

# IFEA PRESIDENT'S LETTER



## YOUR SUPPORT IS NEEDED **NOW, MORE THAN EVER**

**O**n February 27 & 28, the IFEA World Board and IFEA Foundation Board met together in Grapevine, Texas, USA, for the first of our 2020 annual meetings. A small part of our discussion noted the coverage of a new virus (originally thought to be a strain of pneumonia) that was impacting China and starting to be reported in several other countries around the globe. It was not thought, at that time, to be a critical concern. On March 11, 2020 (just twelve days later) the Novel Coronavirus Disease, COVID-19, was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO). On March 13, 2020 a national emergency was declared in the United States concerning the COVID-19 Outbreak. In the course of the next four and a half months, the global festivals and events industry (the industry of mass gatherings), and all of our related stakeholders and host communities, had been decimated, both economically and programmatically, as a direct result of this pandemic.

Unlike anything that we have witnessed or dealt with before – terrorism, market drops, supply shortages, travel fears, weather-related and natural disasters, et al. – the COVID-19 Novel Coronavirus Disease was not a problem affecting ‘someone else,’ for which we could offer our thoughts, prayers and support; add an educational session at our IFEA annual convention, addressed by a recognized industry ‘expert’; and give thanks that it was not happening directly on our own doorstep. COVID-19 is on all of our doorsteps and we do not get a choice as to whether we want to deal with it or not. Like the wearing of a mask, it is mandatory that we deal with it, or we may not be around to welcome that opportunity again. And there are no ‘experts’ or ‘best practices.’ No one has ever dealt with this before. And as we look forward, when we do get to see a light at the end of the proverbial tunnel, every event – no matter its age in years, or decades or centuries – will be a first-time event.

On the good news front, we are all in this together. Never before in global history, has there been a more important time to know that we all have a global and wide-ranging network of friends, professional peers and access to the most up-to-date insights and information available. A network provided by the IFEA. A brain trust made up of the most creative and talented leaders in ours, or any other, field, as we all go through a Master’s Degree program, that none of us signed up for!

Over the last several months, that has seemed like an eternity to all of us and the world around us, the IFEA has made a pivotal change in our focus, and has been busy researching, educating, advocating for and supporting all those in our global industry who – on our best days - provide those important bonding opportunities for our respective communities, cities, state/provinces/territories, and countries, in good times and bad.

We have taken the lead in debating and defining new direc-

tions and new realities for the future, learning from and sharing with all of you at every turn. And while answers are still neither clear, nor easy, we have been reminded, over and over, that it is, and will be, the power and willingness of our professional network (both locally and globally) to share, support and imagine the future together, that will get us all through this unique time in our history, however long that may last.

And as we have done our best to provide honest and credible information and insights to all of you, the reality of the message has not been lost on us internally. Taking into account the continued information that we have been following and sharing with health and government officials; our awareness of and empathy for all of your own events and organizations, as you have had to make the very tough decisions to cancel or postpone; and the huge impact on both human and financial resources throughout ours and many other industries; the IFEA World Board of Directors concluded in June that it was in the best interest of the IFEA; the health – individually and organizationally – of all those that we serve; and the focus of our finite resources moving forward, **to move our 2020 IFEA Convention, Expo & Retreat, presented by Haas & Wilkerson Insurance, to 2021 (with more details to follow in the months ahead)**. This will help ensure that we continue providing the highest quality support possible, for a challenge that we cannot yet predict an end to.

While we, like all of you with your own events, were highly disappointed in making that decision for our biggest annual gathering – especially at a time when we would all welcome that time together to support, learn from, and network with our global peers who are going through the same questions, frustrations and challenges – we are committed to providing those same outlets and continued/expanded support in other formats, for as long as we are all facing this global pandemic.

We are planning for/currently offering:

- **Enhanced Online Educational Programming** (including our CFE Program, for those who are working on that or may desire to use the current environment to start that process);
- **Increased Networking Opportunities** through participation in our online Affinity Groups – upgraded now to regularly scheduled video formats;
- **Direct Participation Opportunities** in our IFEA COVID-19 Task Force Committees, as we discuss and redefine the future for our industry in several key areas (\* All Task Force recommendations will be shared with the full IFEA Membership):
  - How do we RE-PRESENT our current events if they have had to be cancelled or postponed?

- What will RE-OPENING likely look like, when we do get a green light to return?
- RE-IMAGINING what the future of festivals and events will/may look like if the COVID-19 virus keeps our industry closed for 1-3 years?
- RE-CONNECTING our communities and redefining how our events may need/want to partner more closely with our host communities; other events; and all stakeholders, in order to survive and thrive in the future.
- How to remain FINANCIALLY solvent and sustainable for the short-and-long term future.
- **Continued access to all of our important, Professional Resources** that you have come to rely on, including:
  - ie magazine
  - The Event Insider
  - The IFEA Update & Events
  - www.ifea.com
  - Our IFEA Webinar Series
  - Our Online Event Resource Marketplace
  - Our Virtual Trade Show
  - The IFEA Job Bank
  - IFEA Awards Programs
  - Industry Surveys
  - Industry Templates
  - Social Media Networking
  - Risk Management Resources
  - COVID-19 Specific Resources
  - And Much, Much More

For more information on any of the above, please email Beth Petersen, Director of Member Services at [beth@ifea.com](mailto:beth@ifea.com) and she will connect you with the appropriate staff member to assist you.

