



# IFEA WORLD BOARD

BY JEFF CURTIS



**B**ack in early February while I was on a flight coming home from the IFEA World Board of Director meetings in Orlando, Florida, I jotted down some notes from my recent interactions from respected leaders of our industry. As I collected my thoughts, I could not help but think about just how big our industry is when you try to put into context the sheer number of events that take place across the globe. In that same thinking, events have a successful trend of being shared and replicated in a way that truly transforms our industry. What is clear to me in both what I see today and looking through the history books, is that the event industry is a shared industry. I believe that the power of sharing knowledge from one event to another is the most fundamental key to our industry thriving, while others industries struggle from time to time.

My own festival, the Portland Rose Festival, is a primary example of succeeding via this shared industry. The Rose Festival's signature event, the Grand Floral Parade which began in 1907, can trace its roots back to the mid 1800's carnivals of Europe--most notably, the Battle of Flowers Parade in Nice, France. While the Grand Floral Parade can trace back the heritage, it was not the first to create a flower parade in the United States. During the prior century, two floral parades were started in San Antonio, Texas and Pasadena, California. San Antonio's Battle of Flowers Parade was directly copied from its European counterpart, and in that same year, the world-famous Rose Parade was started in Pasadena, California. All of these parades are linked together by the concept of using a flower as the symbol and the building block for a parade. Collectively,

it was an idea that was shared and transferred from Europe to San Antonio, to Pasadena and then Portland.

In recent years, I looked to adjust how we program and use Portland's waterfront for special events. While I had a vision in my mind of a customized event space for multi-purpose use ranging from major concerts to picnic space, it took a trip to the Kentucky Derby Festival to cement that vision. It simply took my two feet on the ground of their waterfront event to create a roadmap in my mind how the Portland Rose Festival could achieve its goals of revitalizing how we use our own Waterfront space. From there, our RoZone was born. Today it thrives as our concert venue, but over the years has hosted events from BBQ championships to our Opening Night Ceremonies.

The power of taking an event concept and shipping it across the globe is one of the most defining assets of our events Industry. IFEA is that key to the power of event transformation. I encourage you to take the time to engage IFEA's online resources, its membership benefits and to embrace the power of relationships with other festivals across the globe. IFEA is an organization that has been a resource to my own personal growth, as well as the continued growth and success of the Portland Rose Festival through the sharing of knowledge and creative thinking.

**Jeff Curtis**

2018 IFEA World Board Chair  
CEO

Portland Rose Festival Foundation  
Portland, OR