

22 September 2021



Greetings, everyone.

I hope you are all healthy and enjoying the first days of autumn. I have no idea where the time goes, but this year is flying by, which might be a good thing in some ways.

2021 has been another difficult year for everyone, and the travel industry has taken another hit, as you know. Even as things started to rebound, the Delta variant of COVID kicked in, and the number of COVID cases in the US have climbed.

Kathy Merchant and Scott Kendall, along with a host of volunteers, have been busy planning the IFWTWA 2021 conference. Having worked with them, I know how many hours they and their committees have put in to make this meeting a great one. We owe them a huge debt of gratitude.

When we started planning the conference earlier this year, none of us could have predicted where we would be in November. While we have been doing our best to proceed with planning in hopes that more members would be willing to travel for the conference, we are finding that that is not the case.

We completely understand the reluctance of members to travel to a state where COVID numbers are high and continue to climb. As board members, we have a responsibility to look out for both our members and IFWTWA. That responsibility includes safeguarding your health and the financial stability of the organization.

We have, therefore, had to decide what to do. Please understand that we do not come to any decision lightly and that we have had to take many things into consideration. Registrations have been low. Many members have told us they will not come to Florida at this time due to its COVID numbers. At least three sponsors would not send representatives due to the COVID numbers. We have to consider that sponsors sign on to the conference believing we will have a large attendance and they may not get even half of that. And, if we hold the conference in November under these conditions, the organization will lose thousands of dollars.

The IFWTWA Board of Directors has decided, therefore, to postpone the conference at this time. We are in talks with the hotel's management group and the city to come to a solution that is agreeable to all of us.

If you have already registered for the conference, we would like to offer you the opportunity to roll your conference fees over to the IFWTWA 2022 conference. You will be among the first to know when we have rescheduled the conference and how the rollover will work.

The board and I are very appreciative of your support and flexibility in this difficult time. The past 20 months have been hard on all of us. We appreciate your patience as we move forward.

For the IFWTWA Board of Directors,

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