

# ASSOCIATION CONVENTIONS & FACILITIES

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2011

THE SOURCE FOR ASSOCIATION MEETING PLANNING MANAGEMENT



## Speakers & Entertainment

### The Newest Trends That Spark Attendance

PAGE 16

The eye-catching "Eye Droid" troupe performs at a general session for MPI's Southeast Educational Conference.

Photo courtesy of Dorene Collier - ESP Tampa

# SOUTH POINT

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# ASSOCIATION CONVENTIONS & FACILITIES

THE SOURCE FOR ASSOCIATION MEETING PLANNING MANAGEMENT

August / September 2011 Volume 4 • Number 4

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**On the Cover:** Futuristic "Eye Droids" and dancers entertain attendees using iPads in helmets to relay meeting messaging. The troupe is the creation of Dorene Collier and AJ LeBlanc of ESP Tampa.

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## The Double-Deficit Challenge



On my way back from ASAE's Annual Meeting & Exposition in St. Louis, I reflected on all the many programs and features that were designed to engage and excite attendees— from the opening reception with live music, food and fireworks under the iconic Gateway Arch, to the Game Changer keynote speaker sessions, to the rapid-fire Ignite series, to the Innovation Exchange, to Learning Labs that merged education with entertainment, such as “29 Ways to Market Your Education Like Lady Gaga.” ASAE's attendance figures prove that the annual meeting's organizers had the right mix to engage and attract more than 5,300 participants to St. Louis.

When it comes to boosting attendance, planners today are challenged with overcoming an attendee “double deficit”: the first is a budget deficit, and the second is an attention deficit. Both can be overcome with compelling and relevant content delivered by captivating and memorable speakers and entertainment. Says Susan Farrell, senior director of education and learning services at SmithBucklin Corporation, “People are no longer willing to travel halfway across the country just to hear stories.” She adds, “The right speaker can really spark attendance...someone who's innovative, who can present new ideas or information about the future...who can fill the attendees with enthusiasm about these new ideas.” In other words, content is king — so much so, that even the entertainment gets into the act. For example, the whimsical “Eye Droids” pictured on our cover not only get attendees thinking about the future, they can display the meeting's messaging on their iPad helmets! Turn to page 16 for more trends and advice.

Site selection is the other half of the battle for attendance. A great place to start looking is on page 24, where AC&F's 2011 Distinctive Achievement Award-winning hotels, resorts, and convention and visitors bureaus are showcased. Then turn to “The Power of Partnership” on page 10, to read about planners and their proactive CVB partners. Finally, journey to Colorado (page 40) and Florida (page 44) where you'll find more examples of CVBs going above and beyond to ensure successful and memorable events.

Harvey Grotsky  
Publisher

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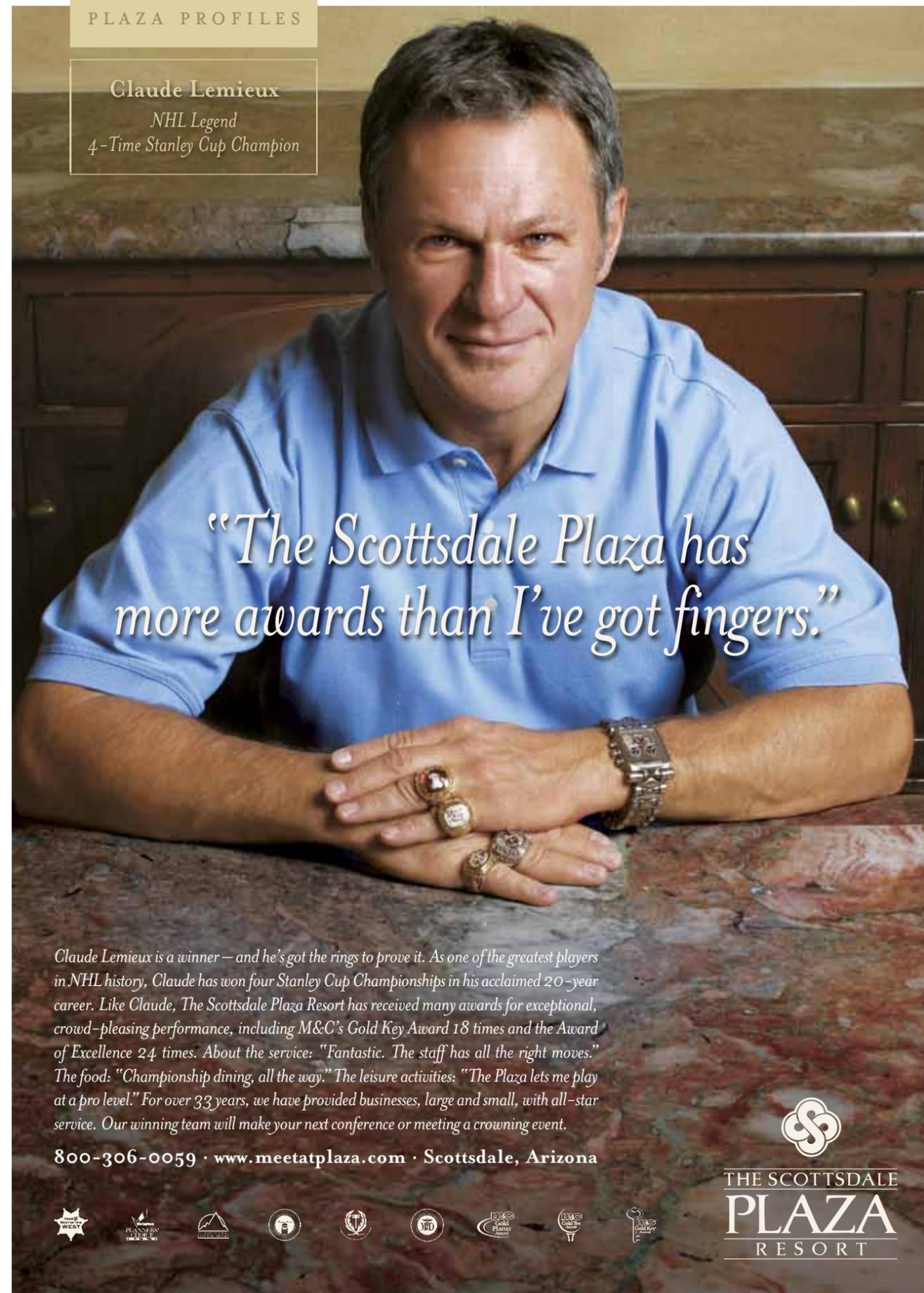
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## Omni Dallas Hotel Books More Than 250,000 Room Nights

DALLAS, TX —The Omni Dallas Hotel announced that it booked its 250,000th room night, comprised of more than 160 meetings and conventions contracted through 2017. The ribbon-cutting ceremony is scheduled for 11/11/11, and Dallas-based Freeman will be the first group to meet at the hotel. The skybridge that connects the headquarters hotel to the Dallas Convention Center offers access to more than 2.1 million sf of meeting space located in center. The hotel features more than 110,000 sf of meeting and event space including 21 meeting rooms. [www.omnidallashotel.com](http://www.omnidallashotel.com)



Photo courtesy of Omni Dallas Hotel  
*Rendering of the Omni Dallas Hotel pool deck.*

## ASAE Foundation Focuses on the Future of Trade Shows as Partner of CHR

WASHINGTON, DC — As the newest senior partner of the Cornell Center for Hospitality Research (CHR), the ASAE Foundation will sponsor a research project on the future of trade shows. This partnership, effective September 1, 2011, is a major step forward in the foundation's commitment to better understand and protect one of the core businesses of most associations. This topic has been identified as one of the four focus areas for the ASAE Foundation going forward, along with governance, membership and the association's role in the creation of content and knowledge.

Susan Robertson, ASAE executive vice president and president of the ASAE Foundation, will become a member of the CHR Advisory Board. "Like the CHR, the ASAE Foundation aims to create and share research-based information to raise awareness about important issues facing the industry and our members," notes Robertson. "Our partnership is a logical connection, and we're delighted to assist with CHR's research agenda." [www.asaecenter.org](http://www.asaecenter.org), [www.chr.cornell.edu](http://www.chr.cornell.edu)

## Philly Convention Center Hotel Upgrades Meeting Space

PHILADELPHIA, PA — The 1,408-room Philadelphia Marriott Downtown recently completed a \$17 million renovation of its meeting space. The only Philadelphia property connected by skybridge to the Pennsylvania Convention Center, the hotel offers 92,000 sf of meeting space and 72 meeting rooms, including the 34,300-sf Grand Ballroom. New meeting space enhancements include state-of-the-art lighting and audio systems, an electronic reader board system, new carpeting and wall vinyl; and new air walls with state-of-the-art sound proofing. Also, the skybridge was redesigned. A good portion of the meeting space and a small number of guest rooms at the Philadelphia Marriott Downtown occupy part of the Headhouse, which was once home to the Reading Railroad Company. The hotel is surrounded by rich revolutionary history and culture, with Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell located within eight blocks. The hotel features Circ, for chic contemporary American cuisine and 13 for inspired American cuisine as well as a Starbucks Coffee in the lobby. The property also features a fitness center and indoor pool. [www.philadelphiamarriott.com](http://www.philadelphiamarriott.com)

## New APEX Tool for RFPs Released

WASHINGTON, DC — The Convention Industry Council (CIC) released the new APEX RFP Workbook — a tool that provides a way to keep the most common RFPs associated with a meeting, convention, exhibition or event in one convenient location. Drawing from the full APEX RFP documents, the APEX RFP Workbook takes a streamlined spreadsheet-driven approach, removing as much unnecessary or duplicative information as possible, and providing simple, drop-down menus and auto-populating fields where possible.

The APEX RFP Workbook includes templates for single facility events; citywide events/destination; event technology/audio-visual; DMC and transportation services; and general service contractors. "One of the benefits of moving to a spreadsheet format for the templates is that they can continue to adapt and improve over time to include new functions and to correct any problems," says Doug McPhee, Experient Sales Network, who chaired the Standards Review Council when the project began. "The SRC Council anticipates that feedback from planners and suppliers alike will continually improve the workbook on an ongoing basis." The APEX RFP Workbook is available free of charge from the CIC website: [www.conventionindustry.org](http://www.conventionindustry.org)



Photo courtesy of Philadelphia Marriott Downtown  
*The Liberty Ballroom at Philadelphia Marriott Downtown.*

## San Francisco Travel Association Launches New Housing Service

SAN FRANCISCO, CA — The San Francisco Travel Association recently debuted a new customized housing



**D'Alessandro**

service developed by San Francisco-based Convention Management Resources Inc. (CMR). The San Francisco Travel Convention Housing – Powered by CMR service will deliver a uniquely San Francisco customized housing experience for participating conventions.

