

Travel broadens the show



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To accommodate an ever-increasing attendance, in the last four years, Hong Kong trade show, ITE and ITE MICE has had to expand exhibition space from two arenas to five. This year with refurbishments at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre complete, the show can take place all on one floor, which is much easier for exhibitors and attendees alike.

Organizers say a key factor to the show's growth has been the decision by past exhibitors to substantially expand their pavilions year-on-year. Despite the financial crisis, official pavilions such as those from Hong Kong, Japan, Philippines, South Korea, Thailand, Turkey and Yemen are all bigger now. Additionally, this year welcomes a number of new pavilions from Europe, other regional countries and the Pacific. Croatia, Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam, Italy, Israel and Prague have all either reserved a space or have expressed interest in doing so. The Czech Republic will in fact have two pavilions: the national tourism authority one and a Prague specific showpiece.

The Taiwan Visitors Association nearly doubles its size to 200 square metres, making it one of the largest at the show. Present also is another Taiwan pavilion on Medical Tourism, which is being organized by the Taipei World Trade Center.

Recently introduced travel themes such as MICE, Cruise, Wellness and Medical Tourism have proved popular with attendees with approximately 30 percent of all exhibitors specifically targeting those areas. Organizers hope the new theme pavilion this year, related to eco-tourism and Geo-parks in Hong Kong will prove equally attractive. The local Agriculture, Fisheries & Conservation Department (AFCD) will host the pavilion, which will also stage some local cultures and tourism facilities.

Though it's true various economies are yet to fully recover from the global financial crisis, China, and Hong Kong in particular, appear to be spearheading the bounce back. Organizers point to latest figures, which indicate in the first two months of this year China's and Hong Kong's outbound tourism numbers grew by double digits with the country's tourism institute forecasting an increase of 11 percent in 2010. Show organizers hope this good news will bolster what's already shaping up to be a big summer event. **AHCT**

