



Group Services Inc.

September 2004
Volume 1, Issue 2

SAN JUAN FULL-FLEDGED MEMBER OF PRESTIGIOUS ALLIANCE

The capital city of San Juan, is the only Latin American and the only Caribbean destination granted with full-fledged membership by Best-Cities.net, an alliance of global convention bureaus. This international organization strives to set and follow best business practices within the Meetings and Convention Industry, through innovation, knowledge exchange, professional development as well as client servicing the meetings industry. Membership to Best Cities.net, provides credibility for the city of San Juan as an international meetings destination. Top convention cities such as Boston, Cape Town, Copenhagen, Dubai, Edinburgh, Melbourne and Vancouver form the alliance.

GSI offers new 401K

Group Services Inc. is offering their staff a new benefit: Employee Retirement Plan since July 2004. Employees are eligible after their third month of employment. As per Western Bank 401 Plans, staff may sign up to participate during the months of June or December. After the third year of employment in the company, GSI matches the amount of savings the employee has assigned for their retirement; matching 0.75 on the dollar. This Plan provides payment of benefits for the purpose of retirement, incapacity or death. These benefits are additional and not affected by Social Security benefits.

2004 GLOBAL EVENTS PARTNERS EXECUTIVE RETREAT

Last June, 60 of the top DMC's in the world and 100 of their best customers got together in Madrid, Spain during the 2004 GEP Partners Executive Retreat. During a period of three days, experts in their field networked and discussed a multitude of topics regarding the DMC industry. The retreat proved once again that this industry thrives on the priceless trust and bond between Planners and their DMC partners.

Source:

[Show me Arizona newsletter. Summer 2004](#)

New Golf Course on the South Coast of Puerto Rico

The new "Costa Caribe Golf & Country Club" held an open house this past August to introduce its new facilities and services. The 27-hole 10,287 yard golf course was designed by Bruce A. Besse Jr. of Willowbend Golf & Land Design. Features include the 1st island green on the 12th hole in Puerto Rico, on-course food & beverage and a practice area with lights for nighttime use. Public guest fees are \$65.00 on Mon, Tue, Thu and Sun, \$75.00 other days of the week. Fees include cart, towel, a water bottle, divot repair kit, use of practice area and club house. For information call (787) 812-2650

Source: [Caribbean Business. August 2004](#)



Inside this issue:

<i>What's new? GSI and San Juan</i>	1
<i>Retirement Plan for GSI staff</i>	1
<i>Golfing in Puerto Rico</i>	1
<i>Resort News & Updates</i>	2-3
<i>New Convention Center for San Juan, PR</i>	3
<i>Dinning out</i>	3
<i>Calendar of Events</i>	4

GSI wins Pinnacle of Excellence Award

Group Services Inc. takes a prominent leadership position among companies in the Destination Management Industry by winning the coveted 2004 Pinnacles of Excellence Award. Considered the most prestigious award of its kind, this award honor is presented in the categories of airline, hotel, destination management company and cruise line. The annual award recognizes leading companies worldwide for their gold level of service, the highest distinction a participant can earn based on a combined score in financial adherence, marketing support, operations and com-



PINNACLES
of
EXCELLENCE



munications. "GSI has distinguished itself for the quality and commitment it offers at all levels of the group travel industry," said Maritz Travel President and CEO Jeff Reinberg. "It delivers the highest levels of service to its customers and we are pleased to recognize the company's hard work and expertise with a 2004 Pinnacles of Excellence Award." This award was created in 1993 to assure that travel customers receive superior service throughout the world. To be eligible, companies must be invited to enter the competition, and then undergo an extensive evaluation and a detailed self-evaluation. Points and criterion in each category are weighted to reflect relative importance in achieving performance excellence, with the final score determining whether companies reach the gold, silver or bronze achievement level.

National Parks Service offers workshops for Old San Juan Operators & Guides

In an effort to improve of service to visitors of San Felipe del Morro and San Cristobal Fort, personnel of the National Park Service with expertise in military history, history of Puerto Rico and the forts themselves, will provide workshops to tour operators and guides doing business in the forts of Old San Juan. Starting in October 2004, the NPS and USDI will require special permits; to obtain the permits the tour guides and operators are required to attend the workshops. In fiscal year 2002, "El Morro" fort received 525,000 visitors and San Cristobal had 325,000.