"Keeping the business local means more jobs in San Francisco, staff who intimately know San Francisco and its hotels, ability to personally meet and greet clients on site inspections, onsite support and many other benefits," says Joe D'Alessandro, president and CEO of San Francisco Travel. "By using our housing service, customers will be able to choose from a multitude of value-added services to enhance their convention."

Key benefits available include site visit and pre-planning trip representation and support; convention-exclusive housing director who is a San Francisco housing expert; "housing always open" post-cutoff booking engine; automated onsite audits to obtain group credit for out-of-block reservations; and more. Eligible customers who use the new service may select from a variety of meeting enhancements such as complimentary San Francisco guidebooks/maps, board/VIP airport transfers, hosted staff welcome reception; attendance-boosting email campaigns and more. To qualify, events must utilize a minimum of two hotels and a minimum of 1,500 rooms peak night. [www.sanfrancisco.travel](http://www.sanfrancisco.travel), [www.cmrus.com](http://www.cmrus.com)

## St. Louis Hosts ASAE Annual Meeting



Photo courtesy of ASAE  
*Attendees toured a funhouse, enjoyed St. Louis cuisine and found answers for their associations from among the more than 400 exhibitors of products, services and destinations at ASAE's Association Solutions Marketplace.*

ST. LOUIS, MO — The official count is in for the 2011 ASAE Annual Meeting & Exposition, which took place August 6–9 in St. Louis at America's Center Convention Complex. A total of 5,368 participants (2,662 executives, 1,715 exhibitors and 984 other) from 20 countries were on hand. Meeting on the heels of the debt ceiling debate and the downgrade of the country's credit rating, ASAE President & CEO John Graham's opening remarks addressed dealing with key demographic shifts and adapting to today's economic situation, among other topics. "First, our demographics are changing radically," Graham said. "Two examples: Today about 6 percent of the members of most professional societies are 65 or older. All things being equal, in 10 years... nearly two-fifths of association members will be past traditional retirement age unless we focus on a younger demographic," he continued. "Hispanics — who now represent one in seven Americans — will represent closer to one in three by 2050. The United States already has the second-largest Hispanic population in the world after Mexico. This has significant implications for membership, volunteers and staff. On the economy, Graham said, "Cash-starved governments, local, state and federal are looking everywhere for revenue," he said. "There is no question that they will continue to eye the not-for-profit community, a \$3 trillion sector. We must remain vigilant on the advocacy front if we hope to maintain our tax exempt status in the same fashion we enjoy today. Associations improve the quality of life we enjoy in this country, and we need to be continually demonstrating that value to the public, policy makers and the administration."

ASAE's board of directors approved the plan of work and related budget for FY 2012 to include initiatives to spur work on innovation; a new code of standards for all segments of the membership; the continuing exploration to serve large organizations; increasing engagement with the international community; and a new diversity plan focusing on key areas of business, integration, cultural competence and membership. [www.asaecenter.org](http://www.asaecenter.org)



Phelps R. Hope, CMP

*We have had our greatest successes when we start engaging (attendees) up to three months in advance, so by the time the convention actually happens, they are more involved and take more away from the entire experience — which is also satisfying for the organizers.*



## Making Your Meetings Mobile

In the age of the smartphone, the tablet and the laptop, it has become easier than ever for organizers to engage attendees about their meetings. Mobile technology now gives us the ability to extend the meetings experience to before, during and after the actual event. This gives the organizer an incredible new advantage and opportunity to increase the ROI of

attendees. Social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube and others can be used to drive event registrations, stimulate topical conversations and obtain questions for speakers, foster networking at conferences and continue the conversation well after the meeting has ended.

### EARLY ENGAGEMENT

It is all about getting attendees to break out of their individual time zones and siloed networks and enhancing their experience through interactive education and extended network-

ing. We have had our greatest successes when we start engaging them up to three months in advance, so by the time the convention actually happens, they are more involved and take more away from the entire experience — which is also satisfying for the organizers. Attendees can preview speaker topics, plan their own personalized networking and raise their expectations.

Bolstering excitement and driving registrations on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn is as easy as posting photos and videos from last year's convention, fun trivia about the host city, and updates on registration dates and deals. With all the choices in social media outlets, use them based on their strengths. LinkedIn is a great outlet for select subgroups (perhaps by specialty) within your meeting audience. Twitter feeds are good for immediate feedback during sessions. Facebook allows for a variety of input — including attendee-supplied photos, videos and more — and is ideal for quick polls.

It is also important as an organizer to consider that while many members do have mobile technology now with apps, some have not made the switch to smartphones and are still using laptops to access email and websites for information.

"We make each tool part of the circle of information and promote them through our website and our e-newsletter," said Jacqueline Petty, APR, communications manager, International Flight

Services Association. "Our LinkedIn group generally attracts seasoned professionals, but they are very engaged in the conversations on there. For Twitter, we tweet about our members' news, and we also link to the Twitter accounts of our speakers so that attendees can see what they are talking about before the meeting. Our Facebook page can alert attendees to upcoming events and schedule changes."

For the Hotel Electronic Distribution Association (HEDNA), Twitter and Constant Contact are their tools of choice for engaging members throughout the meetings process. "Our members are all involved in electronic distribution of information on some level," said Reed Hitchcock, executive director, HEDNA. "It varies, but fortunately their businesses are reliant on e-commerce to begin with, and so they are already utilizing and enthusiastic about mobile technology and social media."

### THE TWITTER STREAM

Speaking of Twitter, it is now a vital part of the overall conference experience. Displaying a live Twitter stream on screens so that everyone (not just the tweeters) in the audience can see it, develops a shared sense of community and active participation, which can be continued throughout the conference. In open sessions, it can help spur new topics and questions — and

it also becomes a way for managers to poll and receive audience feedback up to the minute. This allows for tweaks and resolutions in real time, as opposed to having to hear about issues after the event is over. It also can spark networking during the conference. A sample:

**John\_Doe** *John Doe*

*I really liked your thoughts on that, @Jane\_Smith — meet-up by lobby to talk after session?*

After the meeting is over, it is just as important to keep the conversation going with good follow-ups. Promoting and using Web-based surveys also has been made easier with mobile meetings tools. Getting attendees to share their photos and positive experiences, and making videos of the conference available for the public after 30 days are also great ways to continue the conversation. Not to mention, it is never too early to start promoting next year's event information.

The point is, mobile applications are expanding our capabilities as organizers, reducing costs, making our jobs as managers easier and improving the overall experience of the attendees. AC&F

**Phelps R. Hope, CMP**, vice president of meetings and expositions for Kellen Meetings — division of Kellen Company, an Association Management Company (AMC) with offices in Atlanta, New York City, Washington DC, Beijing and Brussels. He can be reached at [phope@kellencompany.com](mailto:phope@kellencompany.com) or 404-836-5050.

# The Power of Partnership

## The Value of Working With CVBs

By Karen Brost



**Brad Weaber**  
Executive Vice President  
Event Services  
SmithBuckin Corporation  
Chicago, IL

*“Technology can’t replace everything. CVBs are the seat on the street. They know their cities, they know the nuances.”*

**B**etween her current role as conference and special events manager for the Madison, WI-based World Council of Credit Unions (WOCCU) and her previous experience with the Greater Madison Convention and Visitors Bureau, Sue Sabatke, CMP, has learned a lot about the value of working with CVBs.

She is responsible for planning the annual World Credit Union Conference, which attracts more than 1,500 attendees from more than 50 countries. In the past few years, the conference has been held in destinations as diverse as Las Vegas, Barcelona and Hong Kong. This year’s conference will take place at the Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre (SECC) in Glasgow.

Sabatke values the support that each destination’s marketing representatives can provide. “I think in the U.S., some people tend to skip CVBs because it’s quite easy to find those contacts yourself, or you may have an allegiance to certain brands. But when you’re overseas, sometimes you’re working with local or national brands that you don’t have (at home).

“Because we rotate around the globe, we’re not really able to keep any of our partners,” she con-

tinues. “We start out every year having to find AV companies and translation companies and printers, all of these partners that when you’re meeting in the U.S. could travel with you. We can’t do that when we rotate around the globe. It’s very different.

“After having worked at a convention bureau,” she adds, “I realize the economic impact that an event the size of ours can have on a local community. So we try to use local vendors as much as we can. The Glasgow Marketing Bureau has done a really good job of helping us forge those partnerships. They have a really good team of people. They really know their city, and they do a good job of promoting it and following through with the help that you need.”

Representatives from the Glasgow Marketing Bureau attended WOCCU’s 2010 conference in Las Vegas to help the organization get a jump start on generating interest in the 2011 event. “They worked the stand the whole time,” Sabatke notes. “They brought giveaways and helped create buzz. It has really made a difference for us this year. Whenever we would go anywhere, people all knew about our conference. I truly attribute that to the marketing bureau being onsite in Las Vegas and also to the allure that Scotland has.”

### EXTRA EFFORTS FOR EXHIBITORS

Brad Weaber, executive vice president of



Photo courtesy of International Facility Management Association

event services for Chicago-based SmithBuckin Corporation has seen the role of the CVB evolve over the years. “In the past, we used them for lead referral and chasing down multiple hotels for citywides and things of that nature. Now there are online tools that will support that. But, he notes, “Technology can’t replace everything. CVBs are the seat on the street. They know their cities, they know the nuances.”

Weaber relies on CVBs to help him with marketing ideas, particularly in regard to exhibitors. “The exhibitor portion of our conventions is no longer just the five or six days of the meeting,” he says. “We’re looking at 365 days of commerce now in our exhibitor community. In order for us to build that commerce, we need to have support from our destinations. What I’m finding is that the creative cities are starting to get more and more engaged with organizations through their exhibitors. They are identifying, in advance, who they are and what they can do to help support them to keep them interested in the show. They’re actually trying to help solicit more sponsorship and more exhibitors to come to our shows.”

He elaborated on how exhibitors’ needs have changed. “The old way, you show up at the show, you go to an exhibitor and conduct business right there and right then. That’s not the norm any more. Most organizations now are finding that the exhibitor wants to have that constant connection with their buyers throughout the year, either through the association creating networking opportunities or through social media and things of that nature. The ROI component is completely different now.”

### SERVICES AND SUPPORT

Sherri O’Neill, logistics manager for the Schaumburg, IL-based American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), says the marketing support she receives from CVBs for her annual convention is invaluable. AVMA’s event attracts 6,000–10,000 attendees each year, and future sites have been booked through the year 2024.

