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July 2009 Meeting Planners' Guide™

CONVENTION FORUM

Serving Meeting Professionals Throughout The Southeast

**2009 BIENNIAL
MEETING PLANNERS' GUIDE**





MESQUITE CONVENTION CENTER & EXHIBIT HALL
 1700 Rodeo Drive
 Mesquite, TX 75149
 Contact: Carol Abbott, Sales/Services Manager
 Phone: 972/204-4927
 Fax: 972/204-4926
 cabbott@ci.mesquite.tx.us
 realtexasflavor.com
 Number of Meeting Rooms: 14



Just 15 minutes east of downtown Dallas, Mesquite's Convention Center and Exhibit Hall offer meeting planners a flexible, full-service venue for groups up to 1,400. Located at Rodeo Center, adjacent to the convention center hotel and the Mesquite Championship Rodeo, groups can expect convenience, value and outstanding service at very competitive rates.



RADISSON HOTEL & SUITES AUSTIN - TOWN LAKE
 111 Cesar Chavez @ Congress
 Austin, TX 78701
 Contact: Steve Huey, Director of Sales
 Phone: 512/478-9611
 Fax: 512/478-3227
 shuey@radissonaustin.com
 radisson.com/austintx
 Number of Meeting Rooms: 15
 Total Sq. Ft.: 9,600

Ideal downtown location overlooking scenic Town Lake. Flexible and elegant meeting facilities for up to 500, plus catering for business and social events. 2009 remodel for meeting space and hotel tower. Enjoy high-speed Internet, Sleep Number beds, pool, fitness center, miles of hike/bike trails, Starbucks coffee store and T.G.I. Friday's.



THE WESTIN LA CANTERA RESORT
 16641 La Cantera Parkway
 San Antonio, TX 78256
 Greg Haugland, Director of Sales & Marketing
 Phone: 210/558-2229
 Fax: 210/614-0721
 greg.haugland@westin.com
 westinlacantera.com
 Number of Meeting Rooms: 23
 Total Sq. Ft.: 39,000

A 4-Diamond resort featuring 508 newly renovated guestrooms, 39,000 sq. ft. of renovated function space, 36 holes of golf, a spa, dining, the Shops at La Cantera and meeting experts to assist with every step of the planning process, The Westin La Cantera is the perfect place for your next event.

INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENTS

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initiative provides the lodging industry with technical assistance, encouraging hotels and motels to adopt cost-saving "green" practices that reduce waste and conserve natural resources. "The entire team at Hyatt Regency Orlando International Airport has worked hard to achieve this designation, and we are honored to be a part of the Florida *Green Lodging* Program," says Pat Engfer, hotel general manager. "Maintaining a healthy environment is a shared responsibility, and we recognize that it is vitally important not only to ourselves and our guests, but to all future generations as well." orlandoairport.hyatt.com; dep.state.fl.us/greenlodging

National Harbor Sells Land to Disney

The Peterson Companies has announced the sale of land at its National Harbor development near Washington, D.C., to Walt Disney Parks and Resorts. Disney is considering using the 15-acre site overlooking the Potomac River in National Harbor, Md., as the location for a resort hotel for visitors to the National Capital Region. The new resort hotel would be one of Disney's standalone resort hotels separate from the Disney theme parks. This new resort hotel, like the project under construction in Hawaii, will be in a prime geographic location and will provide

guests with the same comfort and amenities for which Disney is famous. Disney purchased the Maryland property from the Peterson Companies for \$11 million. disney.com

Majestic Beach Resort Hosts Inaugural FRLA Bay Chapter Meeting

On Apr. 23, 2009, Majestic Beach Resort, a property of The Resort Collection of Panama City Beach, hosted the inaugural meeting of the Bay Chapter of the Florida Restaurant & Lodging Association (FRLA). Florida's Lieutenant Governor Jeff Kottkamp gave the keynote speech. He elaborated on the advantages of



Lieutenant Governor Jeff Kottkamp; Paul Wohlford; and his children, Paul, Bethany and Alex

joining the 10,000-member hospitality trade association. FRLA's mission is to safeguard the needs of the hospitality industry, improve the business climate, promote the highest levels of qual-

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IN THE NEWS

Send "In The News" announcements to editor@conventionforum.com.

