

IFEA IS AN ORGANIZATION **UNLIKE ANY OTHER**



As your incoming IFEA World Board Chair, I am humbled to follow in the footsteps of some incredible event professionals from around the globe. And doubly honored to do so twice. First in 2001 and again this year. Equally, I am proud to represent the City of Scottsdale, Arizona, as its Tourism & Events Director.

What a blessing to be a part of an industry where on any given day we bring people together to engage and celebrate. As I write this letter to all of you, Scottsdale is amid Western Week that includes the 65th Annual Hashknife Pony Express, the 68th Annual Parada del Sol Parade & Trails End Festival and the 7th Annual Arizona Indian Festival featuring 21 of Arizona's 22 native tribes. These festivals and events showcase Scottsdale's history and heritage and I'm so proud to be a part of the planning and production.

And when you read this, many eyes will be on Scottsdale as we host the WM Phoenix Open and the AFC Conference Champion for Super Bowl LVII, which includes ESPN once again broadcasting live from Scottsdale on our historic Main Street in Old Town. Yet another proud moment.

Mid-February, I look forward to welcoming the IFEA World and Foundation Boards to Scottsdale for our first meetings of 2023. The focus of the World Board meeting is a strategic planning session facilitated by Neville Bhada, Founder & CEO of Tourism Skills Group who has presented numerous times at the IFEA Convention & EXPO. I'm excited to be a part of this process to have the World Board, Steve Schmader and his staff determine IFEA's key goals for the next few years.

IFEA is an organization unlike any other I have encountered in my 42-year career in special events and tourism working for non-profits, state, and municipality governments. This organization opened my heart and mind to the festival and event industry - and literally the world. Little did I know back in 1983 that I would learn so much, be encouraged often, gain confidence as a leader, and serve this association alongside such incredible people.

Not only did IFEA teach me much, but it has also given me much. It gave me the opportunity to travel the US and Europe to experience many magnificent festivals and events as well as amazing IFEA Conferences. With that came many occasions to network and collaborate in both large and small ways while seeing up close the ways a festival can benefit from IFEA.

Because of the enormous opportunities that IFEA provides, as IFEA World Board Chair, I hope to lead an effort focused on growing IFEA's membership base, working in partnership with our passionate and dedicated board members and staff. It's my honor to serve as Chair of the IFEA World Board. Thank you to my fellow board members for selecting me to represent the IFEA membership and affiliated organizations. I look forward to celebrating our world events and growing IFEA in 2023!

Karen Churchard, CFE

IFEA World Board Chair
Tourism & Events Director
City of Scottsdale
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