O’Neill relies on her CVB contacts to help her find vendors, secure special facilities for executive board dinners, and to provide information such as a list of restaurants that she can publish for her attendees. “Even though we don’t use them for

International Facility Management Association (IFMA) attendees are tuned in at the education session at IFMA’s World Workplace 2010 Conference & Expo in Atlanta, GA. Ann Burton, manager of conferences for the Houston-based association, says she partners with CVBs more now than ever to help select and market the destination for the annual event. This year’s event will be held in Phoenix.

housing, it's invaluable assistance. We've just had the best luck with our reps so far in every city." The group is meeting in St. Louis this year, and has met in Atlanta, Seattle, New Orleans, Washington, DC, and Honolulu in recent years.

"Each CVB has its own program," she notes. "For instance, St. Louis has a welcome program where they'll put signs in all the windows of the local retail establishments and restaurants welcoming us. They also put welcome signs in the airport and they do street banner signage."

"Atlanta," she continues, "actually has a telemarketing program, so for free they will do telemarketing calls to our membership in the Atlanta region, inviting them to the AVMA convention. We worked with them last year, and they were fantastic."

Ann Burton, manager of conferences for the Houston-based International Facility Management Association (IFMA), is finding that she's using the CVB's services more now than ever. "Typically, in the past, we've only had them come out the year before to exhibit to give people some information about the city. We weren't really using all of their services. But now, we actually send them our RFPs

for vendors, for housing, for everything. We have them send them out on our behalf, and say that we only want five (responses) back."

She reflected on the important role that CVB staff members can play. "If our point person, our key contact person, is really good and at the top of her game, it's definitely a huge reflection on the city. Orlando is definitely on top. They're probably the easiest city for us to

work with. They're such a convention city that they completely have it down."

Organizations planning meetings in Orlando can call on Tina Jones for assistance with building attendance. As the meetings and conventions marketing executive for the Orlando/Orange County Convention and Visitors Bureau, Jones works closely with planners to help them market their Orlando show or event to attendees.

IFMA's next conference will be held in Phoenix in October. "I've been really, really impressed with Stephanie Davidson, our Phoenix CVB rep, also,"

Burton notes. "We've already been on several sites. Stephanie picks us up from the airport, shows us whatever is new. She also set up a meeting with their PR department and our marketing person."

"Phoenix has so much going on in their city," she adds. "It's basically brand new within the last three years. They've sunk so much money into it, which is completely opposite from the rest of the country, where with the economy, everything has pretty much come to a standstill. Phoenix has just been rocking and rolling."

Since IFMA's attendees are facility managers, sustainability is naturally a hot topic. The Phoenix Convention Center's West Building is LEED Silver certified and its North Building was built to LEED standards. The facility, which offers more than 900,000 sf of event space, has a comprehensive recycling program in place along with many other green initiatives, but it's the little touches that captured Burton's attention. "Their chairs are all made out of recycled seat belts and car batteries," Burton explains. "The Sheraton (Phoenix Downtown, adjacent to the convention center) grows their own herb garden on their roof. It's just little fun stuff like that, quirky little FM (facilities manager) facts that totally speak to the sustainability movement. We like to put them in our marketing pieces."

The Quad Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau is offering a new meeting planner incentive program for meeting contracts signed by June 30, 2012. The QCCVB represents the cities of Davenport and Bettendorf, IA, and Moline, East Moline and Rock Island, IL. Incentives include four percent off the master room bill plus up to three additional incentives based on peak room nights with a two-night minimum. Choices include one complimentary room for every 25 rooms consumed, a free suite upgrade, a free beverage break, free onsite registration staff or free Loop transportation. The Loop is a new transportation service that offers visitors a convenient way to see all five cities.

#### LEGISLATIVE LEADERSHIP

CVBs also can play a key role in supporting legislation that impacts their city's convention business. When organizations began canceling their conventions in Chicago due to high costs, the Chicago Convention and Tourism Bureau (CCTB) and the Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority (MPEA) worked with government offi-

cial and state lawmakers to support new legislation to remedy the situation. The new law, which calls for reforms that will lower costs for exhibitors, went into effect in May of last year. According to the CCTB, more than a dozen shows have signed with Chicago in recent months, including the Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society Annual Conference & Exhibition, which is one of the shows that had pulled out of Chicago years earlier, citing cost factors.

However, on March 31 part of the law (those rules that give exhibitors expanded rights to work on their booths and that extend union workers' straight-time hours) were overturned by the U.S. District Court citing a violation of the National Labor Relations Act.

The MPEA requested the court to stay execution of the order. In the interim, the MPEA will continue business as usual at McCormick Place under the current laws and prepare an appeal.

#### CONVENTION CENTER UPDATE

Sabatke has found that there are several advan-



Photo courtesy of Greensboro CVB

tages of working with the **Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre** in Glasgow for her upcoming conference. "Some centers have a base price and they don't tell you about all these other things that aren't included in your contract," she notes. "The SECC takes a little bit more of an inclusive approach. When you rent certain rooms, they already include AV, a technician and a room steward. I think they know their building so well that they know what it takes from a staffing perspective, and they just include all of that upfront."

The skyline of Greensboro, NC — home to the Greensboro Coliseum Complex, which boasts a 167,000-sf Special Events Center that can be partitioned into four halls, leaving 60,000 sf for exhibits and a 4,500-seat general seating arrangement.



**Ann Burton**  
Manager of Conferences  
International Facility  
Management Association  
Houston, TX

*"If our point person, our key contact person, is really good and at the top of her game, it's definitely a huge reflection on the city. Orlando is definitely on top. They're probably the easiest city for us to work with."*

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The Anaheim Convention Center offers 815,000 sf of exhibit space, making it the largest exhibit facility on the West Coast. The meeting and ballroom space totals 130,000 sf, conveniently located on the second and third levels, directly above the exhibit halls.

From my perspective, it was easier to have it factored in and know that it was included.

"Another thing that's nice is that the main room that we're using is an existing auditorium," she adds, "so it's really well equipped. From our perspective, it's nice to not have to deal with lighting. It's included as part of the facility rental."

The SECC includes 240,627 sf of flexible event space in five halls, 31 meeting rooms and two auditoriums. The 3,000-seat Clyde Auditorium is known as "the armadillo" because of its dramatic shell-like design. A new 12,000-seat venue, which will be named the Scottish Hydro Arena, is scheduled to open in 2013.

The **Albuquerque Convention Center** recently added a 360° virtual tour to its web site, [www.albuquerquecc.com](http://www.albuquerquecc.com). The virtual tour makes it possible for planners to view the facility's Kiva Auditorium, exhibit halls, ballroom and other meeting spaces online. The center offers over 600,000 sf of usable space on three levels.

The newly opened 107,000 sf **Wilmington Convention Center**, located on the North Carolina city's historic Riverwalk, is awaiting LEED certification for its eco-friendly design. The building's low-VoC white roof reflects the heat from the sun to reduce energy costs. Other green features include natural lighting through floor-to-ceiling windows, and carpeting and upholstery made from recycled content. Each of the center's interior rooms also features individual lighting controls and energy management and air quality sensors.

Located in the heart of downtown Durham, NC, the 44,000 sf **Durham Convention Center** is com-

pleting an extensive \$6 million renovation project, which includes new lighting, in-house sound, digital signage and wall and floor coverings. The facility's Junior Ballroom is also being reconfigured to create additional breakout space.

The **Charlotte (NC) Regional Visitors Authority (CRVA)** is planning to capitalize on the increased interest in the city as a convention destination since it was named as the site of the 2012 Democratic National Convention. The CRVA is working with agency Eric Mower and Associates which has worked with such brands as I LOVE NY, to create a new marketing campaign called "Charlotte's Got A Lot."

This year, the new White Oak Amphitheatre and the ACC Hall of Champions opened on the campus of the **Greensboro (NC) Coliseum Complex** — one of the premier sports and entertainment facilities in the Southeast. With a seating capacity of 7,688, the amphitheatre hosts a diverse selection of community events, music, arts and crafts, and festivals. The entrance to the ACC Hall of Champions features a state-of-the-art video globe with a multimedia display of conference highlights. Scheduled to open soon on the campus, the Greensboro Aquatic Center is a state-of-the-art facility for all major aquatic sports — competitive swimming and diving, water polo, synchronized swimming and other unique sports — all in one venue.

The staff of the **Palm Beach Convention Center** is committed to giving back. In the past year, employees have volunteered their time to the non-profit organization Rebuilding Together, and they collected donations for a "Stockings for Soldiers" program and non-perishable food items for Tree of Life, a program designed to help men re-enter the work force after being homeless.

#### PARTNERSHIPS PAY OFF

In the end, getting the right support from a CVB and/or convention center can make a planner's life much easier. As Sabatke says, "If the convention bureau is not involved and you have a problem, you're sort of hung out to dry." Fortunately for her, she's looking forward to a positive experience in Glasgow based on the strong relationships she has built with the bureau and convention center. "It's a good thing I like the (Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre)," she laughs, "because I'm going to be spending a lot of time there." AC&F

# green-centric; *adj.*, placing the planet at the center of an organization's business efforts



As the largest LEED-certified convention center in the United States, here's how the Anaheim Convention Center redefines "Green":

#### Culinary/Operational/Energy Sustainability

- On-site roof-top chef's garden
- First convention center to join the Seafood Watch program at Monterey Bay Aquarium
- Significant farm-to-fork program in place
- Beef provided through our own free-range herd; certified humanely raised, and grass fed and finished, ensuring a safe food source
- On-site Green Zone, a recycling and composting area that provides the Anaheim Resort District with fortified landscaping compost
- 65% of all waste diverted from landfill
- 1.5 megawatt rooftop solar array coming in 2012
- Environmentally Preferred Purchasing (EPP) to comply with green purchasing requirements

Equally important, we work with our customers, including Natural Products Expo West, on how to best embrace green policies.

### Anaheim/OC "LEEDers"

(starting at the back row left to right)

**Jim Tripp**  
General Manager, ARAMARK  
Anaheim Convention Center

**David Meek**  
Convention Center Manager  
Anaheim Convention Center

**Charles Ahlers**  
President, Anaheim Orange County  
Visitor & Convention Bureau

**Brian Daniels**  
Maintenance Manager  
Anaheim Convention Center

**Tom Morton**  
Executive Director  
Convention, Sports and Entertainment  
City of Anaheim

**Dina Prediskik**  
Product Development Specialist  
City of Anaheim

**Adam Andersen**  
Show Director  
Natural Products Expo West

**Earl Lasley**  
Business Program Manager  
City of Anaheim



[anaheimoc.org/green](http://anaheimoc.org/green)



# Speakers and Entertainment

## The Newest Trends That Spark Attendance

By Steve Winston



Susan Farrell  
Senior Director, Education and Learning Services  
SmithBucklin Corporation  
Chicago, IL

*“People are no longer willing to travel halfway across the country just to hear stories. But they will travel to hear visionaries or economists, or people who can speak about the impact of legislation or reform on their businesses.”*

**E**xperience.” It’s the word heard over and over again when speaking to association planners. These days — especially after the past few years — meetings need to be experiences. Education is obviously important. But many associations are beginning to realize that if they’re asking folks to travel great distances and stay in hotels — at their own expense — while giving up several days of work, they’d better provide something experiential in addition to education: experiences that will send them home not only more knowledgeable, but also more enthused, more engaged and more inspired!

