

CONVENTION BUREAUS

Diann Bayes has been named vice-president of the San Angelo (Texas) Convention & Visitors Bureau. She most recently served as senior vice-president of membership services at the Texas Travel Industry Association.

Art Jimenez has been appointed executive director of tourism sales at the Reno-Sparks (Nevada) Convention & Visitors Authority. With more than 30 years of experience in tourism sales and marketing, Jimenez most recently served as vice-president of marketing for the



Art Jimenez

Travel Leaders Group. He also spent more than 17 years at the Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority in multiple leadership roles.

Samantha Swadish has been named director of marketing at Visit Phoenix. Swadish previously worked with Hilton and Waldorf Astoria properties, most recently at the Arizona Biltmore in Phoenix as marketing and public relations manager.

Jill Vance has been named director of sales at the Lee County (Florida) Visitor & Convention Bureau. Vance most recently served as group sales manager at the Westin Cape Coral Resort at Marina Village in Cape Coral, Florida. Prior to that, she served as director of sales and marketing for the Wyndham/Cleveland at Playhouse Square.

Keith Talbert has been hired as associate director of sales at the Oklahoma City Convention & Visitors Bureau. Talbert previously held several sales roles at Visit Wichita (Kansas) and served the Mid-Atlantic market at the Nashville (Tennessee) Convention & Visitors Corp.



Keith Talbert

Visit Milwaukee recently made several staff promotions. **Marissa Werner** has been promoted to senior sports and entertainment sales manager, **Lauren Hys** is now senior convention sales manager, and **Michelle Haider** has been appointed senior meeting and event-services manager. Werner was formerly the organization's sports and entertainment sales manager. She also served as an account executive with the NBA's Milwaukee Bucks. Hys has been with Visit Milwaukee since 2008 and previously worked at the Hyatt Regency/Milwaukee and the Pfister Hotel, also in Milwaukee. Haider most recently served as Visit Milwaukee's convention services manager.

GRAND OPENINGS

Pandora—the World of Avatar has opened at Walt Disney World in Orlando, Florida, just in time for the summer season. The project, the largest addition to Disney's Animal Kingdom, was more than five years in the making and was created through a partnership between Walt Disney Imagineering, James Cameron (the director of the film) and Cameron's company, Lightstorm Entertainment.

Other new attractions at Walt Disney World include the new "Happily Ever After" and "Once Upon a Time" shows at Magic Kingdom Park and a new live stage show at Disney's Hollywood Studios that celebrates the music, characters and

films from Pixar Animation Studios and will run through the summer months.

Groups meeting at Walt Disney World can hold events in the parks or at one of the four main convention spaces: Disney's Coronado Springs

Resort (which is undergoing a major expansion project), Disney's Yacht and Beach Club (which is also expanding its meeting space), Disney's Contemporary Resort and Disney Springs, which recently completed an expansion project. New event space at Disney Springs

includes restaurants such as Paddlefish, which opened earlier this year in a renovated steamboat and can accommodate groups of up to 1,000.

—Ann Shephird



Disney CEO Bob Iger, director James Cameron and the cast of "Avatar" attend the opening of Pandora.

HOSPITALITY & SUPPLIERS

Jane Davis has been appointed executive director of sales administration at the National Conference Center in Leesburg, Virginia. Davis has experience working in sales at the Willard InterContinental Washington, D.C., and as national account director for Salamander Hotels & Resorts.



Jane Davis

Rudy Tauscher has been named general manager of the Sofitel/New York in New York City. Tauscher has held sev-

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