**Speaker Bios | Inclusivity is Sustainability**

**Sherry L. Rupert | CEO, AIANTA**

AIANTA CEO Sherry L. Rupert (Paiute/Washoe) has nearly two decades of executive-level experience managing and promoting Native American tourism. Since joining AIANTA as CEO in 2019, she has spearheaded several initiatives, including the organization’s groundbreaking new Tribal Agritourism program and overseeing AIANTA’s first-ever virtual American Indian Tourism Conference, which drew a record number of registrants in 2020.

As CEO of the only national association dedicated to indigenous tourism, she is the leading voice when it comes to advocating for travel and tourism as a significant economic driver in tribal nations. Among her responsibilities, she curates a robust educational program for tribes and indigenous-owned hospitality enterprises around the country. Prior to assuming the role of CEO, she was President of AIANTA’s Board of Directors since 2010. During that time, she was instrumental in working with Congress to pass the Native American Tourism and Improving Visitor Experience (NATIVE) Act.

Rupert was formerly the Executive Director of the State of Nevada Indian Commission, where she reported directly to the Governor of Nevada to serve as a liaison to the state’s 27 tribes, bands and colonies. During her tenure, she developed the Nevada Indian Territory initiative and won awards and accolades for her work in preserving the site of the Stewart Indian School as a museum and cultural center.

**Billy Kolber | Co-Founder + CEO, Hospitable Me**

Billy Kolber is the Co-Founder and CEO of HospitableMe, providing inclusive hospitality strategy and training for tourism, retail and healthcare organizations. He has a degree in Biology, but has spent his entire career in travel, running an American Express travel agency before launching OUT&ABOUT, the first gay and lesbian travel magazine in the USA. Billy traveled and sang around the world with the Yale Whiffenpoofs and is a two-time annual Pie
Contest champion in Water Island. A 3rd generation native New Yorker, has visited 72 countries, and currently lives with his husband in Frankfurt, Germany.

John Sage | CEO, Sage Traveling

John Sage is an industry leader in the large and growing accessible travel market. According to the World Health Organization, people with disabilities comprise 15% of the global population, and they are 20% to 25% of the population in developed countries and source markets. As Baby Boomers age, the population of people with disabilities grows. In 2009, John Sage founded his first accessible travel company, Sage Traveling, which provides accessible vacations to disabled travelers. John Sage has personally traveled with his wheelchair to inspect accessibility in hundreds of cities around the world, and Sage Traveling currently provides accessible accommodation, transportation, tours, pre-trip consulting, and emergency assistance in more than 50 countries.

In 2016, Sage realized that no tour operator was focused on the accessibility market, so he founded his second company, Accessible Travel Solutions (ATS). ATS is now an industry leader in providing accessible travel packages to travel agents and has won Travel Weekly’s Tour Operator of the Year award. In 2017, ATS began providing accessible shore excursions to multiple cruise lines. ATS now offers accessible shore excursions in 100+ ports around the world.

In 2021, John Sage founded his third accessible travel company, Include Me Travel, which provides multiple services to help travel businesses and DMO’s succeed in the accessible travel market: 1) accessibility strategy development, 2) accessibility training, 3) accessibility auditing and certification, 4) destination marketing, 5) big data, and 6) technology. John Sage is the first and only accessible travel company CEO who is a member of the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC). He was the primary author of the WTTC’s “Inclusive and Accessible Travel Guidelines”, and his “Top 10 Accessible Travel Tips for Europe” article has been published in Rick Steves’ guidebooks. Sage received the Houston Business Journal’s 40 Under 40 award for executives and entrepreneurs. He is one of only a few individuals in the travel industry to have attained the IAAP Certified Accessibility Professional designation.
John Sage resides in the beautiful hill country town of New Braunfels, Texas with his wife and daughter where he enjoys handcycling, live music, and nature.

Sonya Bradley | Chief of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Visit Sacramento

Sonya Bradley started with Visit Sacramento in 2002 as Director of Marketing Services. She took the reins as Vice President of Marketing in 2007, responsible for the strategic development and execution of the "Discover Gold" brand strategy for the convention and tourism (trade and consumer) markets. She’s responsible for the development of Visit Sacramento’s strategic business plan; managing marketing strategies, tactics (media buying, direct marketing, website and trade shows) and budget; and overseeing the eight-person marketing team that includes marketing services, tourism marketing, market intelligence and graphic design.

Before joining Visit Sacramento, Bradley worked at the San Jose CVB for eight years serving in various marketing communications capacities, and prior to that in retail advertising for a major drug store chain. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree from Pepperdine University and a Masters of Science from San Jose State University. She’s a first-degree black belt in Tae Kwon Do and enjoys spending time with her family, going to baseball games, traveling and reading.