### VISIONARIES INFORM AND INSPIRE

Susan Farrell is senior director of education and learning services for SmithBucklin, the largest association-management company in the world. And she has a front-row seat on the speakers and entertainers that associations are using these days.

“The right speaker can really spark attendance,” Farrell says. “I think the most important thing is to have a speaker who’s a visionary...someone who’s innovative, who can present new ideas or information about the future...and who can fill the attendees with

enthusiasm about these new ideas. When considering a speaker, it’s important to determine the needs of the people who will spend the money to come, in order to get knowledge that will help them perform better. And we have to be sure the speaker whom we select will meet those needs.”

Farrell says that even the most famous speaker is not enough in itself to get people to come. They’ll come only when they believe the content is right for them, and the speaker will provide them with knowledge that will help them perform better. Knowledge, she says, is the greatest motivational tool, not a famous speaker.

In the past, she says, there was a trend toward using people such as sports figures who became successful in business, or regular people with inspiring stories. But no more.

“People are no longer willing to travel halfway across the country just to hear stories,” Farrell says. “But they will travel to hear visionaries or economists, or people who can speak about the impact of legislation or reform on their businesses. And they’ll travel to hear heroes who can talk about crisis-management or resourcefulness...people such as Captain Sullenberger or Rudy Giuliani or former Navy Seals.”

Diane Goodman, CMP, president of Windsor, CT-based Goodman Speakers Bureau, also believes celebrity is no longer king when it comes to speakers. “Content is king now,” says Goodman. “It has to be relevant for the attendees. How can we lead



Photo courtesy of Key Artist Group

Merging content and entertainment, the eye-catching “Eye Droids” troupe displays customized meeting messaging to attendees via iPad helmets.

better? How can we increase retention? How can we better service our members? How can we grow our membership? How can we enhance our team-building and collaborative efforts? And how can we be better innovators?”

### BOOKED ON A FEELING

Brian Palmer, CMM, president of National Speakers Bureau, an Illinois-based company, notes that sometimes speakers are chosen for the wrong reasons. And when that happens, attendees are reluctant to come again the following year. “Often, planners base decisions about a speaker on emotion. What really matters, however, is how effective he’ll be with this particular group. We have a saying here, based on the old song, ‘Hooked on a Feeling.’ Too often, entertainers are ‘Booked on a Feeling.’ You need to base your decision on solid, objective information, and on the goals and objectives of your meeting. Otherwise, your speaker will flop. And your attendance the following year will do the same.”

Michelle Lemmons-Poscente is founder/chairman of ISB Global, which procures speakers and entertainment for association and corporate events. “The difference between a good speaker and a great one can be the difference between success and failure for your event,” she says. “Attendees will remember a great speaker for a long time.”

Lemmons-Poscente notes that many plan-

ners are still under the misperception that using a speakers bureau or talent agency costs money. In fact, she says, it doesn’t cost money in most cases. And, in addition, since they do the negotiating for you, you’ll probably get a better price.

“The typical motivational speaker is not that much in demand anymore,” she says. “Today, associations want people who can speak about technology, about globalization, CSR, social media, innovation. They want to hear an inspiring message, true — but they want to hear it from someone who can provide them with practical advice they can use when they get back home.”

### ENTERTAINMENT WITH A MESSAGE

It’s not only speakers who can provide motivation and innovation for association groups; certain types of entertainers also can spark creativity and innovation.

Lee McDonald, owner/president of Key Artist Group (Las Vegas and Orlando), says the right entertainment can provide a relevant message, while also providing an experience attendees will remember long after they’ve left the meeting. McDonald, who’s also membership director of the International Association of Corporate Entertainment Producers, represents a new act called “Eye Droids.” The troupe, created by ESP Tampa’s Dorene Collier, creative director and AJ LeBlanc, technical director, special-



Lee McDonald  
Owner/President  
Key Artist Group  
Orlando, FL

***“We’re seeing entertainment being moved from parties and dining functions into the meetings themselves. And we’re seeing technology that can provide the learning experience for which attendees are hungry.”***

izes in innovation and creativity, McDonald says. Its members appear at meetings in futuristic silver outfits and helmets, with iPads positioned inside their helmets and covering their faces. And these iPads can display graphics, messaging and video, all customized for the association. They also can post messages directing attendees to the next event or meeting room. They get attendees thinking about the future while enhancing the “experience” factor.

“We’re seeing entertainment being moved from parties and dining functions into the meetings themselves,” McDonald says. “And we’re seeing technology that can provide the learning experience for which attendees are hungry.”

#### CELEBRITY CAUTIONARY TALE

Guy Genis is founder/CEO of Eventmakers, a Southern California firm representing speakers such as former President Bill Clinton, Microsoft’s Bill Gates, and success coach Anthony Robbins;

and entertainers such as Elton John, Bill Cosby and Jerry Seinfeld. “You can’t hire a speaker or an entertainer on a hunch,” he says, “or just because they’re a big name. If their speech or act isn’t relevant to the

audience, you’re wasting your time.” Genis adds that, often, the biggest entertainers come with the biggest riders, and they’re sometimes the most difficult to deal with. “One famous entertainer included a rider that she needed a separate room for her cats,” Genis says. “Another one didn’t want any contact with the hotel staff, so we had to build her a special tunnel to pass through. Another one has his bed shipped from home, so he has all the comforts of home.”

Genis says there’s another — perhaps unlikely — type of speaker/entertainer making inroads with associations today. He says winners of TV shows such as “Survivor,” “The Apprentice” and “American Idol” are becoming more popular — because they can convey useful messages about creativity and about persevering against the odds.

#### EMCEE/ENTERTAINER/TROUBLESHOOTER

“I want people to walk out of our meetings talking about the experience,” says Claire Rusk, CMP, vice president of operations of the 3,000-member Air Traffic Control Association. “Our people work hard, under a lot of pressure, all year long. They want to learn, but they also want to feel rewarded for their hard work. This year’s meeting isn’t successful if attendees aren’t inspired to sign up for next year’s meeting.”

Rusk is responsible for staging the Annual Air

Traffic Control Conference & Exposition. This year’s event, which will be held in October at Gaylord National Hotel & Convention Center near Washington DC, will be the 56th. She has 3,000 attendees and more than 125 exhibitors who want to be entertained as well as educated.

“I’ll tell you the benefits of a great speaker or entertainer,” says Rusk. “We’ve been using an emcee/magician named Bill Herz the past five years. He knows our organization, and our goals. He’s so professional that I don’t need to script him. If an act doesn’t show up, or if something goes wrong with the sets, he runs up, takes center stage and entertains the crowd as if it’s all part of the show. Most of our members never even know when something goes wrong.”

Goodman likes the approach. “You can maximize your value — and lower your price — if your speaker is also an emcee who can keep your audience engaged or if he/she can entertain them, as well.”

Rusk says that in the past there were more observers of world affairs. But these days, attendees want entertainment, as well; someone to wow them.

“Even through the recession,” Rusk adds, “our meetings have grown every year — in both attendance and exhibitors. We’re obviously giving our members what they need to come to the meetings and what they want in a program.”

Tracy Wright, CAE, is director of special projects at the National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI), which has a membership of 7,000 companies and 22,000 people. She puts together the Annual House of Delegates Meetings for the association, attracting some 300 attendees every spring. And she contracts for talent for the annual Evening of Excellence Awards at each meeting.

“We need an emcee as well as entertainment,” Wright says. “But we economize by using one person for both. John Charles is a unique singer/musician/performer/comedian. He knows our organization, our goals and our attendees. He’s very engaging; he gets them excited and enthused. And he’s quick on his feet. If a backstage or scheduling problem arises during the evening, no one in the audience even realizes it.” The attendees love him so much, in fact, that NARI has already booked John Charles for its 2012 meeting.

“When you have chemistry that works,” says Wright, “and that brings attendees back year after year, there’s no reason to change it. There are a lot of factors that go into the creation of a successful

meeting. And one of the biggest is attendance. If people don’t come, the meeting isn’t successful.”

#### AVOIDING ‘NAPTIME AT DAYCARE’

More than 1,000 attendees from all over the country attended the Warehousing, Education, & Research Council’s (WERC) May conference in Orlando. WERC is a 2,500-member association for logistics/distribution professionals and suppliers.

“Nothing’s worse than having a great dinner on your final evening, and then having a bad speaker,” says Michael Mikitka, CEO of WERC. “This increases the chance of rolling eyes and yawns. We call it ‘naptime at daycare.’ It’ll ruin your conference. And it’ll hurt attendance the following year.”

Mikitka says WERC likes high-energy speakers and humor. And — even in the presentations from industry professionals — the program stays away from a lot of data and facts/figures in order to eliminate the yawn-factor.

The association had two excellent speakers at the May meeting, each of whom had a relevant message for attendees. Keith Ferrazzi, an author and networking expert, spoke about how the establishment and maintenance of relationships can enhance organizational success. And Robyn Benincasa, a San Diego firefighter and an Eco-Challenge Adventure Racing World Champion (running 50 miles through the desert, then swimming five miles, then cycling up a mountain, etc.) spoke about “Ordinary People, Extraordinary Results.”

“We have a great ROI from programs such as this,” says Mikitka. “Both are high-energy speakers, engaging without being too touchy-feely. They really fire up our attendees. And fired-up attendees will go back to their jobs with more focus and more creativity. This resonates very well with our people; they tell us it’s exactly what they need to be better at their jobs.”

For planners whose job it is to produce winning events, the question about budgeting for speakers and entertainment is no longer “Can we afford it?” These days, the question may be “Can we afford not to have it?”



Tracy Wright, CAE  
Director, Special Projects  
National Association of the  
Remodeling Industry  
Des Plaines, IL

***“We need an emcee as well as entertainment. But we economize by using one person for both.”***



Photo courtesy of Anthony Tripp, AMF Photos

Singer/musician/performer/comedian John Charles serves as both entertainer and emcee for the National Association of the Remodeling Industry’s meetings. “He knows our organization, our goals, and our attendees,” says NARI’s Director of Special Projects Tracy Wright. “He’s very engaging; he gets them excited and enthused. And he’s quick on his feet — if a backstage or scheduling problem arises during the evening, no one in the audience even realizes it.”

