

INDUSTRY UPDATE

Staff, Meeting Attendees Rally In Wake of San Diego Area Fires

OFFICIALS FROM THE SAN Diego Convention Center Corporation mobilized resources to ensure attendees, exhibitors, and meeting planners were updated on the impact of the devastating fires in the San Diego County region in October.

Only one large group, Sharp Healthcare's annual employee meeting, expected to attract 12,000-14,000 local attendees, cancelled its event at the convention center due to the fires. Attendees, primarily health-care providers from the San Diego region, were asked to marshal resources in response to the fires.

The more than 6,000 attendees who participated in the American Society of Human Genetics (ASHG) annual meeting <http://www.ashg.org/genetics/ashg/menu-annmeet.shtml> at the downtown convention center ended their meeting Oct. 27, but not before taking extra efforts to help local citizens hard hit by the fires.

Event attendees freed up hotel rooms for evacuees by doubling up on sleeping rooms, volunteered to provide medical assistance, and ASHG launched a fund to help provide additional resources to local relief efforts.

"We have been deeply touched by and appreciative of the incredible efforts made by ASHG attendees, exhibitors, as well



OPEN FOR BUSINESS: San Diego Mayor Jerry Sanders, at podium, San Diego Convention Center Corporation President and CEO Carol Wallace, and San Diego CVB President and CEO David Peckinpugh spoke at a press conference Oct. 27.

as ASHG meeting organizers who have gone above and beyond in their efforts to support the relief efforts," said Carol Wallace, president and CEO of the San Diego Convention Center Corporation.

Beginning Oct. 28, the National Association of Housing & Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO), with approximately 2,000 attendees, held its three-day conference in the convention center. The next meeting at the center was the Society for Neuroscience, with 32,000 attendees, from Nov. 3-7.

These three events alone are forecast to generate more than \$150 million in economic impact to San Diego and contribute nearly \$2.5 million in tax revenue.

MILI, the Meeting Industry Ladies Invitational, also went off without a hitch on the courses at La Costa Resort & Spa in Carlsbad, Calif., Oct. 28-31. According to MILO (Meetings Industry Ladies Organization) President Jo Ann Hoffman, the San Diego CVB as well as the entire community was "tickled that we

continued to hold our event." In response to the wildfire crisis, MILI switched charities and donated clothing and other needed articles to the local Red Cross, as was recommended by the San Diego CVB. ■

By Peggy Swisher

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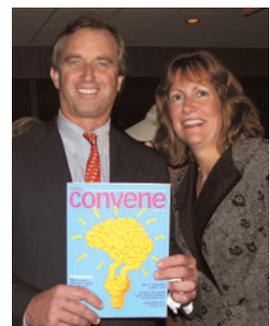
Hawaii Brings Attendance Program to China

June Matsumoto, Hawaii Convention Center's (HCC) director of international sales and marketing, was in Beijing and Shanghai, Oct. 22 - 26 to promote the center's international attendance-building program to key Chinese travel agencies with connections to potential delegates. Matsumoto, along with a HCC representative in China, met with the tourism and commerce departments at the U.S. Embassy to present the program. The HCC is focusing on bringing Chinese delegates to

the following conventions in Hawaii:

- ▶ Society of Critical Care Medicine (SCCM) — February 2008
- ▶ Pediatric Academic Societies (PAS)/Asian Society for Pediatric Research (ASPR) — May 2008
- ▶ World Brewing Congress — October 2008.

Editor's Note: Read more about Hawaii Convention Center's attendance-building program in the July 2007 issue of Convene.



Convene's Andrea Doyle met Robert F. Kennedy Jr. at the Hackensack Riverkeeper Awards Celebration Oct. 11. He holds the issue with his interview.

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