



International Festivals & Events Association
IFEA World

STEVEN WOOD SCHMADER, CFEE

Steven Wood Schmader, CFEE, is the President & CEO of the International Festivals & Events Association (IFEA World), which celebrates 69 years as the “Premier Association Supporting and Enabling Festival & Event Professionals Worldwide” in 2024.

Schmader took the helm of the IFEA in May of 2001, moving the world headquarters of the organization to Boise, Idaho, in the United States. Effectively responding to the unexpected events of 9/11/01, which forced the first postponement of the IFEA annual convention since its founding in 1956, and a decade of uncertain economic environments with industry-wide impact, Schmader succeeded in moving the organization forward, taking the association’s publications, conventions, web site, benefits, programs, partnerships, international affiliations, and member resources to new levels, while laying the foundation to ensure future outreach and positive impact.

In 2020 - 2023, his crisis management skills were once again tested when the global Covid-19 pandemic effectively shut down the festivals and events industry, worldwide, including the IFEA’s annual conventions and other in-person programming, for nearly three years. Quickly reimagining and repositioning the organization to help events, event organizations, and cities/communities around the world to navigate, understand, respond to, connect with and expand global networks, and protect themselves financially from this unimaginable challenge, he continues to work on behalf of ours and other affiliated global industries, until we can find our way fully back to a lasting and positive normalcy.

Schmader also serves as the publisher and editor of “*ie: the business of international events*”, the leading professional magazine resource in our industry and was co-publisher of “*Venue Safety & Security*” magazine from 2007 - 2009. In 2002, *Amusement Business Magazine* recognized Schmader as an “Industry Difference Maker” and in 2004 he was featured as a “Profile in Event Leadership” in *Special Events: Event Leadership for a New World*. In 2004, Schmader initiated the creation of a new “Association Alliance”, bringing together five major global representative associations of the special events industry (IFEA, IAAPA, IAVM, IAFE and the OABA) in a new and valuable partnership. In January of 2005 Schmader led the first international delegation of experts to Beijing to help open the new IFEA China and a whole new world of opportunities for the festivals and events industry. His efforts have dramatically expanded the organization’s global network that today includes the umbrella geographic regions of IFEA Africa, Asia, Australia / New Zealand, Europe, Latin America, Middle East (MENASA) and North America. In 2010, Schmader created the *IFEA World Festival & Event City Award Program*, designed as a way for the global festivals and events industry to openly encourage, support and recognize positive local environments for festivals and events worldwide. In 2012, he developed and created the IFEA Event Management School at Oglebay National Training Center in West Virginia, partnering with the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA).

Previously, Schmader served for 11 years as the President of the original Boise River Festival, which he started from scratch in 1991 and grew to include the support of more than 750 sponsors and 4000 volunteers. The festival featured more than 400 events and reached an aggregate attendance of more than 1 million. Under his leadership, the Boise River Festival gained recognition as “One of the Top 100 Events in North America”; “One of the Top 40 Events in the Country”; “One of the Top 10 Summer Festivals in the United States”, “One of the Top 10 Parades in the United States” and the “Best (Hot-Air) Ballooning Event in the United States”.

Simultaneously, Schmader founded and served as President for NCAA college football's "Humanitarian Bowl" (now the "Famous Idaho Potato Bowl") from its creation in 1997 through 1999. In 1999, the Humanitarian Bowl played to a sold-out stadium and received the highest television rating for a bowl game (to that date) in the history of the espn2 network.

Schmader acted as Executive Producer of the Boise 2000 Millennium Celebration, which was seen by 175 million people in the United States and countless additional millions around the world on NBC, ABC, CNN, PAX Cable, and on the world-wide web, as the anchor event for the U.S. Mountain Time Zone. The BBC recognized the event as "the top celebration by an American city".

Early in his career, Schmader spent twelve years working for the international, educational and performing organization Up with People, as their Director of Special Events. His many other credits include the development, production and/or direction of the Inauguration Celebration and Gala for Idaho Governor (and later U.S. Secretary of the Interior) Dirk Kempthorne; Up with People's 25th Anniversary "Silver Celebration"; the "Welcome Home Celebration" for released U.S. hostage Jesse 'Jon' Turner; the annual induction ceremonies for the World Sports Humanitarian Hall of Fame; the Bicentennial Presidential Inauguration of George Bush, Sr.; the opening of the 60th annual Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade; the Washington, D.C. 4th of July "Celebration on the Mall;" and the Super Bowl XX half-time spectacular. He has served as a float judge for the Pasadena Tournament of Roses, the Fiesta Bowl, and the National Football Hall of Fame Festival Parades.

In 2000, *The Idaho Statesman* named Schmader as one of 10 top influential individuals leading Idaho into the new millennium. He is a past Chairman of the IFEA World Board of Directors (1999) and was the founding President of the Rocky Mountain Festivals & Events Association. He has served on the Board of Directors for the IFEA Foundation, IFEA Europe, the IFEA Professional Certification Commission (now the Academy of Event Education), the IFEA Presidents Council, and the IFEA Global Roundtable Council (as founder). He has also served as a Board Director and Executive Officer of the Boise (Idaho) Convention & Visitors Bureau. Serving the safety and security side of the industry, Schmader served as the Outdoor Venue Sub-Sector Co-Chair for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN). On the academic side, he has served on the International Advisory Councils for the Event Management Program at George Washington University (Washington, D.C.); Johnson & Wales University (Providence, RI); Algonquin College (Ottawa, Ontario, Canada); as an Executive of Residence for the Temple University (Philadelphia, PA) School of Tourism & Hospitality Management; as a Distinguished Consultant to the International Centre for the Study of Planned Events (a part of the School of Business, Enterprise and Management) at Queen Margaret University in Edinburgh, Scotland; a member of the Advisory Board for the Global Center for Event Management Education (GCEME); a Visiting Professor for the Zhejiang University of Media and Communication School of Cultural Creativity in Hangzhou, China; and an Executive Advisor to the Event Management Program at Middlesex University in Dubai. Schmader has served on the International Cultural Industries Blue Book Report Editorial Committee, published annually in the People's Republic of China; as an Honorary Advisor to the China National Festivals Committee; on the International Advisory Board for Skills Village 2030 in Africa; and was a Board Director for the Concert for Japan/Japan Earthquake Relief Foundation. He was featured as a 'Profile in Event Leadership' for *Special Events: Event Leadership for a New World* (4th, 5th and 6th Editions). The co-author of *Special Events: Inside & Out*, the complete library of IFEA resources, and *Building Marketing Alliances* (published by the International Council of Air Shows); a contributing author for *Festival & Special Event Management* (4th Edition) and *Creating Enduring Festivals*; contributing consultant for *The Complete Guide to Careers in Special Events*; and the forward author for *The Sponsorship Seeker's Toolkit* (3rd and 4th Editions) and *Events Feasibility and Development: From Strategy to Operations*, Schmader is a frequent and highly rated speaker on industry related topics worldwide. In 2018 he had the very real and moving honor of speaking at the memorial service of long-time Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade Producer, friend and industry icon, Jean McFaddin, in New York City.