

BESTCITIES ANNOUNCES NEW BOARD for 2012

BestCities Global Alliance is pleased to announce the appointment of Jerad Bachar as Board Chair for 2012. As Director of the Dubai Convention Bureau and Chair of the Global Leadership Advisory Council . Destination Marketing Association International (DMAI), Mr Bachar brings a wealth of leadership and industry experience to the position.

Mr Bachar said that he was delighted to take on the role and follow in the footsteps of his predecessor, David Frandsen CEO of the Cape Town and Western Cape Convention Bureau, who stepped down from the position in August.

The past twelve months has been extremely productive with more business development initiatives and activities than ever before and I am looking forward to continuing the work that David, and previous Board Chairs, has started.

One of Mr Bachar's first roles as Board Chair was to officially welcome new preliminary partners, Berlin and Houston, to the Alliance.

The inclusion of not one, but two new cities to the BestCities network illustrate the strong, international standing that BestCities has amongst the world's top convention destinations. Berlin and Houston not only bring further caché to the Alliance but opens up even more diverse and exciting options within Europe and North America, said Mr Bachar.

As a leading alliance among destination marketing organisations, BestCities has a level of dedication and involvement among the member destinations that is truly remarkable, said Mr Bachar. As the Alliance continues to grow with new cities and stronger ROI from Business Development it will continue to build momentum to be the strongest alliance anywhere.

Joining Mr Bachar on the 2012 Board are: Lars Bernhard Jørgensen, Managing Director of Wonderful Copenhagen, Calvyn Gilfellan, CEO of Cape Town Routes Unlimited, Sue Stuart, Marketing Edinburgh Convention Bureau, Melissa Ow, Assistant CEO Singapore Tourism Board and Rick Antonson, President and CEO of Tourism Vancouver. Lisa Altieri is the current Board representative of the Puerto Rico Convention Bureau.

Three new faces will also join the Board in 2012: Karen Bolinger, the new CEO at the Melbourne Convention + Visitors Bureau, Greg Ortale President and CEO of the Greater Houston Convention and Visitors Bureau and Kieker Burkhard CEO of VistBerlin.

A fitting end to this year are the results from the 2011 Association Executive Survey which reported 54% of respondents rating a destination's membership of BestCities as **important** or **very important**. About 70% considered BestCities LRQA certification as **important** or **very important** and 54% said that of all the benefits provided by BestCities, **confidence** and **reliability** were the most significant.

Completing the online survey not only helps to improve BestCities services and products, but also benefits the International Federation of Red Cross with a USD10.00 donation made for every completed survey.

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Note to Editors: BestCities is the first global alliance to put in place a certification programme – with standards certified by Lloyd's Register Quality Assurance (LRQA) - to ensure a consistent level of convention bureau service excellence from all partner cities. BestCities Partners are Cape Town, Copenhagen, Dubai, Edinburgh, Melbourne, San Juan, Singapore and Vancouver. Berlin and Houston joined the Alliance as preliminary members in October 2011 and will become full members in 2012.