## Speaking From Experience

Danny Cox has made over 3,000 speeches. He’s a member of The Speaker Hall of Fame. And, oh yes, he’s broken the sound barrier over a thousand times.

Cox is a well-known speaker and author on the topic of being a leader in pressurized situations. And if there’s anyone who knows about “pressurized” situations, it’s him. For 10 years, he was a test pilot for the U.S. Air Force, flying F-101B Voodoo fighters at 1,200 miles-per-hour, sometimes breaking the sound barrier two or three times in the same flight.

“You want to talk about being cool under pressure?” Cox asks. “Try climbing from sea level to 35,000 feet in 90 seconds, with no horizons and a force of about 1,000



Former test pilot Danny Cox imparts hard-won wisdom about staying cool under pressure.

pounds pushing down on your head. Or try diving at 1,000 mph straight down toward the Okefenokee Swamp in Georgia.”

Cox doesn’t tell jokes. But he does tell humorous stories, in his native Ozark Mountain accent. One of them was about the time, after all his supersonic stunts, he was turned down for a job as a commercial pilot...because he’s only 5 feet 4 inches tall.

“If you want to get an audience’s attention,” he says, “start with a story about personal failure. No one can relate to speakers who walk in as if they’re better than everyone else. People want to know how they can work more effectively with the guy sitting next to them back at the office. And they want to know how they can improve their own performance.”

Toward that end, Cox sends his association clients detailed questionnaires about their organizational goals, and their members’ needs. And, being from the Ozarks, he’s not above using a little homespun humor to illustrate his points about dealing with priorities.

“If you’ve got a frog to swallow,” he says, “don’t look at it too long. And if you’ve got more than one to swallow, start with the biggest one first.” — SW

# The SMERF Challenge

## Negotiating a Changing Economy

By George Seli



Jessica Roberts, CMP  
Director of Sales & Special Events  
University of Maryland Alumni Association  
College Park, MD

*“We have to be really strategic when we’re setting up our budgets for catering, rooms and rental fees. And we get really creative with our décor, doing mostly everything in-house. For the invitations, we don’t do printed pieces.”*

The lighthearted nature of the acronym SMERF is effectively a sign that one shouldn’t expect precise criteria for whether a group belongs to the category. It stands for social, military, educational, religious and fraternal organizations, but there are exceptions. For example, not all educational associations would necessarily qualify as SMERF, while government groups would, according to some meeting professionals. And there are some who still use the acronym SMURF, including union groups instead of educational ones. It became SMERF, notes Fred Shea, vice president of strategic partnerships with Visit Orlando, “because some hotel companies don’t really market to the unions.” In fact, the term originated in hotel sales,

when reps wanted a way to designate groups with certain booking patterns. “We started using it in the late ‘80s, maybe early ‘90s,” recalls Shea, who once specialized in the SMERF market as vice president of global sales for Hyatt. “We always had sales managers who were focused on ‘distressed date’ business,” that is, clients that typically meet over lower-demand times.

SMERF groups tend to be open to meeting during slow seasons, weekends and sometimes holidays.

It’s often because they are looking for lower rates, but

in other cases it’s part of tradition: The Lions Club, for example, meets on the Fourth of July. “Many of the religious groups don’t hold the same religious holidays as the majority of Americans, so some groups are willing to meet over Christmas and Easter. That’s huge to a destination or an individual property,” observes Teri Elliott Jarvie, CMP, vice president, member programs with the Association Forum. “Over the last several years destinations have come to realize how important this base of business is during times when traditionally other groups aren’t willing to meet.”

### THE RECESSION’S GOOD SIDE

A time when many corporate groups weren’t willing to meet was of course the height of the recession, and that’s when CVBs and hoteliers oftentimes became more cognizant of the value of their SMERF clients, and began catering to them more. “And what some of these groups will do in a down market like we’ve had is take the opportunity to go to locations and hotels where they previously couldn’t afford to go,” Shea says. “Sometimes they’ll move from second- to first-tier cities or change their quality of hotels because they can.”

Unfortunately long-term relationships seldom develop when meetings business is based on market opportunism, as invariably the corporate market improves (indeed, it has) and suppliers in turn distance themselves from SMERF groups. “It becomes much



more transactional. And so in those places where SMERF groups are always welcome, you’re going to have better relations,” Shea adds. And there is a reason for hotels to routinely welcome them: routine need periods. “January in Chicago, even in the best of markets, is always going to be a time period where you going to want to go after certain types of business, or any business,” he points out. Now, SMERF clients don’t generally mean the kinds of ancillary revenues that come with major corporate or association clients, but they do mean occupancy, which “is critically important for a hotel. A hotel makes more money on rooms than they do anywhere else.”

And SMERF groups can make quite dependable clients: Fraternal groups regularly meet during the summer, and military reunions are picking up again, “unfortunately because we’re at war,” says Shea. Religious groups can bring vast numbers into a destination, and the educational segment is also going strong. That’s not to say SMERF meetings haven’t been challenged by the recession. Educational congregants, for example, tend to be budget-focused to begin with, and in some cases the recession compounded those economic limitations, resulting in diminished attendance.

### CASH-STRAPPED ATTENDEES

“The economy has had a real impact, especially on our organization where a majority of our mem-

bers are cash-strapped teachers from small towns, and so it puts a hardship on our members to attend the meetings,” remarks John Hill, Ph.D., executive director of the National Rural Education Association (NREA), based at Purdue University in West Lafayette, IN. This year the NREA expects about 200 attendees at its annual convention in Hilton Head, SC. A couple of years ago attendance reached a low of about 120, whereas 10 years ago it was about 400, Hill relates. In response to its demographics and the impact of the recession, the NREA continues to “be very sensitive on cost” for attendees, he says, and has reduced its own operating expenses by shifting from face-to-face to conference calls for its committee meetings and other small gatherings. “We’ve found that we’ve had to do that to save money, but we’re meeting more often,” he explains.

The NREA convention also has been restructured to increase its affordability to members, essentially shortening it from five to four days. “We actually have two meetings in one: our convention and our research symposium. We have them at the same time to help cut back on expenses, and teachers can spend fewer hours out of the classroom,” Hill says. The organization is also exploring co-locating its convention with that of another educational group, thereby creating more negotiating leverage with ho-

(Top) The University of Maryland Alumni Association uses a strategic budgeting approach to plan events such as the Alumni Annual Awards Gala held at the university’s Alumni Center each year. (Above) Maryland Day is a campus event open to the community, celebrating all the university has to offer.

tels. "And some of these educational organizations are very closely related, so instead of a person having to attend two meetings a year they can attend one location, saving on transportation." The cross-organizational networking is an added plus.

### MEETINGS MERGERS

Other educational groups are also merging their meetings. For instance, Bloomington, IN-based Future Educators of America oftentimes holds a board of directors meeting at the annual meeting of Manassas, VA-based Association of Teacher Educators (ATE). "It brings them more hotel rooms, and we generally get a pretty good rate, so it helps them. And we'll take care of all their food functions," says ATE Executive Director David A. Ritchey, Ph.D., CAE. "If any of their members want to attend our annual meeting, they're right there." These days, the

ATE is also "trying to get the best deal for our members possible" and is looking at shortening its event. "We're working toward that, but it's a long process, especially trying to fit in the number of presentations that we have."

### FUNDING ATTENDANCE

State teacher associations are sometimes challenged by a lack of state funding for members to participate in their professional development programs. "The funding for educational professional development in Michigan has been very minimal for the past four years, and so we've had to get creative and work out of the box to find resources to get teachers to be able to get to the conferences," says Sue Campbell, associate director, Michigan Science Teachers Association (MSTA), and manager with Ann Arbor, MI-based Association Management Resources. "It's

kind of a Catch 22: When we find the resources for the teachers to come there's not enough substitutes for the school districts to be able to let the teachers have the time off. But the teachers in the state every five years have to have so much professional development to renew their certificate." The problem was alleviated to a degree last year with a campaign to obtain sponsorships for teachers from companies such as yearbook publishers, associations and individuals. The proceeds went toward teachers' dues, registration fees, substitute fees and travel expenses for the MSTA's annual conference. "We were able to secure enough in stipends to get 400 teachers to attend" among the roughly 3,000 total attendees, Campbell remarks. "And the vendors whom we approached liked the idea, because it helps them with their exhibits when more teachers are able to attend."

### STRATEGIC BUDGETING

Attendees of the University of Maryland Alumni Association aren't necessarily on tight budgets: Some are corporate leaders and fairly affluent. But in order to maximize overall attendance at the organization's various events, it's still important to "watch cost," says Director of Sales & Special Events Jessica Roberts, CMP, especially for events that are not donor-related. For example, members will be invited to watch the University of Maryland take on Notre Dame at FedEx Field in November, and "if it's any more than \$30 a ticket, many will not attend. So we have to be really strategic when we're setting up our budgets for catering, rooms and rental fees," she relates. "And we get really creative with our décor, doing mostly everything in-house. For the invitations, we don't do printed pieces, just a lot of e-marketing because that's more cost-effective."

Since the association only meets in cities with a big alumni base (whether first-tier or not), just about all alumni drive in to the events, apart from the staff, who fly in from the university. And that means few sleeping rooms at the hotel in contrast to the amount of function space required. Negotiating leverage is thus compromised. To make the business more attractive to the hotel, "we do mention the fact that many of our alumni coming in are VIPs, especially if it's a donor-related event. We mention these are CEOs of companies, people that are very high up in the companies they work for, so the exposure for the property is really good," says Roberts. In addition, the association tries to keep all or most F&B events onsite. At a

recent gathering at the W Los Angeles for about 100 alumni, "not only did we have that particular event that evening at the hotel, but we hosted a smaller luncheon earlier in the day with a select group of people, sometimes with quite a few staff because many development officers will go. So the hotel got revenue from staff rooms, F&B and those types of ancillary items."

### ROOMS-TO-MEETING-SPACE RATIO

While the University of Maryland Alumni Association's sleeping rooms-to-meeting space ratio is less than ideal from a hotelier's perspective, it's also something hoteliers versed in the SMERF market expect. The market is characterized by many regional events with a good number of drive-ins, and educational groups in particular "have a tendency to use a lot of meeting space for the amount of sleeping rooms that they would want, and it can be less attractive to hotels," Shea says. Now, an alumni gathering would not tend to use many breakouts, confining its activities mostly to one ballroom or conference room. But other kinds of educational groups do conduct training and a variety of presentations, the latter being important for members' CVs. "We try to bring in as many sleeping rooms as we can, but we do need to have a decent-sized ballroom and 8–10 presentation rooms throughout the entire meeting," says Ritchey. "Whether the hotel can handle that is a big part of the decision to go there."

