

EXQUISITE TASTE MEETS AN EXTRAORDINARY VIEW

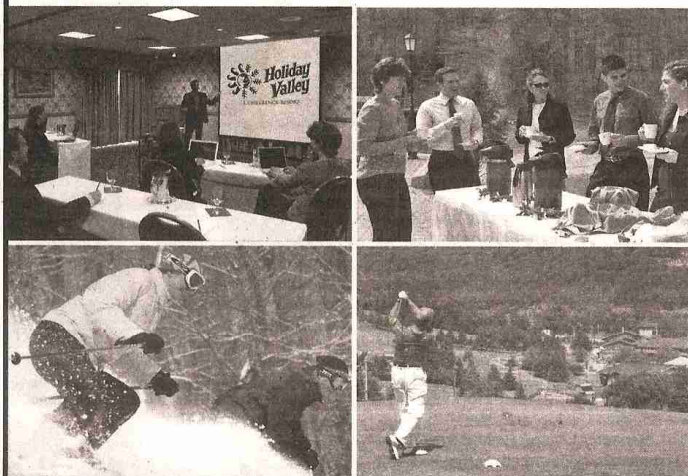
If it's not just the delicious entrees, then the view at the Top of the Falls makes it one of Buffalo's most memorable dining experiences. The casual dining restaurant overlooking Terrapin Point and the majestic Horseshoe Falls offers a full menu of American and regional culinary favorites. Open May through October, the floor to ceiling windows and outdoor dining decks allow for spectacular views whether dining indoors or out. Top of the Falls also can host up to 200 guests for banquets, wedding receptions, reunions or any special event. Whatever the occasion, it's definitely a dining

For more information or to book your next event, call 716-278-0337 or request for a proposal by visiting www.TopOfTheFalls.com

Ellicottville **Holiday Valley** Resort & Conference Center

Any Meeting ... Any Season ... Any Reason

Lodging for over 500 people • 20 Spacious Meeting Rooms
18 Hole, Par 70 Golf Course • Wi Fi in all Meeting Spaces
Fun Loving Village of Ellicottville



To schedule your site inspection contact Heather Adams at 716.699.2345 ext. 6003 or visit www.holidayvalley.com

Cost-efficient meetings a good deal for business

BY TERRI PARSELL HILMEY

Tracy Fletcher has been actively brainstorming with fellow meeting planners on a simple but vital question: How can we get more bang for our clients' bucks?

"The economy is definitely having an impact, and we've had some cancellations, especially meetings of the customer-appreciation sort," says Fletcher, incoming president of the Eastern Great Lakes Chapter of Meeting Professionals International. "But most of our clients are trying to find creative ways to do business as usual, while still saving money."

Fletcher says the "more inventive ideas that come out of this will set the bar for years." But what are those ideas? Here is a look at some:

• **Bigger can be better.** Fletcher has noted that some companies are making their meetings bigger, and trying to do more at once by combining meetings, to increase their negotiating ability with hotels and conference centers. "We can get better deals," she says. "When it comes to menus, and things like that, many of those costs can be pretty flexible. Doubling up also means fewer meetings during the course of the year, saving productive time as well."

• **Lean Six Sigma.** Nowadays, talk of Six Sigma has most people thinking about County Executive Chris Collins' effort to make the efficiency system part of the county government. But Kaleida Health, which is facing \$20 million in state and federal budget cuts, already went through the process improvement program from 2003-05. "We're pretty well-positioned to weather the storm," says Michael Hughes, a Kaleida vice president. One of Kaleida's strategies has been to streamline communication among executives at a dozen area locations. "We don't like to have to put them in a car and make them travel to a meeting," Hughes says. "We'll do a lot of conference calls and virtual meetings that save us time and don't cost much."



Hughes

• **Invest in creative technology.**



Collins



McCarthy

'The economy is definitely having an impact, and we've had some cancellations, especially meetings of the customer-appreciation sort.'

Tracy Fletcher
Incoming president, Eastern Great Lakes Chapter,
Meeting Professionals International

Marc Mussachio of Mussachio Architects has been conducting virtual meetings for the past few years, using a subscription with "GoToMeeting" that costs less than \$50 a month. It enables him to be on one computer while his client is on another, wherever that happens to be. Together they can examine schematics, floor plans, elevations, and so on. Either party can operate the mouse, to point something out, or make alterations. "It saves us, and the client, a lot of money in terms of travel," says Mussachio, "because we work with people all up and down the East Coast and into the Midwest."

• **Put the meeting on the road.** Wegmans has been using the "traveling roadshow" meeting concept. The grocer will put together a group of trainers, or directors, as the case may be, and send them to each region - Western and Central New York, Maryland, New Jersey and Virginia. This minimizes the time local managers spend away from their stores and families. "Now that we're in five different states - soon to be six - we've gotten really skilled at bringing the meetings to the people," says Ann McCarthy, consumer affairs manager. "We'll have them drive a short distance, instead of putting them on a plane and making them stay overnight. That way, they can invest their time in the content of the meeting, instead of getting to the meeting."

Terri Parsell HilmeY is a freelance writer.

BNA passenger counts up in '08

BY JAMES FINK

jfink@bizjournals.com | 716-541-1611

For the fifth consecutive year, the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority posted a record in terms of passengers using Buffalo Niagara International Airport.

NFTA officials said Jan. 15 the airport handled 5,526,301 passengers last year — 3.5 percent more than the 5.3 million the Cheektowaga facility handled in 2007. Since 2004, the NFTA has consistently hit new passenger counts at the airport.

The NFTA credits a number of factors including the presence of low-cost air carriers like JetBlue and Southwest that has attracted a record number of Canadian travelers as well as those from cities such as Rochester and Erie, Pa. Canadian travelers

account for more than 35 percent of the terminal's passenger count.

Still, because of the slow economy and other factors — including inclement weather — passenger counts were down in December, marking the third consecutive month that the number of fliers using the airport has decreased from the same period in 2007.

The airport handled 396,500 passengers in December, down 1.59 percent from December 2007.

"We were hit hard by the snowstorm that came just before Christmas," said Douglas Hartmayer, NFTA spokesman.

The storm, which came on the weekend of Dec. 19, brought air traffic at the airport to a crawl though the airport remained open and operational.