The staff and boards of the IFEA take great pride in serving as the leadership hub for our global industry. We will continue to be there, on your behalf, helping to keep our common industry informed, educated, connected, creative, represented, and up-to-speed on all fronts, especially during these challenging times. But just like all of you and your events, we have lost our major event revenue streams, and, to-date, have been excluded from any government payroll protection or loan access programs, due to our 501(c)6 filing status (something we hope will be fixed in future government stimulus plans). We are in the same boat as many of you, as we work to ensure the financial sustainability of the IFEA, well into the future.

To that end, we need your ongoing and generous support now, more than ever, to ensure that we can continue to provide all of the many programs and resources above. If we are a valuable resource to you and your organization, and as you are able, here is how you can help:

# HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT THE IFEA?

## MAINTAIN YOUR IFEA MEMBERSHIP

If you are a current IFEA Member, please remember to renew your membership, preferably at your first-notification renewal messaging, or before, if able. Or, look into renewing for multiple years.

[RENEW HERE](#)

## JOIN THE IFEA

If you are not a current member, but have been enjoying and participating in our weekly COVID-19 Webinar programming, please join the IFEA, so that you can help support the organization, while gaining access to our many other benefits and resources. Multi-year memberships available.

[JOIN HERE](#)

## DONATE TO THE IFEA FOUNDATION

Make a donation to our IFEA Foundation 'Fund for the Future,' at as generous a level as possible. Those funds are all directed to keeping our mission-specific educational programming available.

[DONATE HERE](#)

## MOVE YOUR CONVENTION REGISTRATION TO 2021

If you have already registered for our 2020 IFEA Convention, Expo & Retreat, presented by Haas & Wilkerson Insurance, please consider moving your registration dollars ahead to 2021, if possible. (Please contact Kaye Campbell, CFEE at [kaye@ifea.com](mailto:kaye@ifea.com).)

## PRE-REGISTER FOR OUR 2021 CONVENTION

Register now for our 2021 IFEA Convention, Expo & Retreat, presented by Haas & Wilkerson Insurance as an attendee and/or Expo vendor.

[REGISTER FOR 2021 CONVENTION HERE](#)

[REGISTER FOR 2021 EXPO HERE](#)

## REGISTER FOR A WEBINAR

Consider signing yourself or members of your team up for one or a complete series of IFEA's Webinars. Whether it's an upcoming live IFEA Webinar, a Summer Webinar presented by VolunteerLocal or a Webinar on Demand, IFEA's Webinars are easily accessible and a valuable educational resource.

[VIEW UPCOMING WEBINARS](#)

[VIEW UPCOMING SUMMER WEBINARS PRESENTED BY VOLUNTEERLOCAL](#)

[VIEW WEBINARS ON-DEMAND](#)

## REGISTER FOR CFEE

Register for our IFEA Professional Certification Program (CFEE – Certified Festival & Event Executive), sponsored by Kaliff Insurance which will continue to be offered online, with revamps to allow for completing all elements of the program, given the new COVID-19 restrictions that effect some required components.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

## BECOME A SPONSOR

Support our global industry and all those who make festivals and events possible around the world, as an IFEA Sponsor. We will work with you to design a specific opportunity that will help you to reach the leadership of our industry with your own programs and services, while supporting those same leaders and organizations through this challenging time.

[LEARN MORE](#)

## ADVERTISE WITH THE IFEA

Advertise in any of our high-quality, professional publications and online resources. You'll not only keep your product front and center with IFEA's audience of festival and event decision-makers, you'll also be helping to enable the IFEA to continue serving the festival and event professionals in our industry through the challenges of COVID-19 and beyond.

[LEARN MORE](#)

## PRE-PAY FOR IFEA PROGRAMS & SERVICES

Create a pre-paid account with the IFEA, that can be used at any time in the future for all IFEA Programs, Resources, Webinars, Memberships, Convention Attendance, Professional Certification, and more. Gift Cards can be sent on your behalf, as requested.

[PRE-PAY FOR IFEA SERVICES HERE](#)

## CREATE AN IFEA LEGACY SCHOLARSHIP

Create a permanent and named IFEA Legacy Scholarship, ensuring that the future leadership of our industry remain supported and that the named individual, group or organization is recognized in perpetuity for your/their role in our global industry.

[LEARN MORE](#)

## SHARE YOUR STORY, YOUR EXPERTISE AND YOUR RESOURCES

Help us to provide the latest information, guidance, and creative new ideas for getting us all through the current COVID-19 challenges by writing articles for our quarterly magazine, ie: the business of international events; offering to present a Webinar on a relevant and current COVID-19 topic; sharing your templates, new operational guidelines, planning documents, and other professionally-relevant materials with your global peers through our IFEA website; and/or offering to host/moderate/manage one of our IFEA Online Affinity Groups, helping to keep all of our professional networks active and in-touch. (Please contact Nia Hovde, CFEE at [nia@ifea.com](mailto:nia@ifea.com).)

## SUPPORT OUR SPONSORS

Continue to support our highly-valued IFEA Sponsor Partners and Vendors, who have made their own, much-appreciated commitment to ensure the ongoing success of the IFEA and our common industry through these challenging times.

[VIEW OUR SPONSORS](#)

[VIEW VENDORS](#)

We thank everyone for your continued, highly-valued and important support through these unprecedented times. Globally, we are an 'essential' and resilient industry of the most creative and talented professionals that I can imagine, who will help to ensure that the world's 'new normal' will never be without quality celebrations of who we are at our best! Together we will continue to create the future for us all.

Stay safe and healthy,

**Steven Wood Schmader, CFEE**

President & CEO

IFEA World