### VENDOR RELATIONSHIPS

Whether it's an educational group, a union, a religious group or any of the other SMERF categories, CVBs and hoteliers that value the business will maintain the relationship despite any limitations and challenges. Due to those relationships, Campbell says she feels no sense of competition from corporate groups or transients trying to book the hotels the MSTA partners with. "The individuals at the hotels that I've been working with for a while, they know when our meetings take place, they're very mindful of the size of our group and very appreciative of our business." SMERF planners can take heart in the many hoteliers who will put up the welcome banner for a group like the MSTA just as they would for Merrill Lynch. AC&F



Sue Campbell  
Associate Director  
Michigan Science Teachers  
Association  
Ann Arbor, MI

*"The individuals at the hotels that I've been working with for a while, they know when our meetings take place, they're very mindful of the size of our group and very appreciative of our business."*



## Government Groups: the Downturn's Upside

There's no graceful way to include a G in the acronym SMERF, but some meeting pros feel government groups do fall under that umbrella. True, they generally don't want to meet on weekends, and they don't have the date flexibility to allow an exclusive focus on slow seasons at destinations. But they are characterized by a need for low room rates — government lodging rates — which are usually lower than hoteliers' standard rates. And, like many other SMERF groups, government attendees are not likely to bring a property a great amount of ancillary revenue, being limited by per-diem travel expense allowances.

"The government lodging rates and per diem are always points of contention for the hotels because they continue to drop," notes Leslie Thornton, managing director of Courtesy Associates, a subsidiary of SmithBucklin that has been working in the government space for over four decades. "During 2003–2004, before the recession, we were having problems with hotels wanting to take government business because they could hold out and find groups that would pay more, that would have more F&B and big parties that would ultimately earn them much more revenue." Furthermore, the groups tend to be very space-intensive, with lots of breakouts and even exhibit hall usage. And, Thornton points out, "they want to fly in on Monday and meet Tuesday-Thursday, which are prime days. For a hotel that's not the best booking pattern."

But unsurprisingly, the recession brought more supplier interest in the government market, along with SMERF overall. "Hotels were dying for business, and everybody wanted to learn about the government market," Thornton relates. Yet the "education" that transpired was mutual. "We were able to get into hotels, four-star hotels, at the government rate. ...And we would have to educate our clients by saying, 'We are not setting a precedent here; chances are you will never see this again.' We were so thrilled to be able to get into some of these higher-end properties that we didn't even think about what life was going to be like when we got there. For example, the dining is much more expensive, and so we had all sorts of people who were actually going outside of the property to get lunches and dinners."

Against all the disadvantages to booking government business, the plus for hotels to learn the market is that there is and will continue to be plenty of that business available. "We saw the corporate business slide a few years ago, but government meetings stayed consistent," Thornton notes. "Since the recession, I think there's been a great education across the hotels that didn't do government business, and a realization that it is a market that needs to be understood. I would say we now have better relationships and understanding." Hopefully that will make government meeting planners' lives a bit easier now that occupancy rates are rising again.

— GS



## The Best of the Best

The deserving winners of the 2011 Distinctive Achievement Awards presented by *Association Conventions & Facilities* magazine have met or exceeded the high standards that association meeting planners demand today. Many of the more than 20,400 meeting professionals who read *Association Conventions & Facilities* magazine seized this golden opportunity to cast their ballot for the hotels, resorts, and convention and visitors bureaus that successfully accommodated their association meetings during the past year.

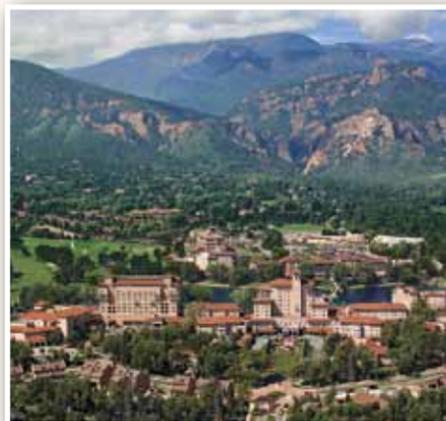
These Distinctive Achievement Award winners join the fine awardees of Coastal Communications Corporation's other prestigious meeting magazines:

- *Corporate & Incentive Travel's* 27th Annual Awards of Excellence to be published in November.
- The 17th Annual Greens of Distinction Award winners, which were named in the August issue of *Corporate & Incentive Travel*.
- *Insurance & Financial Meetings Management's* 13th Annual World Class Awards to be published in the September/October issue.

The list of winners can be found on the opposite page. Several profiles of the best of the best follow.



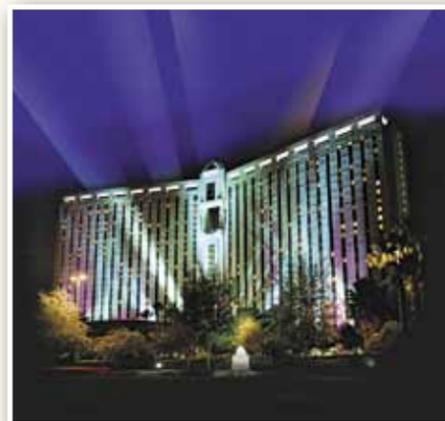
ARIA Resort & Casino



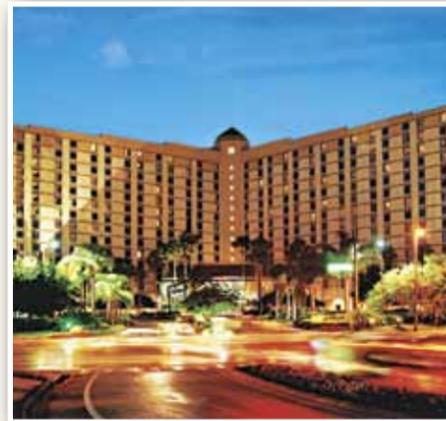
The Broadmoor



Long Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau



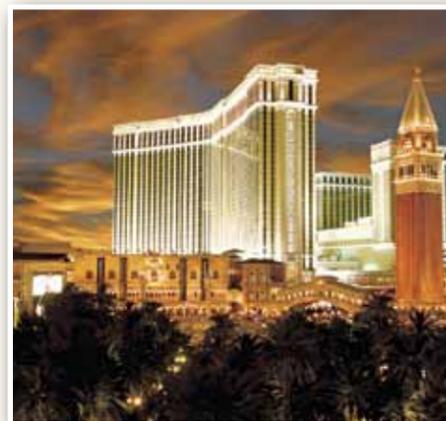
Rosen Centre Hotel



Rosen Plaza Hotel



Rosen Shingle Creek



The Venetian Resort Hotel Casino

## 2011 DISTINCTIVE ACHIEVEMENT AWARD WINNERS

### CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAUS

**Atlantic City Convention & Visitors Authority**  
Atlantic City, NJ

**Chicago Convention & Tourism Bureau**  
Chicago, IL

**Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau**  
Boston, MA

**Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau**  
Miami, FL

**Indianapolis Convention & Visitors Association**  
Indianapolis, IN

**Irving Convention & Visitors Bureau**  
Irving, TX

**Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority**  
Las Vegas, NV

**Long Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau**  
Long Beach, CA

**Nashville Convention & Visitors Bureau**  
Nashville, TN

**New Orleans Convention & Visitors Bureau**  
New Orleans, LA

**NYC & Company**  
New York, NY

**Oklahoma City Convention & Visitors Bureau**  
Oklahoma City, OK

**Palm Beach County Convention and Visitors Bureau**  
Palm Beach, FL

**San Diego Convention & Visitors Bureau**  
San Diego, CA

**San Jose Convention & Visitors Bureau**  
San Jose, CA

**Seattle's Convention and Visitors Bureau**  
Seattle, WA

**VISIT DENVER**  
Denver, CO

**Visit Orlando**  
Orlando, FL



### HOTELS AND RESORTS

**ARIA Resort & Casino**  
Las Vegas, NV

**Beau Rivage Resort & Casino**  
Biloxi, MS

**The Broadmoor**  
Colorado Springs, CO

**Caesars Palace Las Vegas**  
Las Vegas, NV

**Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center**  
National Harbor, MD

**Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center**  
Nashville, TN

**Hilton Anaheim**  
Anaheim, CA

**Hilton Anatole**  
Dallas, TX

**Hilton Chicago**  
Chicago, IL

**Loews Portofino Bay Hotel at Universal Orlando**  
Orlando, FL

**MGM Grand at Foxwoods**  
Mashantucket, CT

**MGM Grand Detroit**  
Detroit, MI

**MGM Grand Las Vegas**  
Las Vegas, NV

**Mohegan Sun**  
Uncasville, CT

**The Palmer House Hilton**  
Chicago, IL

**The Peabody Orlando**  
Orlando, FL

**Rosen Centre Hotel**  
Orlando, FL

**Rosen Plaza Hotel**  
Orlando, FL

**Rosen Shingle Creek**  
Orlando, FL

**The Venetian Resort Hotel Casino**  
Las Vegas, NV

**Walt Disney World Resort**  
Lake Buena Vista, FL

**Wynn Las Vegas**  
Las Vegas, NV



# The Broadmoor

1 Lake Avenue, Colorado Springs, CO 80906  
Phone: 800-633-7711 • Fax: 719-577-5779 • Contact: John Rovie, Director of Sales  
jrovie@broadmoor.com • www.broadmoor.com

**W**hen The Broadmoor opened in 1918, the master plan was to create a perfect blend of classic style and service excellence. Because of that continued commitment, today this spectacular resort is the longest-running consecutive winner of both the AAA Five Diamond and the Forbes/Mobil Travel Guide Five Star awards, and is a premiere choice for association meeting planners.

### MEETING SPACE

With 185,000 sf of flexible meeting space and 62

meeting rooms, the “Grande Dame of the Rockies” combines state-of-the-art comfort and convenience with an elegant and luxurious charm, making it the ultimate place to gather. Broadmoor Hall has 60,000 sf of pillarless, carpeted meeting space that is ideal for large meetings, trade shows of up to 350 booths or banquets that can accommodate up to 3,800 attendees. It is adjacent to Colorado Hall, which boasts 15,000 sf and the International Center, which offers 18,000 sf of space. The complex of meeting space can host up to 7,000 attendees.

### ACCOMMODATIONS

The Broadmoor has 744 accommodations including 593 hotel rooms, 107 suites and 44 Cottage bedrooms. Added in 2009, Broadmoor Cottages are located along the 18th fairway of the East Golf Course and feature five eight-bedroom cottages and one four-bedroom cottage.

Larger groups are accommodated by the Broadmoor Connection, a unique alliance of three nearby support properties with more than 1,000 additional guest rooms.

