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## • Conference Reports

### Building for Tomorrow

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The Society of Travel and Tourism Educators (STTE) held its annual conference from 14 to 17 October, 1993, in Miami. Founded in 1980 with 15 members, the purpose of STTE is to increase professional knowledge of educators in the tourism field through interaction. Today's membership has grown to over 300 with members from all regions of the United States and abroad. The 1993 conference participants were from US, UK, New Zealand, Canada, and Germany. STTE maintains a keen interest in both education and research issues and there were parallel sessions in these two areas.

The theme of this year's conference, *Building For Tomorrow*, was intended to help high school teachers, and their students prepare for the future needs in various tourism sectors. One way the conference addressed these future needs was to sponsor an "Educational Choice Fair," which promoted a closer work-

ing relationship between high schools (both teachers and students) and college educators and professionals in tourism.

The conference sessions dealt with sustainable tourism: issues and challenges, international perspectives on tourism marketing research, emerging issues in tourism research (two sessions), new perspective on tourism marketing, and education, research and industry interface in tourism.

On sustainable tourism, Jerome Agrusa (Texas A&M University, USA) gave a presentation about eco-friendly methods of resource preservation and conservation, to ensure sustainable tourism development. He argued that tourists are becoming increasingly sensitive to the ecological practices of tourism-related organizations and concluded that advertising messages should cite the eco-friendly practices of the firm, in order to differentiate from other firms and thus to attract more tourists.

Brian Wheeler's (University of Birmingham, UK) provocative presentation on "Eco or Ego Tourism: Marketing the Ego" suggested that ecotourism had become a convenient bandwagon for marketers to jump upon, permitting them to cynically exploit the ecotourism message and intent. The reality, however, is that neither the operator nor the "eco-friendly" tourist was prepared to put up with the costs and inconveniences of real ecotourism.

Gary Russell's (Auckland Institute of Technology, New Zealand) presentation gave a more optimistic view of ecotourism. He advocated the need to teach ecotourism as a philosophy of life, rather than as a series of techniques and urged educators not to be shy about proselytizing the message of ecotourism. Robert O'Halloran (University of Denver, USA) also felt that ecotourism need not be an oxymoron. In his view, both tourists and operators were guilty of sins of omission, rather than commission. He suggested the adoption of a code of ethics that would promote ecotourism by informing people what it is and how to practice it.

A. V. Seaton (University of Strathclyde, UK) presented the preliminary findings of his four-nation study of the comparative roles of children and parents in vacation decision-making. The study found that children were involved in the decision-making process in all four countries. Further, those children who were not involved in the process were more likely to be unhappy with the family vacation. Continuing in the international vein, Nadini Nadkarni (Purdue University, USA) presented a study of Japanese tourists visiting North America. It was found that the younger generation of tourists, and those with a greater command of the English language, were more likely to be independent travelers. The older generation, lacking a knowledge of English, preferred the comparative security of escorted tours.

Legalized gambling, euphemistically called "gaming," is becoming widespread in the United States. Kathy H. C. Hsu (Iowa State University, USA) found that residents had a favorable perception of the social and economic impacts of riverboat casinos. In fact, residents complained about the restrictions placed on the amounts they could bet. They felt that these restrictions interfered with their rights to make their own choices.

Michael Evans' (Appalachian State University, USA) analysis of the tourism promotion materials of the United States shows that all 50 states had catchy tourism slogans. However, in most cases, these slogans did not serve either to differentiate the offering or to identify why a tourist should vacation there. On the same lines, Linda Lowry (University of Massachusetts, USA) found that sexually suggestive photographs in tourism promotion literature, while arousing interest, failed to differentiate the destinations or to identify what is unique to each. Bharath Josiam (University of Wisconsin-Stout, USA) gave a presentation on influencing consumer choice. He concluded that the introduction of a carefully constructed decoy into a choice set, would influence consumers to select a targeted item.

Gerald Showalter (Ball State University, USA) spoke about the growing trend among cruiseship operators to stop only at private islands, in order to avoid paying port fees and as to avoid the crime and harassment that their clients may face in many ports. He pointed out that this practice is controversial, as it results in minimal interaction between tourists and residents, reduces economic benefits of tourism to residents, and could potentially create environmental problems in visited islands. Finally, Pauline Sheldon (University of Hawaii, USA) introduced a relatively new tourism bulletin board called TRINET (Tourism Research Information Network) and how it facilitates research and dissemination of information among its subscribers.

Overall the conference was a success, with more than 350 educators participating in over 30 academic and research sessions. In addition, the conference featured the first ever "Educational Choices Fair" where over 500 high school and community college travel and tourism students participated in a trade show and educational program.

For copies of conference proceedings or information about future conferences, contact the Society of Travel and Tourism Educators, Joann M. Bruss, 19364 Woodcrest, Harper Woods MI, 48225, USA. □ □

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## Tourism Planning and Development in Asia

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The Asian Productivity Organization (APO), headquartered in Japan, sponsored a seminar on tourism planning and development in Jakarta, Indonesia, from 23 August to 3 September 1993. The local host was the National Productivity Center of Indonesia. Nineteen Asian-Pacific countries were represented by government tourism ministry officials and national tourism organization executives. They included Pakistan to the west, the Maldives to the south, Mongolia to the north, the five ASEAN countries, and Fiji, Western Samoa, and the Cook Islands from the east. China and Vietnam, which are not members of the APO, and Singapore were the only notable absentees from the Asian region. The objective of the seminar was to "give participants an insight into the factors that have to be considered in the planning and development of the tourism industry to ensure that it is competitive, effectively contributing to national socioeconomic goals, and adaptative to changing travelers demands." Its format was the presentation of country papers, followed by a series of papers on the Indonesian experience in tourism planning and development, and field visits to theme parks located close to Jakarta.

The 19 national papers constitute a comprehensive and up-to-date collection of information on the state of tourism planning and tourism development in Asia. Each paper provided an overview of the tourism industry of the country and then focused on two or three specific issues confronting tourism planners. Thus, the challenge for Mongolia is to incorporate tourism planning