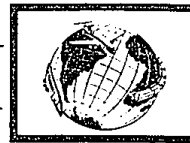


Travel Scene



More jobs in travel by 2000

(AP) — By the year 2000, the travel industry will be the nation's top employer, responsible for one of every five workers, the president and chief executive officer of Loews Hotels says.

The head of the founding division of the \$26 billion Loews Corp., Jonathan M. Tisch, told a consortium of travel agencies Feb. 26, the business opportunities in travel and entertainment will continue to burgeon in the coming decade.

"The globalization of business will only increase as we approach the year 2000... and corporate travelers won't suddenly unpack their bags," Tisch said.

American corporations now spend \$100 billion annually on travel and entertainment, including \$40 billion just on meetings and conventions, he said.

"By the year 2000, the travel industry will be the nation's No. 1 employer, providing jobs to one out of five workers," Tisch said.

"It will need three-quarters of a million new workers every year. With labor shortages a virtual certainty in the 1990s, recruiting and retaining qualified staff will be a demanding task."

Tisch said that among keys to success in the '90s will be earning both customer and employee loyalty. The former will be accomplished in part by the ability to offer the wide range of services that corporate travelers will need, "from meeting planning to incentive travel," he said.

As for the latter, Tisch added, "Like other service industries, hotels and motels are already experiencing severe shortages of qualified line employees and managers, even in major markets. And as service suffers, vacant rooms translate because of vacant jobs."

He said his hotel's administration believes in a decentralized labor force, allowing managers to "make the decisions. We want the people to do the job that we pay them to do. And certainly a manager, whether it be in Tucson or Santa Monica, knows more about what's going on than we do in New York."

He said decentralization lowers overhead and gives the people "the responsibility that they surely deserve to make the decisions quickly."

Tisch said corporations increasingly are depending on travel agents to set up sales appointments and arrange board meetings, and "these corporate travelers insist upon a sophisticated partner" offering efficient service and planning, outstanding resources and good value, all of which ends in a "hassle-free travel experience."

He said corporations increasingly want a full range of travel-planning services, particularly planning meetings and conferences, and that agencies working in a consortium bolster buying power and offer added value.

Tisch said Loews, which owns 16 hotels including destination resorts and is developing three more such resorts, views the growing role of travel agencies as positive, but warned, "If you assume a customer is yours forever, you are very, very wrong."

He said hoteliers, and travel agencies, "have to keep talking to our customers, and listening to them."

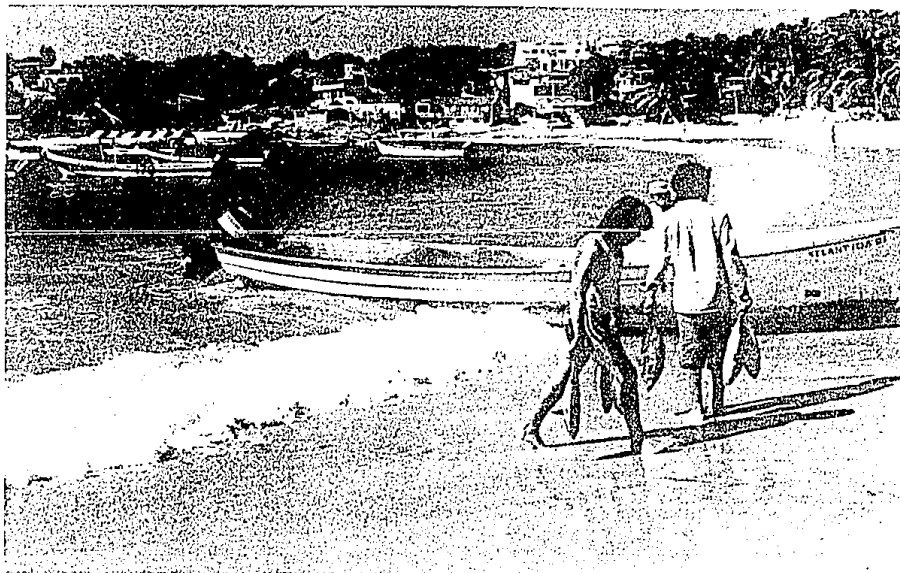
Tisch said upgrading service is Loews' top priority, because travelers base their stay on whether they obtain perceived value for their money.