### CHAMPIONSHIP GOLF AND MORE

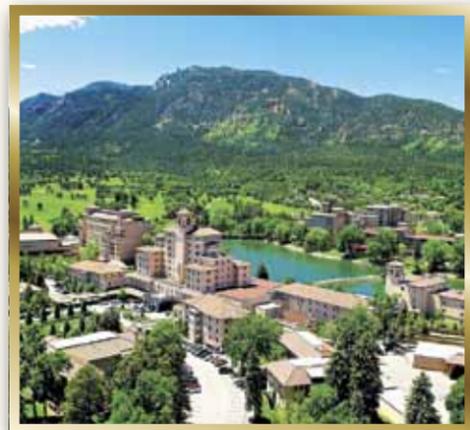
The Broadmoor features three championship golf courses. The Broadmoor’s historic East Course hosted the 2011 U.S. Women’s Open. The East Course and the traditional West Course are a collaboration of designs by Donald Ross and Robert Trent Jones Sr. The Mountain Course by Nicklaus Design offers an additional 18 challenging holes and exquisite panoramic views.

In addition to the Penrose Room, Colorado’s only five-star, five-diamond restaurant, The Broadmoor features 17 restaurants, cafés and

lounges for endless dine-around or private dining options. It also features six tennis courts, 25 retail shops and The Spa at The Broadmoor — Colorado’s only Forbes Five Star spa.

### VALUE OF A RESORT MEETING

When space, time and efficiency are part of a meeting equation, the value of a resort experience like the one offered at The Broadmoor is unparalleled. The resort setting at the gateway to the Colorado Rocky Mountains offers an atmosphere conducive to gathering while increasing face-to-face time. There is no need to take people offsite because the campus environment provides multiple, easily accessible areas to intermingle, saving time as well as transportation costs. This is where the value proposition of The Broadmoor plays a direct role in achieving the goals and objectives of an organization by providing a wide variety of meeting spaces within walking distance of rooms, dining options and activities.



### FACTS & FEATURES

**Total Guest Rooms:** 744  
**Meeting Space:** 185,000 sf, 62 meeting rooms.

### SPECIAL SERVICES & AMENITIES

The historic Broadmoor offers 54 holes of championship golf, a full-service spa, swimming, 18 dining options and 25 specialty boutiques on 3,000 acres.

AC&F



THE PROPERTY

# famous

FOR GREAT MEETINGS

IS ALSO AVAILABLE FOR GREAT BIG MEETINGS.

IF YOU’VE BEEN HERE, YOU KNOW.®

A legendary venue for high-end board meetings and executive retreats, The Broadmoor can also host grand corporate events at Broadmoor Hall, featuring 60,000 square feet of pillarless space. Hold a meeting November through April of any future year and receive 25% allowable attrition and up to a 10% rebate on room revenue.\*

\*Offer applies to new business opportunities contracted by December 31, 2011.

THE  
**BROADMOOR**  
COLORADO SPRINGS

BROADMOOR.COM

866.914.8433



ASK ABOUT BROADMOOR CONNECTION, OFFERING UP TO 1,700 ROOMS WITH OUR NEARBY PARTNER PROPERTIES.





# ARIA Resort & Casino

3730 Las Vegas Boulevard South, Las Vegas, NV 89158  
Phone: 866-718-2489 • Fax: 702-669-4568 • Contact: Tony Yousfi, CMP, Director of Sales  
meetings@arialasvegas.com • www.arialasvegas.com

**L**ocated in the heart of CityCenter, the AAA Five Diamond ARIA Resort & Casino is an awe-inspiring combination of striking architecture, impeccable hospitality and sustainable design.

ARIA's 4,004 guest rooms incorporate integrated technologies allowing guests to customize their stay to meet their personal preferences.

ARIA's rooms and suites showcase impeccable décor with dramatic color tones, expressive artwork and a balance of textures and materials that convey calm and elegance along with an unparalleled array of amenities. ARIA's suites offer spaces to satisfy a variety of needs such as large parlors for entertaining and separate conference rooms

in Executive Hospitality Suites.

### THE MEETING EXPERIENCE

ARIA provides Las Vegas' premier meeting experience featuring 300,000 sf of technologically advanced meeting and prefunction space. A spectacular glass curtain wall spanning the entire north façade of the facility brings in the outside and enhances the meeting experience. Three levels of flexible space feature four ballrooms ranging in size from 20,000 to 51,000 sf, three with fully functioning theatrical stages. Each level offers additional breakout meeting rooms from 800 to 3,400 sf to host smaller programs. Two executive boardrooms are designed for intimate meetings with intricate presentation requirements such as video confer-

encing and incredible technology taking production and execution to a new level.

Setting the standard for responsible growth in Las Vegas, ARIA is one of the largest buildings in the United States to receive LEED Gold certification from the U.S. Green Building Council. The property utilizes recycled wood from responsibly managed forests and advanced technology to attain a 30 percent improvement of energy efficiency. ARIA has received a five key rating from the Green Key Eco-rating Program for its ongoing operational commitment to sustainability.

The resort features a variety of dining experiences from world-renowned restaurateurs including Masa Takayama, Michael Mina, Julian Serrano, Jean-Georges Vongerichten, Sirio Maccioni and Shawn McClain. Private dining rooms and buy-outs for groups and events are available at all of the impressive venues. Guests will also enjoy ARIA's dynamic collection of lounges, bars and nightclubs available for large or small private events. The well-designed Spa & Salon at ARIA offers a complete treatment menu, deluxe fitness room and spa suites designed to accommodate couples' treatments or small group events.

At the entertainment centerpiece of ARIA, the visionary creative team at Cirque du Soleil presents Viva ELVIS, a rockin' blend of dance, live music and acrobatics that pays tribute to the life and musical legacy of Elvis Presley.

Crystals, CityCenter's shopping, dining and nightlife district, houses some of the world's most elite luxury brands and high-end couture and dynamic dining concepts. Specialty events can be held in many of the truly unique spaces inside Crystals. 



### FACTS & FEATURES

Guest Rooms/Suites: 4,004/442  
Meeting Space: 300,000 sf

### SPECIAL SERVICES & AMENITIES

The AAA Five Diamond ARIA provides 300,000 sf of technologically advanced meeting space with four ballrooms and 38 meeting rooms. An attentive staff ensures every program is executed flawlessly.



THE NEW GOLD STANDARD IN VEGAS MEETINGS.



Book a meeting at ARIA Resort & Casino and experience innovation upon arrival. As a resort with LEED® Gold certification, your group will enjoy clean air and beautiful natural lighting throughout three levels of flexible convention space. In addition, an enticing array of acclaimed dining, shopping and entertainment options is trumped only by an unrivaled commitment to individually tailored service and the utmost personal attention. Ensure your meeting is an absolute success at this AAA Five Diamond destination.



Contact us at 866.718.2489 or meetings@arialasvegas.com.

**Aria**  
RESORT & CASINO  
CITYCENTER, LAS VEGAS

AriaLasVegas.com



## Long Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau

301 E. Ocean Boulevard, Suite 1900, Long Beach, CA 90802  
Phone: 800-452-7829 • Fax: 562-436-8606 • Iris Himert, Senior Vice President of Sales  
irish@longbeachcvb.com • www.visitlongbeach.com

Over the past decade Long Beach has continued to expand its appeal as a premier convention destination, with more than \$1 billion invested in new downtown development.

Located in the center of Southern California, Long Beach blends the urban excitement of a big city alongside the welcoming charm of a beach community.

### MEETING FACILITIES

The Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center offers more than 300,000 sf of modern, flexible exhibition and meeting space, including two newly renovated 3,000- and 800-seat theaters and a 12,000-seat arena. The convention center offers spectacular

views of the Pacific Ocean, miles of beachfront and the downtown harbor. The convention center received an \$8 million renovation with oceanview-inspired interior design of the venues, with more upgrades in the future. Special event venues include the Aquarium of the Pacific, The Queen Mary, nightclubs, rooftop banquet rooms, harbor cruises and oceanside parks.

### ACCOMMODATIONS

Long Beach has 5,000 hotel rooms citywide, with more than 2,000 rooms within an easy walk to the convention center. Many downtown hotels offer panoramic ocean views and there are accommodation choices for every preference and pocket-book ranging from a historic ocean liner, singular

boutiques, first-class business hotels and quality economy properties to family-oriented and long-term-stay properties.

Newly opened hotels include Hotel AVIA featuring a rooftop pool and bar with a 360-degree view of the downtown waterfront; all of the Residence Inn's guest rooms feature spectacular views of the Pacific Ocean and downtown skyline; and Hotel Maya boasts newly refurbished guest rooms, reimagined meeting space and a full-sized lap pool with tranquil floating cabanas.

With its central location between Los Angeles and Orange Counties, Long Beach is minutes away from Southern California's major attractions. Long Beach has world-class attractions of its own: The Queen Mary, once the largest, fastest and most luxurious ocean liner on the Atlantic, is now a first-class hotel and features restaurants, shopping, spacious meeting and banquet rooms, plus historical tours of the ship. The Aquarium of the Pacific features more than 11,000 fish, mammals and birds that live in and around the Pacific Ocean. The Museum of Latin American Art (MoLAA) is the only museum of its kind on the West Coast.

Long Beach is jeweled with mouthwatering eateries from romantic hideaways, sidewalk cafés and neighborhood favorites to those serving up elegance, spectacular city and harbor views and seaside charm. Visitors will find more than 100 quality restaurants within an eight-block radius in the downtown.

Three airports provide easy access including LAX, John Wayne/Orange County Airport and the Long Beach Airport, which is just 10 minutes from downtown Long Beach.

AC&F

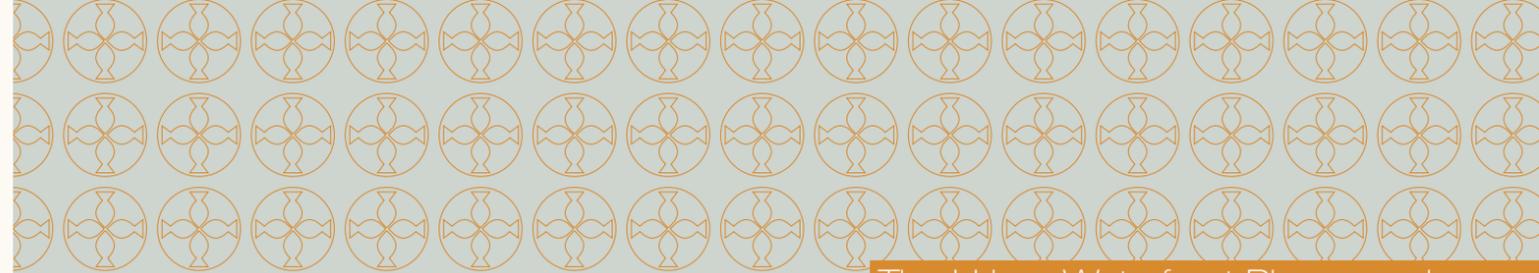


### CITYWIDE FACTS & FEATURES

**Guest Rooms:** 4,528  
**Hotels/Resorts:** 21  
**Meeting Space:** Hotel: 219,000+ sf;  
Offsite: 500,000+ sf.

### CONVENTION CENTER FYI

The Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center features more than 300,000 sf of flexible exhibit and meeting space, two theaters, an arena and 34 meeting rooms. The CVB provides many innovative tools to help planners, including free access to their own "micro-site," providing customized information for conventions or meetings.



