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FOR THE RECORD

"Spring is far more than just a changing of seasons; it's a rebirth of the spirit."

—Toni Sorenson

FOLLOWING AN INNOVATIVE AND HIGHLY RATED European Meetings & Events Conference (EMEC) in Copenhagen, MPI has roared into spring. We started strong by hosting 245 volunteer chapter leaders at our annual Chapter Business Summit (Page 28). Next, we joined the rest of the industry to celebrate the first Global Meetings Industry Day (GMID, Page 22), as we proudly watched this grassroots concept—started 20 years ago by MPI Canada—grow to now include nearly 100 events on five continents. Then, with our strategic partner IMEX, we delivered cutting-edge education and engaged with our community in Frankfurt.

We also signed a letter initiated by the Human Rights Campaign urging for the repeal of a

law in North Carolina that overturned protections for the LGBT community—a human rights issue relevant to our membership. As recently there has been an increasing prevalence of this kind of legislation, I want to make sure our membership is well informed about MPI's position on diversity and the role we can play as a professional association in political issues.

Unequivocally, our association welcomes and celebrates diversity, and we condemn discrimination of any kind. As stated in our Principles of Professionalism, we "embrace and foster an inclusive business climate of respect for all peoples regardless of national origin, race, religion, sex, marital status, age, sexual orientation, physical or mental impairment."

However, as a professional association, it is important to understand that MPI is not a political or cause-related organization. It is not in our charter to advocate for political issues, except where they directly impact the meeting and event industry. This means that while we may take umbrage with new laws that are discriminatory, we are limited in the lobbying actions we can take; but we can issue public statements, write and/or sign letters of support and produce editorial.

Finally, in an effort to elevate the professionalism of the global meeting and event community and in support of our mission, we expanded our Professional Development Roadmap with the launch of an additional introductory-level

program for those new to our industry and/or exploring career options. Our new Meeting Fundamentals course covers the basics of meeting planning such as budgets, RFPs and site selection, with participants receiving six clock hours.

This is just one of many offerings we provide for professionals engaged in our industry. For example, at this year's World Education Congress (WEC) we will deliver more than 80 education sessions covering a wide spectrum of topics for all meeting and event professionals, from beginners to senior planners, experiential marketers and executives. Most sessions are aligned to the CMP International Standards and eligible for clock hours. We received a 98 percent satisfaction rating for our educational programming at WEC 2015 and look forward to high ratings this year as well.

To learn more about the depth and diversity of MPI's educational and professional development offerings, please visit our website and explore the Professional Development Roadmap, as well as the program for WEC 2016.



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