Source: Caribbean Business July 2004

Eco-Tourism US Senate to designate protection areas at Caribbean Rain Forest

The US Senate discussed a project to designate of 10,000 acres of El Yunque rain forest as part of the National System for the Preservation of Wildlife. Mark Rey, USDA Department of Natural resources under-secretary said, "We believe that the designation of El Toro will increase the scenic, desolate and pristine areas of the forest. El Toro will be the only tropical forest in the National Wildlife Preservation System and the only wildlife protected area in Puerto Rico", Rey indicated. The area, which the project intends to protect, will be known as El Toro, named after the highest peak at El Yunque rain-forest. Source: El Nuevo Dia News



Mexican Todi, a resident of the Caribbean Rain Forest

Fairmont Hotels coming to Puerto Rico

Fairmont Hotels & Resorts of Canada is slated to manage a Five-Star, \$150 million, 416-room "Fairmont Resort and Spa at Coco Beach" located in Rio Grande, Puerto Rico.

Source:Caribbean Business. July 22 '04

Marriott welcomes new GM

Marriott International Inc. announced last August the appointment of Hans Goerg Rohrbein as the new General Manager of the 525-room San Juan Marriott Resort & Stellaris Casino in Condado. Rohrbein was the former manager of the Renaissance Jamaica Grande Resort and has held several positions at Marriott properties since 1982 in Asia, Caribbean, India and the United States.

Source: San Juan Star News 08.11.04

Rising Tide of Opportunity in Puerto Rico

“The Convention Center is exceptional, and the plan for the surrounding complex is a beautiful addition that will keep hotel properties close. It’s hard not to ‘catch the wave’ of excitement as you see it all come together.” said Pam Reisinger, director of meetings, American Association of Law Libraries

During a recent hard-hat tour of the new Convention Center and nearby hotels, restaurants and sites; planners stayed at the Caribe Hilton, a 17-acre, 646-room, ocean-front resort near the new Convention Center.

Planners visited other world-class hotels and attractions, as well, including the new Casa Bacardi Visitor Center and the historical, Spanish colonial city of Old San Juan. In addition, planners savored the flavors of award-winning Puerto Rican, Spanish and international cuisine in San Juan and the fashionable Condado district, while still finding time to unwind on white-sand beaches, all minutes from the new Convention Center.

“We want planners to see for themselves the extraordinary amenities Puerto Rico,

has to offer,” said Ana Maria Viscasillas, president and chief executive officer, Puerto Rico Convention Bureau. “When the new Convention Center opens, San Juan will be able to accommodate groups of 10,000 attendees, placing Puerto Rico at the forefront of meetings destinations.”

With construction moving rapidly toward its opening in September 2005, the Puerto Rico Convention Center will be the largest convention center in the Caribbean and the most technologically advanced in the Caribbean and Latin America. The facility, near the Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport and tourist district, will feature a roof shaped like a giant wave to recall the cascading Caribbean surf. At 580,000 sq. ft./53,882 sq. m., the state-of-the-art Convention Center will house a 152,700-sq. ft./14,186-sq. m. exhibition hall, the largest ballroom in the Caribbean and 36,200 sq. ft./3,363 sq. m. of meeting space divisible into as many as 25 rooms. The facility will be the centerpiece of a \$415 million (U.S. dollars) destination – the Puerto Rico Convention Center District -- that is the largest waterfront development project in the history of the U.S. and its territories.

Conceived as a bustling urban center, the 113-acre District will combine hotels, shops, restaurants, movie theaters, offices, residences, parks and more. For a virtual site inspection of the new Convention Center and all around the island contact the Bureau at (787) 725-2110

Source: PR Convention Bureau



Aerial View of the New Convention Center building site

Dining out

The Wyndham Condado Plaza Hotel & Casino newest restaurant is Gusto Di Italia. This restaurant offers family-style Italian dining at reasonable prices, while featuring spectacular views of the Atlantic Ocean on the resort’s Mezzanine level, across from San Juan’s most popular 24-hour Casino. Gusto Di Italia includes an extravagant walk-in Wine Cellar with a mahogany lounge and bar. A gelato parlor featuring a wide selection of ice cream



and desserts, which guests can enjoy on the patio or to take-out. Gusto Di Italia is open on Monday-Friday from noon to 3:00 p.m. and from 5:00 p.m. to midnight; on Saturday from 5:00 p.m. to midnight; and on Sunday from noon to 11:00 p.m. The Lounge and Bar are open daily from noon to midnight. For reservations call (787) 724-8833 or (787) 721-1000

Source: Wyndham International Inc.

