

TICA Gets First President From Thai Private Sector

The Thailand Incentive and Convention Association has elected its first President from the Thai private sector. Mr Sumate Sudasna, Managing Director of Creative Destination Management (CDM), was elected unanimously by TICA's 36-member board of directors at its annual meeting on 08 April 2009.

Since its formation in 1984, the presidency of TICA, a private sector industry grouping specialising in the lucrative meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions (MICE) sector, has been traditionally held by the governor of the Tourism Authority of Thailand.

In a brief statement following his election, Mr Sumate noted that his priority agenda during his two-year tenure would be to rally everyone in the industry to restore confidence in the Thai MICE sector.

He said, "These are trying times for Thai travel & tourism which is facing the twin challenges of both local and global upheaval. We are going to have to deal with this as best as we can. No-one can afford a long and drawn-out downturn in business."

Mr Sumate entered the Thai travel industry in 1974 and has been specifically involved for 25 years in the M.I.C.E. sector. He set up CDM Thailand, a destination management company and professional convention organiser, in 1988, and has served TICA in various positions since its founding.

Mr Sumate has also headed the Society of Incentive and Travel Executives Thailand chapter. He was named World Incentive Travel Personality for Asia by the organisers of EIBTM and IT&ME in 1993 and was nominated SITE Member of the Year in 1995.

He said, "I plan to be a hands-on president and truly represent all of TICA's 281 members. I am sure they will respond with the same professionalism and enthusiasm that has helped Thailand maintain its competitive edge in the MICE sector over the years."

Mr Sumate said he would also seek to:

- Focus TICA's efforts in developing business from domestic sources, i.e. local corporations for events in Thailand and professional associations as well as government departments with potential to host international meeting events
- Enhance efforts on buyer relationship development
- Work closely with both the TAT and the Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau on trade shows, road shows and other promotional activities;
- Work with other Thai trade and industry bodies on business and service capacity development opportunities.

Other members of the new board include:

Vice President - Opas Netraumpai (Consultant, ITIM)

Vice President - Pornthip (Addie) Hirunkate (Managing Director, Destination Asia (Thailand) Ltd.

Vice President - Sansern Ngaorungsi, Executive Director East Asia Region, Tourism Authority of Thailand