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INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF AMUSEMENT PARKS AND ATTRACTIONS (IAAPA)

BY

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the role of IAAPA in the leisure industry.

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF AMUSEMENT PARKS AND ATTRACTIONS (IAAPA)

Amusement parks and attractions offer visitors a necessary commodity in today's world. That commodity is fun-clean, safe fun. Representing these permanently located amusement operations is the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA). Founded in the early 1900's as the National Association of Amusement Parks, the association today represents all of the major amusement parks and attractions in the United States as well as facilities from 38 other countries.

A membership service organization, the IAAPA has more than 1,250 members of which some 450 are amusement facilities including corporate-owned theme parks, family-owned operations, waterparks and arcades. The remainder of the membership is composed of industry manufacturers and suppliers, concessionaires and individuals with a vested interest in the industry.

Among the purposes of the IAAPA are promoting progress and development in the amusement parks and attractions industry, collecting and disseminating management information, sponsoring conventions and educational exhibits for its industry members and promoting the welfare of the industry and public which it serves.

Each leisure industry organization has its own area of emphasis. For the IAAPA, the emphasis is on the operational aspects of the amusement business. Convention workshops and the monthly publication concentrate on the "how to." But while each leisure organization has its own particular interests, there is cooperation among the organizations on matters of mutual concern. The IAAPA has held membership in related organizations and over the years has joined with them in a variety of ways—from developing informal networks to drafting testimony together for presentation before government bodies. Two examples which illustrate

areas of mutual concern are highway signs and energy restrictions.

The amusement park and attraction industry in the United States alone employs more than 200,000 teenagers, making the industry one of the country's largest employers of young people. An average annual attendance of 170 million suggests that amusement parks and attractions play an important role in the American lifestyle. Amusement parks have not only survived but in many instances prospered during times of world strife, economic recessions and energy crises, possibly because they offer a safe, clean, wholesome and fun escape from everyday stresses.

Governed by an executive committee and board of directors, the IAAPA maintains an international headquarters in suburban Chicago, Illinois, and a government relations office in Washington, D.C. Ken Wynne, Jr., of Casino Pier, Seaside Heights, New Jersey, is the 1983 president whose theme for the year is the "Pursuit of Happiness."

For more than 60 years, the IAAPA has been providing a forum for the exchange of information within the industry and fostering its continued growth and development. By keeping abreast of the trends of society in general and the industry in particular, the IAAPA will continue to promote the progress of the industry by offering its members access to new products, new ideas and new methods of operations.