\$37M Expansion at Wyndham’s Las Casitas Village

Las Casitas Village, a Wyndham Luxury Resorts, winner of AAA’s Five Diamonds for six consecutive years and the only ‘Five Diamond’ resort in Puerto Rico continues its \$37 Million Expansion. Thomas Marvel Architects, interior design firm Jorge Rosello & Associates, and the landscape architect firm EDSA, are the masterminds behind this exquisite project. Improvements include larger living rooms, bedrooms and balconies, marble bathrooms and Italian Snaidero kitchens with granite tops. New villas provide scenic views of the Atlantic Ocean or the Arthur Hills-designed golf course. Services and amenities include private around-the-clock butler service; concierge; rooms personalized to individual preferences prior to arrival; private check-in and resort transfer by limousine; twice daily housekeeping service; nightly turn-down service and more. The project is Phase II of the original master plan, which has added 67 luxury villas to the existing 90, and features a stunning new infinity pool. The Villas are available for individual sale and may become part of a voluntary resort program for nightly guests. For reservations call 888-472-6229

Source: Wyndham International Inc.

Calendar of Events

Sports

World Amateur Team Championships.
October 20-31 At The Westin Rio Mar Beach Resort and Golf Club.



Domingo Apellaniz Marathon

September 26, 2004. A 10 Km race along route 5 in the town of Cataño. For info call (787) 788-0404

International Light Tackle Blue Marlin Tour September 23-26, 2004. Tournament sponsored by "Club Deportivo del Oeste"(Road 102 Km 15.4) and the Puerto Rico Tourism Company. For Information Call (787) 851-8880

Culture

Old San Juan Gallery Night

Old San Juan Second Tuesday of every month is a special night in Old San Juan, when the art galleries open until 9:00PM for the enjoyment of visitors and locals.

Le Lo Lai Festival

Old San Juan-San Cristobal Fort ,Sept 7, 2004- May 24, 2005 Every Tuesday at 6:00pm San Juan National Historic Site and Puerto Rico Tourism Company present Ballet "Folklórico Areyto" as part of the Le Lo Lai Festival. With Fort San Cristóbal as a backdrop, enjoy Spanish architecture and sea breezes in this unique cultural experience! The This Festival was created to promote the Puerto Rican culture through music, rhythms and performances that highlight the island's Spanish, African and native heritages. This

show lasts up to 45 minutes. The park's user fee (\$3.00 adults, \$2.00 seniors [62+], free for kids under 12) covers entrance to the festival.



San Juan Fashion Week

September 9-26, 2004. A preview of upcoming Spring-Summer Fashion. For info call (787) 793-4070

Patron Saint Festival of Aguada

September 24-October 4, 2004 . Music, Food kiosks, artisans, contest etc. at the town's "Plaza de Festivales Carlso Ruiz Gonzalez. For info call (787) 868-1660

Patron Saint (Saint Michael the Archangel) Festival of Cabo Rojo

September 24-October 3. Robeca Coldberg Stadium, (Road 312 Km 0.2). For info call (787) 255-1560

Patron Saint (Saint Michael the Archangel) of Utuado. Sept 26-29, 2004.

Witness an old mountain town Saint Procession, enjoy the local music and local food kiosks during these festivities.at "Plaza Luis Muñoz Rivera". For info call (787) 894-3505

Speakers

Dalai Lama

1989 Nobel Price Recipient, Dalai Lama will be visiting the island September 23-25. **09.24.04** Events include, 9:30AM Honorary Degree Award from the University of Puerto Rico; 10:30AM "A Prayer for Peace" @ the Museum of Art; "4:PM-Universal Responsibility" @ Bellas Artes. **09.25.04** Events include, 8:30AM "Teachings"@Tapia Theater. For Tickets call (787) 620-4444 or email inkarridepr@prtc.net



Group Services Inc.

Condo San Alberto Suite 721
 605 Condado Avenue
 Santurce, PR 00907
Toll Free 1-800-720-7747
 Fajardo Office 7(787) 863-6890
info@gsipuertorico.com

Hospitality Industry

18th Annual Hospitality Industry Convention & Tradeshow

Sept 29-Oct 1, 2004

Seminars, workshops, culinary competitions, equipment, products and services tradeshow. Caribe Hilton Hotel. For information call (787) 725-2901

Puerto Rico Convention Bureau's Annual Membership Meeting.

Sept 14 ' 04

At the Holiday Inn. For info Call An-nelle Figueroa (787) 725-2110 Extension 5062

Local Holidays

- Oct 12** Discovery of America
- Nov 11** Veterans' Day
- Nov 19** Puerto Rico's Discovery
- Nov 27** Thanksgiving Day
- Dec 25** Christmas Day