"OVER THE LAST decade, explosive growth and rampant overbuilding have heated up the competitive nature of the hotel industry. No matter how many VCRs or fax machines we might install in our suites in coming years, genuine hospitality will remain the key to customer satisfaction," he said.

Tisch said Loews will be continue a policy of conservative expansion, buying or developing hotels that are viewed as good opportunities.

In recent years, he said, "Our competition was expanding rapidly. We thought that they were expanding too rapidly. Unfortunately for them and, hopefully, fortunately for us, that tale has come to be true."

PUERTO ESCONDIDO



Village fishermen unload their catch of the day on the beach of Puerto Escondido.

A MEXICAN PARADISE

By Sue Marx and Hank Marx
staff writers

We had a few simple requirements for our recent vacation: two weeks in the sun with weather we could count on, where no one would know us, where we wouldn't have to dress for dinner, and most of all, it had to be affordable.

We found just what we were looking for in the little Mexican coastal town of Puerto Escondido, population 25,000. Puerto Escondido is located on the coast of the Pacific Ocean about 500 miles from Mexico City, a 50 minute flight.

Our major decisions each day consisted of how many miles of gorgeous beach to walk and what to order for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

We knew the dollar would buy more in Mexico but we couldn't believe the value we got at the Sante Fe Hotel, a charming little place on the beach. Fielding's 1990 Guide To Mexico lists the 30 unit Sante Fe Hotel, as a moderate priced, 2-star hotel "designed like a set for Romeo and Juliet complete with balconies and an occasional turret."

WELL, HERE'S A Sante Fe update. On Dec. 10, Sante Fe became a 4-star hotel and the price of a double room went from \$32 to \$46. The hotel was designed by San Francisco artist Rich Elmore and was built in 1981. A free-standing addition should be complete soon and will add eight rooms and seven suites. Most rooms overlook the pool and gardens. Our balcony room, however, had a bay window with an ocean view. The enchanting rooms have high ceilings with Mexican tile floor. There's a phone in each room but you might think

twice before calling home. Phone charges from Mexico to the states are very costly and frustrating.

A hearty breakfast, lunch and dinner costs approximately \$25 each per day. It's vegetarian, but the fresh seafood and fish are truly outstanding. Our favorites were quesadillas, baked cheese-filled flour tortillas; chiles rellanos, meatless stuffed chile peppers; pulpo, sauteed octopus; and hanchinango, grilled red snapper. Don't worry about eating raw vegetables in Sante Fe, fresh fruits and vegetables are carefully sanitized.

Someone is always eating in the hotel restaurant which is open all day. And there is no dress code for dinner. Bathing suits and T-shirts? No problem. Barefoot? Fine. Come as you are.

A FEW COLORFUL tiled stairs lead up to the bar and the restaurant which is a large open room with a thatched roof and 20 round tables with comfortable leather barrel chairs. There is a continuous breeze and a view of the ever changing surf that comes from the beach.

The hotel guests were an eclectic mix of Americans, Canadians, Germans, French and Mexicans. Among those we met were a writer, a sculptor, an import-export dealer, a major record producer-talent manager from the states, honeymooners and just plain surfers.

The Sante Fe staff is comprised of the sweetest, most helpful people to be found anywhere. The hotel is owned by the Cleavers, an American family from Sante Fe, N.M., and is run by Paul Cleaver who sees to it that everything runs smoothly which, in this remote spot, is no easy task. A graduate of Cornell and former

headmaster of a school in the states, Paul is a multi-lingual artist and writer. He takes time to get to know each and every visitor, perhaps loaning you a book that a previous guest left behind, or talking about Mexican artifacts or American politics. After living in Puerto Escondido for seven years and Guadalupe prior to that, Paul knows Mexico.

