

SLAVITTER TO CHAIR 2009 NTA CONVENTION

NTA Chairman and CEO **Randy Julian** recently announced that **Suzanne Slavitter** will be the 2009 Annual Convention Chair. The event will take place in Reno, Nevada, Nov. 14–18. Slavitter is the co-owner of **Sports Empire Inc.**, a Lakewood, California-based sports and special events tour company, and is president of The Empire Consulting Group. She has served on the NTA Leadership Team and as a member of various association committees.

Slavitter will follow **Bob Hofmann** of **Broadway Inbound** in New York City, who will chair the 2007 Convention in Kansas City, Missouri (Nov. 2–6), and **John Shaffer** of **Luray Caverns** in Luray, Virginia, who will chair the 2008 Convention in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (Nov. 15–19).

TOURISM CARES MATCHES GRANT

Tourism Cares, as part of a matching funding program, recently awarded a grant of \$46,000 to the Lough Gur Environment and Conservation Trust in County Limerick, Ireland. The funds will be used to continue conservation efforts at the Christian Stone Forts of Carraig Aille, a 6th- to 11th-century AD medieval ruin and archaeological site.

Twelve tour operator members of United States Tour Operators Association, many of whom also belong to NTA, contributed \$2,000 each, which was matched by Tourism Cares. These funds were in turn matched by Limerick County, Ireland and the Shannon Development Corporation.

The contributing tour operators were **Brendan Worldwide Vacations, Celtic Tours, CIE International, Collette Vacations, Globus & Cosmos, GOGO Worldwide Vacations, Insight Vacations, Mayflower Tours, Sceptre Ireland, Tauck World Discovery, Trafalgar Tours and Travel Connection.**

OHR-O'KEEFE MUSEUM NAMED BENEFACTOR

The NTA Board of Directors has selected the **Ohr-O'Keefe Museum of Art** in Biloxi, Mississippi, as the recipient of the funds NTA members raised for the Tourism Cares Gulf Coast Restoration Fund Grant. These monies were collected during a luncheon at the 2005 Convention in Detroit, at which delegates placed donations into baskets on each table; more than \$4,000 was raised for this fund. The Ohr-O'Keefe Museum has a special place in the hearts of the volunteers who participated in the 2006 Tourism Cares for America Gulf Coast Cleanup event as many worked at the devastated site. To learn more about Tourism Cares and its programs, please visit www.tourismcares.org.

SAN FRANCISCO CVB WINS AWARD, ZAHNER MOVES, HOOPS JOINS

The federal government has awarded the **San Francisco CVB** an Export Achievement Award for its international tourism outreach. The award comes from the U.S. Commercial Service, a division of the U.S. Department of Commerce. The U.S. Commercial Service worked with the San Francisco CVB to promote San Francisco abroad. The partnership resulted in positive press coverage about San Francisco in "emerging markets in Asia, Europe and South America," the bureau said in a written statement.

In personnel news, CVB spokesman **Tim Zahner** announced in December he was leaving to head up communications for the visitors bureau of Sonoma County, California, while **Leonard Hoops** was appointed executive vice president, sales and marketing for the CVB. In this newly created position, Hoops oversees four divisions of the SFCVB: convention sales and

services, marketing, tourism and public relations. He previously held the position of senior vice president and chief marketing officer with the Sacramento CVB, which he joined in 2001. In 2006, Hoops was named one of the "25 Most Extraordinary Sales & Marketing Minds in Hospitality & Travel" by the Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association International.

FIVE IN A ROW FOR SAN DIEGO

For the fifth year in a row, the **San Diego CVB** was awarded the prestigious 2006 Gold Service ELITE designation by readers of *M & C Magazine*, a distinction recognizing the nation's top five bureaus. Readers made their selections based on professionalism of staff; support on hotel and site inspections; assistance with ground transportation planning; guidance on local attractions; and liaison with local vendors and services. The San Diego CVB has won the ELITE award every year since *M & C* created it in 2002.

LAKE TAHOE RANKED TOP SKI DESTINATION

The Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority announced that Travelzoo, a global Internet media company, recently listed Lake Tahoe, California, as the No. 1 ski destination in North America. Subscribers voted for destinations that they had visited and would recommend to others, and Travelzoo editors ranked the most popular destinations for skiing, overall winter recreation and non-ski activities. More than 6,500 Travelzoo subscribers ranked Tahoe their top choice.

RICHMOND CVB HIRES, PROMOTES

The Richmond (Virginia) Metropolitan CVB named **Jennifer Carnam** vice president of marketing. Carnam previously served as vice president, project development direc-

tor, for the Southeastern Institute of Research in Richmond. She brings more than 25 years of marketing experience in the travel/tourism, hospitality and entertainment industries to RMCVB. The organization also announced the promotion Katherine O'Donnell to the newly created position of director of marketing. She had previously served as publications manager.

EMBASSY SUITES OPENS IN MEXICO

Embassy Suites Hotels opened its first hotel in Mexico in November 2006, the Embassy Suites Hotel Mexico City–Reforma. The 18-story, 162-suite boutique hotel, located in the heart of the business and financial

district, is the first all-suite hotel in Mexico City.

“The hotel’s incredible location in the heart of the Reforma business and financial district, coupled with all the amenities Embassy Suites has to offer, will be a refreshing addition to the Mexico City hotel portfolio for visitors traveling on business and/or leisure to the Mexican capital,” said **Jim Holthouser**, senior vice president, brand management, Embassy Suites Hotels.

Among many amenities offered to its guests, services at the Embassy Suites Hotel Mexico City–Reforma include a concierge, currency exchange, 24-hour room service, transportation and Mexico City tour services.

LITTLE ROCK TOURS HAS NEW FACILITY AND DIRECTOR

Little Rock Tours announced its move to a new Interstate 30 facility in downtown Little Rock, Arkansas. The 13,800-square-foot facility is located at 3100 Interstate 30, next to Ryder Transportation Services. The move will enable the company to house its administrative offices and its bus garage in the same location, as well as open up a maintenance and dumping facility to other motorcoach operators who visit the area. The company also hired **LeJuan Washington** as its new director of operations. Washington resigned as manager of Coach USA to join the staff at Little Rock Tours. ■

uncork. bold. harvest. crisp. bright. cheer.

uncork | ,ən-ˈkɔrk | *verb*

1. to free from a sealed or constrained state
2. to draw the cork from

Uncork a wealth of knowledge and experience (and fun!) at the NTA Spring Meet.

Mark your calendar to join us in Kelowna, British Columbia, located in the heart of the Okanagan wine region, at the 2007 NTA Tour Operator Spring Meet, April 26-28.

Education, new partnerships and a gorgeous backdrop await you.

