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IAIM Launches Distance Learning Program

by Jack Vivian, Ph.D.

The Ice Arena Institute of Management (iAIM) is launching an exciting new educational opportunity for professionals in the ice arena industry. By the end of 2003, students seeking to earn a Certificate of Arena Management can register for and access the required courses online. Anyone anywhere in the world will be able to access this invaluable source 24 hours a day seven days a week. Courses for the Certificate of Arena Programming track and the Certificate of Arena Operations will be available online in mid-2004.

The iAIM program has partnered with the Noble Foundation of Wooster, Ohio to develop this trend-setting educational program for the ice arena industry. The Noble Foundation, under the leadership of the late Don Noble and his son David Noble, recently built a $5.5 million arena and donated it to the Wooster School District. Don Noble, CEO of Rubbermaid for many years, recognized that employee education and training are critically important to the success of the arena business. David Noble and the Foundation saw the need for and the future of distance learning and agreed to help the iAIM Board of Regents initiate, develop and administer this important initiative.

iAIM has been highly successful in conducting one-week certification programs, having certified over 250 professionals from around the country. However, given today's economic times and the fact that distance learning classes don't require specific times, dates or locations, thousands of dollars can be saved in both travel and employee downtime by using distance learning. The convenience and autonomy of online learning has made the Internet a great tool for educators, from colleges and universities to any organization that offers education to professionals. Furthermore, this medium provides access to education for arena professionals when and where it is needed.

New technology makes it possible to effectively develop and deliver shorter online courses on the various aspects of ice arena management. Courses are broken into manageable learning modules of 30 minutes to one hour each. Students must complete all of the online modules to earn credit for the course. Each course is composed of text on the subject matter, images, power point presentations and reference materials or readings. Students will be able to access these learning aids before moving to other courses. Each course will conclude with a test on the subject matter. The advantage of using the online format is that students will have access to the materials for six months and can read, study and take tests at their convenience.

With this program, iAIM now has two ways to deliver education to the ice arena industry. iAIM will continue to offer its very popular 30-hour, week-long certificate programs at locations around the nation. iAIM officials have been approached by a number of regional management associations and corporations about conducting these programs at their sites. iAIM recently completed the Certificate of Arena Operations program in Marlborough, Massachusetts, sponsored by Facility Management Corporation.

The distance learning option is a blended program whereby arena professionals can take 20 of the 30 credit classes online and obtain the remaining 10 hours in weekend programs. We anticipate having management associations sponsor many of these weekend programs so arena professionals can complete their certificate requirements near their homes.

The distance learning products are available for a fee of $450 per certificate program. Students will

be able to register and pay online and will be assigned an electronic password and mailbox where their courses will be housed. Access will be 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and the courses purchased will be available for unlimited viewing for six months after the date of purchase.

The iAIM program, thanks to the generous support of the Noble Foundation, has made a commitment to use technology to improve the development and delivery of educational opportunities and services to the ice arena industry. iAIM's Distance Learning Program is a progressive step toward making management, programming and operations courses available to anyone, anywhere, at anytime. Check it out!

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