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Association Forum Responds to Meetings Crisis

Plans Educational Event to Help Members Recession-Proof Their Meetings

CHICAGO – In response to the global economic crisis, which has put tremendous strain on associations' events, the Association Forum of Chicagoland has developed a special seminar to help association executives recession-proof their meetings and conventions.

Titled "Managing Association Meetings and Conventions in a Recession Economy," the two-hour program will take place Tuesday, April 28, 2009, from 3 p.m. until 5 p.m. at the InterContinental Chicago Hotel, which is located at 505 N. Michigan Ave. in downtown Chicago.

"Associations rely heavily on revenue from meetings and conventions, which their members find invaluable in times like these thanks to the career-advancing opportunities that they offer in the way of networking and education," said Christie Tarantino, CAE, president & CEO of the Forum. "Unfortunately, the economic downturn is forcing organizations across the board to cut personnel as well as budgets — which translates into fewer attendees at association meetings and less revenue with which to provide the professional development opportunities that are needed to jumpstart the U.S. economy."

Because members of the media and of Congress have criticized meetings expenditures by recipients of federal economic aid, the economic challenges facing association meetings are especially pronounced.

"Because they want to appear conservative, many companies have suspended corporate travel to legitimate meetings and events," Tarantino said. "That puts the onus on associations more than ever to deliver valuable content to their attendees, and to market their meetings as essential business-building resources. Our April 28 event will show them step by step how to do exactly that."

Moderated by *Meeting Mentor* Publisher Peter Shure, "Managing Association Meetings and Conventions in a Recession Economy" will feature panelists Bruce Harris, founder of Conferon, now Experient; Richard B. Green, Vice President, Association Business Development and Strategic Partnerships, Marriott International; Paula Goedert, Partner, Barnes & Thornburg LLP; and Lise A. Puckorius, Senior Vice President, SmithBucklin.

Together, panelists will discuss challenges facing association meetings — including attendance and attrition — and offer solutions for addressing them.

For more information, or to register for the event, visit www.associationforum.org.

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ABOUT THE FORUM

The mission of the Association Forum of Chicagoland is to “advance the professional practice of association management.” Founded in 1916, the Forum serves 47,000 association professionals whose efforts in turn serve more than 37 million members and generate \$11 billion in annual expenditures.