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The Westin Beach Resort, Fort Lauderdale—an ocean-front resort with 433 inviting guestrooms and 32,000 sq. ft. of flexible meeting space—and the Sheraton Yankee Clipper Hotel have announced the appointment of Corinne Whittington as the new national sales manager. Whittington is responsible for covering sales in the Southeastern United States for groups of 26 guestrooms and more. With more than five years of Westin Resorts sales experience, Whittington joins the complex from The Westin Diplomat Resort & Spa in Hollywood, Fla., and The Diplomat Golf Resort & Spa, Hallandale Beach, Fla., where she served as the Midwest national sales manager. Prior to that position, Whittington was responsible for managing groups of up to 150 guestrooms on peak as group sales manager for the two properties. westin.com/fortlauderdalebeach

BBC Destination Management is proud to announce that its senior account executive, Nicolas

Nevarés, CMP, was inducted as president of the 2009-2010 New Orleans Chapter of the International Special Events Society (ISES). Nevarés began working in the hospitality industry in 2003 for Mardi Gras Productions (MGP). At MGP, he was an account executive specializing in the society and corporate markets. In November 2006, Nevarés began his career with BBC Destination Management as an account executive. By November 2007, BBC had a record sales year, surpassing anything that had been accomplished in the previous 16 years of business. Nevarés was a major contributor. After his first year with BBC, he was promoted from account executive to senior account executive. Additionally, Nevarés sat for and passed the Certified Meeting Planner exam in January 2008. He was presented with the President's Award for outstanding service by the International Special Events Society for the 2007-2008 year, and he recently received one of the highest honors by receiving the 2008-2009 Association of Destination

Management Executives' "Rising Star Award," an award presented to a single individual in the international hospitality industry. In 2010, he will be co-chairman of The Special Event (TSE) Starts Here opening event for the January 2010 TSE convention in New Orleans, La. Nevarés is an active member of International Special Events Society, Meeting Professionals International and the Society of Incentive and Travel Executives. bbcdmc.com

Elena Burr has joined the Panama City Beach, Fla., Convention & Visitors Bureau as interactive marketing manager. In her new position, Burr will oversee and maintain the content of visitpanamacitybeach.com, increase the CVB's visibility on the Web through social media, develop strategies for search engine optimization, enhance each user's interactive experience and work closely with the CVB's outside interactive agency to fully leverage and maximize campaigns, offers and key promotional periods in an effort to increase travel to the

award-winning beach destination. Burr brings to her position more than 15 years of experience in retail travel sales, advertising and interactive communication. Prior to joining the CVB, she served as content manager and travel guide editor for bookit.com. While there, Burr managed the content for the market landing pages, property pages and the hotel and content review system. She also developed articles for bookit.com's online travel guide and assisted in maintaining the overall copy for the website. Earlier in her career, Burr worked with AAA Central Penn, Carlson Wagonlit Travel. Her international experience includes holding positions as a travel agent with American & Worldwide Travel in Tunbridge Wells, England, and as a tour operator for USA Tailor Made Holidays in Tonbridge, England. Burr received her degree from West Kent College, England, and is also travel agent and tour operator certified. visitpanamacitybeach.com



Corinne Whittington



Elena Burr

INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENTS

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ity and safety for their patrons, provide legislative advocacy and ease navigation of government regulations. At this inaugural meeting, The Resort Collection's vice president of sales and marketing, Paul Wohlford, was inducted as the vice president of lodging for the Bay Chapter of FRLA as well as incoming chapter president for 2010. resortspcbeach.com; frla.com

New Orleans' 2008 Visitor Numbers Released

The number of visitors to

New Orleans increased from 7.1 million in 2007 to 7.6 million in 2008, and spending levels increased from \$4.8 billion in 2007 to \$5.1 billion in 2008, according to a survey conducted by the University of New Orleans Hospitality Research Center for the New Orleans Convention & Visitors Bureau and New Orleans Tourism Marketing Corporation. New Orleans' hospitality industry leaders are being cautiously optimistic about the findings and predictions for 2009, citing that the U.S. economic environment changed radically at the end of

2008. "It is encouraging that our aggressive sales, marketing, public relations, branding and advocacy work has resulted in increased visitor spending, and annual visitor numbers that are closer to pre-Katrina levels of 8.5 million," says J. Stephen Perry, president and CEO of the New Orleans CVB. "However, the national environment for leisure and business travel, as well as attendance at our booked meetings, remains extremely unpredictable. We must continue our work to secure funding for marketing and promotion, help build attendance

for meetings and conventions and create compelling reasons for visitors to choose New Orleans." Tourism in New Orleans employs 78,000 people and generates \$5 billion in visitor spending. neworleanscvb.com