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Conferences Worth £6.5M Help Edinburgh Weather the Deep Freeze

Business tourism has delivered some early Christmas Cheer to deep freeze Edinburgh.

A total of nineteen new meetings valued at an estimated £6.5M to the local economy have been confirmed in the past month. (3 November – December 6)

A further boost to the city, despite temperatures plunging to -10C, is that there are no reports of any major conferences being cancelled according to the Edinburgh Convention Bureau (ECB).

The nineteen new events reported by the ECB are anticipated to involve up to 4732 delegates and cover topics as diverse as physics & astronomy, biochemistry and echocardiography.

The ECB reports that the economic value of confirmed conferences so far this year now stands at £53.4 million.

Sue Stuart, Chief Executive of ECB, said: "The early onslaught of winter weather has as yet not had any significant impact on conferences due to be held in the city. That's good news for the local economy. So far we have had a good year in helping attract meetings to the city and I'm confident we will achieve our target of bookings with a total economic value of £75.7M confirmed by the end of the financial year in April 2011."

The pleasing performance of Edinburgh as a business tourism destination is in line with the latest tourism figures presented by Destination Marketing Edinburgh Alliance (DEMA) to Edinburgh City Council's Economic Development Department.

The DEMA report shows that in the first nine months of the year the average room occupancy was 77.4%, up from 75.5% in 2009. Within the UK, Edinburgh's room occupancy is now surpassed only by Greater London where it stands at 81.3%.

Meanwhile visitor numbers to Edinburgh Castle, the National Museum of Scotland and the National War Museum have risen by 4.45%. The 2010 Fringe Festival attracted 1,955,913 visitors, 5% more than last year.

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Airport passenger numbers have decreased by almost 5% due mainly to a dramatic decline in the second quarter when volcanic dust from Iceland led to the closure of European airspace. However passenger numbers in the third quarter of this year were 0.8% higher than in 2009.

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Editors Notes

- ECB helped win 257 conferences during 2009/10 worth £74.2 million to the economy.
- Edinburgh is the most popular UK city after London for hosting international association meetings and is the 36th most popular business tourism destination in the world.
- In order to count towards ICCA ranking an event must rotate its location between a minimum of two countries and have at least 50 (international) delegates.
- The annual total value of Edinburgh's business tourism is estimated at almost £300 million.
- The Edinburgh Ambassadors Programme matches recognised leaders in the city's many areas of academic and commercial excellence with the professional marketing support of ECB staff who together work as a team to help them bring their international association's conference to Edinburgh. Since 1996 the programme has helped bring more than 210 major events, worth almost £100 million, to the city.
- Edinburgh is a founder member of the international **www.bestcities.net** strategic alliance, which aims to guarantee the meetings industry the world's best service experience in each of the member cities (Cape Town, Copenhagen, Dubai, Edinburgh, Melbourne, San Juan, Singapore, Vancouver).
- To learn more about ECB visit www.conventionedinburgh.com

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