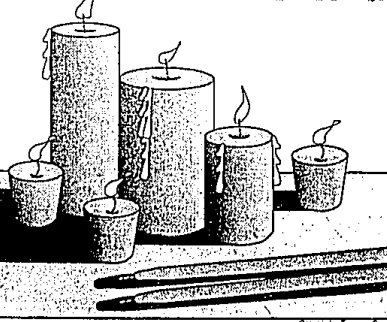
BACK ON THE BEACH, the weather was perfect with high 80s, sunny and breezy every day. At sunrise you wake with a steady off shore breeze and if you walk a third of a mile down, you will spot a group of surfers, riding out the best of the big waves. Puerto Escondido is considered second to Hawaii for surfing. With such a strong undertow, the beach is considered dangerous for swimming, but perfect for walking, wading and watching.

Directly in front of the hotel are several tall rock formations emerging from the shore. It's a favorite for photographers and pelicans. Mexican families and tourists alike are often seen climbing these rocks, but they are most popular at the end of the day when many couples seek out romantic peaks and crevices to watch the magnificent setting sun. To the right of these rocks begins one mile of beach that leads into town.

While strolling down the beach in late morning, fishing boats unload their catch and women haggle over the fish they are buying. Separating the beach from the main street in town are a number of hotels, restaurants and bars. Some hotels such as the Pacifica and Las Palmas rent rooms for as little as \$15. On the other side of

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DAVISBURG



Candle factory is only a drive away

By Garry Forster
special writer

To ease the pangs of spring fever, take a Sunday afternoon drive to the Davisburg Candle Factory in Davisburg, Mich. The town is located between Holly and Clarkston about a half hour's drive north of Detroit off I-75.

Davisburg is so small it looks more like a Hollywood movie set with a business section barely stretching one block. Chances are Davisburg will never grow any larger because the ground it sits on doesn't "perk," which means indoor toilets can't be flushed more than three times in a row. Of course, 125 years ago when the town was first settled, indoor plumbing wasn't a problem.

Today, the size of the town has maintained its charm with every building looking like a museum. Most of them are still being used except for a few vacant spots on the block waiting for the right person to come along and renovate. Perhaps the right person would set up an artist's studio, craft shop or jewelry business.

IN THE CENTER of town is a 120-year-old, two-story brick building with dark aqua gingerbread trim. The two glass display windows on either side of the door announce that it was originally the town's general store. The heavy

old weather-beaten, wood screen door squeaks and slams at the entrance. This is the Davisburg Candle Factory, the town's claim to fame.

Mary Tebo, owner of the candle factory, is responsible for many of the candles that burn in town at night. After teaching school in diverse communities in England, Germany, Japan and Seattle, Tebo wanted to try something new.

Four years ago, her brother discovered the little factory for sale which spurred her interest in the place. Without knowing anything about candle making, Tebo flew home on a Friday, fell in love with the place and bought the factory that same weekend.

Today, business is booming. She employs four people to help run the factory while she spends most of her time finding new markets and selling product throughout Michigan.

TEBO WELCOMES visitors as long as arrangements are made in advance. I was enveloped in the heady aroma of the various perfumes used in the scented candles when I entered the factory. The entire ceiling was covered like a maze, with a Rhos Goldberg contraption which is better known as the assembly line.

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Flights on time

(AP) — Major airlines improve the number of on-time flights and received fewer baggage handling complaints in January, the government says.

The Transportation Department, in its monthly Air Travel Consumer Report, said the largest domestic carriers reported that 77.6 percent of their flights were on time in January, compared with 70.2 percent in December.

The January performance was also a slight improvement over a year ago, when the on-time rate was 76.7 percent. Delays caused by mechanical failures are not counted.

Southwest Airlines had the best record for the month, with 82.5 percent on-time performance, and Eastern had the worst, with 70.7 percent.

Reports of mishandled baggage averaged 8.7 per 1,000 passengers.