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RCRA

THE RESORT AND COMMERCIAL RECREATION ASSOCIATION: BUILDING UPON A DECADE OF GROWTH

BY

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The Resort and Commercial Recreation Association (RCRA) was founded in 1981 by a small group of individuals with a desire to create a network for sharing ideas in an emerging field. Originally, the majority of RCRA members were recreation managers from resorts in the southeastern states. Since that time, membership has grown explosively to include commercial recreation practitioners from throughout the United States as well as Canada and several Caribbean countries. Members now include professionals from Cruise Lines, Sports Clubs, Theme Parks, Campgrounds, Ski Resorts, Tourism & Convention Bureaus, Timeshare Resorts, Special Events Companies and Residential Homeowners Associations. In addition, there are now 56 different colleges or universities with student and faculty members having RCRA membership. Overall, there are about 1,000 members.

Today, RCRA strives to improve all facets of the industry by facilitating communication, promoting professionalism, and providing continuing education opportunities. The services to members are explained below.

RCRA Newsletter: Each month, this informative publication contains articles pertaining to RCRA events, industry trends, research briefs, book reviews, job opportunities, program ideas, revenue opportunities, and more.

Management Strategies: RCRA members automatically receive this quarterly publication, which provides insightful articles about employee motivation, public relations, leadership, strategic planning, legal issues in management, etc.

Membership Directory: This powerful networking tool lists all members by RCRA region.

National Convention: As the highlight event of the year, the convention features 24 educational sessions, a research symposium, and educators caucus, social events, a job mart, product and service exhibits, resort property tours, and information exchange tables.

Research Symposium: As part of the annual conference there are two hours of refereed research presentations, with a printed proceedings.

Educators Caucus: An hour is reserved for educators to discuss topics of mutual concern in an open session.

Job and Internship Mart: A conference "must" for students, there are typically 15 to 20 employers recruiting for internships and/or full time positions. About 80 positions/internships are usually open.

Internship Directory: Available in printed form or on computer disk, this year's directory lists contracts and internship particulars for over 200 resorts and/or recreation businesses.

Program Exchange: This service allows members to solicit and trade information about new programs and topics of specific concern to their area.

Regional Workshops: Several of the RCRA regions conduct regional workshops to address programs and topics of specific concern to their area.

Scholarship Program: Each year RCRA offers tuition assistance to a worthy student member. In addition, many students earn conference fee reductions through assisting as education session hosts, registration assistants, etc.

This year RCRA sponsored a survey of commercial recreation and tourism educators in which their expectations of RCRA were assessed. A total of fifty five educators responded to the survey. Rated as "important" or "extremely important" were the following RCRA services: Membership Directory, Internship Directory, Annual Conference, RCRA Newsletter, Educators Caucus, and Research Symposium. In addition, there were many excellent ideas generated for RCRA conference sessions and improvements to RCRA services. In general, it appears that educators want RCRA to reach a higher level of academic sophistication. This could be achieved through higher quality in the Research Symposium, through publishing the Symposium papers, through sponsorship of research projects, and through publishing a research journal, case studies, and/or management aids. It should be noted that progress in some of these matters is already occurring; the Symposium presentations were subject to the most rigorous review to date, and they are published in this issue of VISIONS IN LEISURE AND BUSINESS.

The RCRA Board of Directors has, through its actions this year, made a commitment to its academic members. It expanded the time slot for the Research Symposium, provided a separate time slot for the educators caucus, and scheduled three conference sessions specifically oriented toward educators. We should expect this progress to continue, since an educator, Dr. Howard Uibel (Eastern Washington University), is RCRA

President for the 1990-91 year.

For persons interested in becoming an RCRA member call or write:

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