



August 31, 2020

On behalf of all of us at MCHA, I want to extend our deepest sympathies to those whose health and well-being have been compromised by the Coronavirus outbreak as well as the Monterey County Fires.

The impact of the pandemic and fire is indiscriminate. Many facets of our lives – our families, our businesses, our communities – have been upended, and we’re only just beginning to realize the repercussions across the global economy.

To say that these last few months have been challenging would be an understatement. Many of the industries that have been hardest hit are the ones that MCHA directly supports meetings and events, hospitality, and corporate travel. We are part of a vibrant industry that deeply believes in the power of live events and face-to-face meetings, and yet we now find ourselves in this new normal – at least for the short-term – of social distancing and isolation. As an Association, we feel a responsibility to try to provide perspective around the question everyone is asking: “How do we bounce back?”

We learn, we adapt, and we collaborate. As we navigate the uncertain times ahead, I can confidently say that the only way through is together. **We prepare now for the better times ahead.**

What we’ve learned over the years is that great leaders, great businesses, and great industries are forged through networking. Ours is such an industry. In 45 years at MCHA our association has been through numerous events that put incredible pressure on all of us. The dotcom bubble burst shocked the economy then we were hit immediately by the tragedy of September 11th, and the subsequent blow to the travel sector. We held on tight through the financial downturn of 2008. Following all of these events, the industry rallied and came back stronger than ever, and that’s what will happen again.

Before looking ahead, we fully understand the need to manage the present. Over the course of the last several months, hotel sales teams and the MCCVB have connected with thousands of our clients – event planners, marketers, travel managers, – to hear from them first-hand about what they’re feeling. We’ve listened to their concerns and worked through their challenges alongside them. Most importantly, we continue to learn more about their needs than ever before – a silver lining during this period of uncertainty.

Through these conversations, we’ve learned that, just like events, no two situations are exactly alike. We don’t have a “one size fits all” approach. **At MCHA, we treat**



**collaboration as an active ingredient in all our successes** – how we respond to COVID-19 is no different. If you want to know what we are seeing in the marketplace, call us. If you want advice on how to navigate through these tough times, let us know. If you want a playbook on how to recover when things inevitably improve, we're here to help.

While we're working remotely, we are staying connected.

As an association and industry, we have embraced many local programs in support of our employees that have been furloughed, laid off or recently evacuated. One program that has served our industry directly is *All in Monterey*. They have over the past several months offered food, clothing, and toiletries to hospitality employees in need every Wednesday from 3pm - 6pm at Seaside High School. Many of our member hotels and vendors have provided food and volunteer hours to assist. If you would like more information on how to help, please email [All.In.Monterey@gmail.com](mailto:All.In.Monterey@gmail.com).

Key to serving our customers is ensuring the health and well-being of our 25,000+ employees and their families. To accomplish this, we have taken steps to ensure their safety and have adjusted our housekeeping protocols and implemented additional sanitation protocols that touch every aspect of the guest journey.

As we weather this storm together, let's remember to take pride in our incredible industry and the crucial impact it has on economies big and small. Meetings and events boost the global GDP by more than \$1.5 trillion and impact nearly 26 million jobs. The economic significance of our industry is undeniable.

**People are now realizing how important our industry truly is, and it'll rise again.** We'll be with you every step of the way as it does. Collaboration and knowledge-sharing are critical to our collective success, and we stand ready to offer our passion, share our expertise, and deliver solutions to help you – and the industry – not just to recover, but thrive, in the months and years ahead.

Stay Safe,

Jeroen Gerrese  
Chair MCHA