advice to event organizers.

This week, we at *dfest*<sup>®</sup> have been getting our hands dirty setting up and tearing down flags, banners, and decorations in preparation for Fiesta<sup>®</sup>, but next week we get to welcome IFEA members to our hometown and production facility. The IFEA’s Texas affiliate, the Texas Festivals and Events Association, is hosting a Behind-the-Scenes Tour of Night in Old San Antonio (NIOA), in the historic downtown village of La Villita where thousands of visitors will gather over four nights to enjoy 250 elaborately decorated food and drink booths and more than a dozen nonstop entertainment stages representing the diverse cultures and customs of San Antonio in 15 heritage-themed areas. NIOA has a Saffire website & is using Extreme Tix (both IFEA members).

Yes, it is easy to see the impact that the IFEA and IFEA Foundation have had on Fiesta<sup>®</sup> San Antonio, the city, and individual organizations. As San Antonio prepares to celebrate its 300th birthday in 2018, we welcome the Tri-Centennial Commission as one of IFEA’s newest members. The success of San Antonio’s festival and event community is repeated around the world thanks to IFEA. Your support of IFEA and the IFEA Foundation helps to link the festival and event community world-wide and assures that the quality of community celebrations continues to improve.

**VANESSA VAN DE PUTTE**  
2017 IFEA Foundation Board Chair  
Vice President of Sales & Marketing  
*dfest*<sup>®</sup> (Dixie Flag Event Services Team)  
San Antonio, TX