The Urban Waterfront Playground

# Experience Unconventional

Meet the City that doesn't do Ordinary. Chic. Casual. Modern. Retro. Hot, sunny days. Bright, electric nights. It's the unmistakable contrasts and sweet contradictions that make Long Beach a city apart from the rest. So when hosting your next event, go where a world of possibilities await – because in Long Beach, whatever you do, you're in for the unconventional. [visitlongbeach.com](http://visitlongbeach.com)





## Rosen Centre Hotel

9840 International Drive, Orlando, FL 32819

Phone: 800-204-7234 or 407-996-9840 • Fax: 407-996-2659 • Todd Frappier, Director of Sales & Marketing  
tfrappier@rosencentre.com • www.rosencentre.com

**R**osen Centre Hotel, known for skillfully balancing business and pleasure with elegance and professionalism, continues to impress even the most well-traveled guest and meeting attendee. This award-winning hotel is located adjacent to the Orange County Convention Center and is in the heart of the city of Orlando's entertainment and attractions district.

At Rosen Centre, guests are walking on air thanks to new additions and renovations, including the new 316-foot Rosen Centre Skywalk, which connects the award-winning convention hotel with the Orange County Convention Center (OCCC) West Building. The covered pedestrian bridge provides attendees a safe, weather-proof and traffic-free "commute" from guest room to meeting room in fewer than four minutes.

**FACTS & FEATURES**  
**Guest Rooms/Suites:** 1,334/80  
**Meeting Space:**

106,000 sf, 33 meeting rooms, including a 35,000-sf grand ballroom and a 14,375-sf junior ballroom.

### SPECIAL SERVICES & AMENITIES

The new 316-foot Rosen Centre Skywalk connects the hotel with the Orange County Convention Center West Building. Named as a Two Palm Green Lodge for dedication to conserving natural resources and implementing environmentally friendly programs. Wi-Fi in all guest rooms and public areas.

### FIRST-CLASS FACILITY

Already a favored meeting destination, Rosen Centre Hotel remains a first-class business facility. Its prime location coupled with attractive amenities that can accommodate groups of 10 to 4,000, easily transform it into convention headquarters. Rosen Centre offers more than 106,000 sf of flexible meeting space, including a 35,000-sf main ballroom, 14,375-sf junior ballroom, 33 distinctive meeting rooms and four permanent registration areas. High-tech meetings are easy to hold thanks to advanced technical support, teleconfer-

encing equipment and simultaneous on-demand translation services.

Each of the 1,334 guest rooms features Wi-Fi, a remote-control color cable TV set, data ports, an in-room safe and video folio review/check-out. Eighty suites, which range in size from 500 to 2,500 sf are ideal for smaller conferences and events.

Attendees will enjoy unparalleled dining at Rosen Centre's eight restaurants and lounges. The newest eatery 98Forty Tapas & Tequila Bar — a nod to the hotel's address on International Drive — offers sophisticated tapas-style dishes featuring fresh, seasonal ingredients in a blend of Mexican and Spanish flavors, as well as an extensive selection of 40 premium tequilas. This hot new gathering spot is located in the newly renovated Grande Lobby at Rosen Centre, where guests can also pick and choose light bites, cocktails and coffee from Banshoo Sushi, Red's Deli or the recently expanded Smooth Java; then relax, mingle and enjoy each other's company in the 150-seat open dining area. Of course, those seeking a more intimate atmosphere need only take a few short steps to the upscale Everglades Restaurant or buffet-style Café Gauguin.

Rosen Centre Hotel features a complete range of spa services at the Body & Sol Spa; the tropical swimming pool with whirlpool and sundeck; lighted tennis courts; and state-of-the-art fitness center. Just minutes away is the Shingle Creek Golf Club, named a four-star "Best Places to Play" by *Golf Digest* magazine. Rosen Centre is mere minutes from Orlando's favorite attractions, including Universal Orlando, SeaWorld and Walt Disney World. Whether it's business or pleasure, Rosen Centre is the place to be. AC&F

Proud Distinctive Achievement Award Winner

When you need additional meeting space, we've got you covered. And then some.



For added convenience and flexibility, our new Rosen Centre Skywalk connection to the Orange County Convention Center's West Building is now open, providing a covered pedestrian walkway to 1.1 million sq. ft. of exhibition space and 49 meeting rooms offering 141 breakout rooms. So should you need more than the spectacular 106,000 sq. ft. of flexible meeting space we offer on-property, you can rest assured that we've got you covered. You will also find that our multi-million dollar guestroom enhancements, dedicated staff, and expanded restaurant offerings, including Banshoo Sushi Bar, 98Forty Tapas & Tequila and Smooth Java Coffee Bar will meet your attendee's every need. Want to bring a sophisticated touch to your meeting? Call us today at (800) 800-9840 or email Sales@RosenHotels.com.

**ROSEN CENTRE HOTEL**  
REST ASSURED.<sup>®</sup>  
www.RosenCentre.com



Have your Orlando meeting with us in 2011 and lock-in the same package for 2013\*.

\* Offer applicable to "NEW" meetings booked after August 1, 2011 only. Both meetings must be booked at same hotel, within same seasonality (same month each year), be of similar size/revenue and meet revenue minimums, which vary by property. 2011 meeting must be consumed by January 31, 2012, and 2013 meeting must be consumed by January 31, 2014. Based on offer and date availability and not applicable with any other discounts, definite business or citywide groups. Booking code: ROSENROI.





## Rosen Plaza Hotel

9700 International Drive, Orlando, FL 32819

Phone: 800-366-9700 or 407-996-9700 • Fax: 407-354-5774 • Victoria Hall, Director of Sales & Marketing  
sales@rosenplaza.com • www.rosenplaza.com

**M**uch more than just a first-class meeting facility, the Rosen Plaza Hotel offers a highly respected professional staff, outstanding accommodations and is adjacent to the 2.1-million-sf Orange County Convention Center. Rosen Plaza is putting its "best foot forward" with a floor-to-ceiling renovation of all 800 guest rooms, as well as hallways and hospitality suites. Guest rooms received new 32-inch TVs, laptop-sized safes, new furnishings, carpet and crown molding, as well as a complete bathroom remodel designed to

invoke the relaxing sensations of an upscale spa.

### MEETING FACILITIES

Located in the heart of the International Drive district, Rosen Plaza offers more than 60,000 sf of state-of-the-art, sophisticated meeting space that includes the Grand Ballroom with 26,000 sf of column-free space; the Foyer with 12,500 sf of space; the 4,500-sf Regency Salon; 22 well-appointed meeting rooms; and 16 hospitality suites. Advanced technical support, high-tech teleconferencing and simultaneous translation allow the Rosen Plaza Hotel to accommodate every need. The hotel is renowned for catering memorable corporate events for up to 2,740 attendees.

Making another old favorite new again, the ever popular Jack's Place restaurant, home to the world's largest collection of autographed caricatures, recently updated its menu. Jack's Place, named one of *Florida Trend's* top restaurants in

Orlando and *Orlando* magazine's Best Restaurant on International Drive, still serves up its famous prime steaks and fresh seafood, but now offers even more options, such as the hefty 16-oz. Veal Chop and mouth-watering Sesame Crusted Tuna. Cafe Matisse offers buffets and a la carte menus for breakfast, lunch and dinner; and Lite Bite is ideal for sandwiches and snacks. Smooth Java and the Lobby Bar are great places to gather.

After dinner, nightlife awaits at the newly renovated Backstage Nightclub & Sports Bar, which features a huge dance floor; live music on weekends, six 50-inch flat-screen TVs for the ultimate high-definition sports and an all-new recreation area with pool tables, darts and video games

Other amenities include a tropical swimming pool area with a cascading waterfall and whirlpool, as well as a fitness center. Guests are granted privileges and complimentary transportation to the Shingle Creek Golf Club, which is located just minutes away. Complimentary scheduled transportation is available to Universal Orlando, SeaWorld and Wet 'n Wild. Walt Disney World Theme Parks are also just 10 minutes away. The Pointe Orlando shopping and entertainment complex is across the street from the hotel.

At Rosen Plaza in Orlando, you'll find people who make smaller budgets work without sacrificing service. Our staff is empowered to create meetings of exceptional value while delivering the legendary service that Harris Rosen insists upon in all of his hotels. Plus, you can rest assured that our flexible and motivated staff members will do everything in their power to make your next meeting something to remember for years to come.

AC&F

*Proud Distinctive Achievement Award Winner*

We changed a lot of things during our latest renovation. Except, of course, our passion for service.



With incredible service, creatively inspired menus and a convenient location, Rosen Plaza Hotel is perfect for hosting meetings of 10 to 2,800. Here, you'll enjoy a dedicated staff that thrives on creating memorable experiences. And our 26,000-square-foot ballroom and over 60,000 square feet of flexible meeting space are accommodating, too. All 800 guestrooms have been renovated to include new mini refrigerators, 32" flat-screen TVs and upgraded furnishings. And after your meeting, there's live entertainment, pool and darts at our revamped Backstage Nightclub & Sports Bar. Ready for a great meeting from start to finish? Call us today at (866) 996-9939 or email Sales@RosenHotels.com.



REST ASSURED.®  
www.RosenPlaza.com



Have your Orlando meeting with us in 2011 and lock-in the same package for 2013\*.

\* Offer applicable to "NEW" meetings booked after August 1, 2011 only. Both meetings must be booked at same hotel, within same seasonality (same month each year), be of similar size/revenue and meet revenue minimums, which vary by property. 2011 meeting must be consumed by January 31, 2012, and 2013 meeting must be consumed by January 31, 2014. Based on offer and date availability and not applicable with any other discounts, definite business or citywide groups. Booking code: ROSENROI.





## Rosen Shingle Creek

9939 Universal Boulevard, Orlando, FL 32819

Phone: 866-996-9939 or 407-996-6338 • Fax: 407-996-9935 • Leslie Menichini, V.P. Sales & Marketing, Rosen Hotels  
sales@rosenshinglecreek.com • www.rosenshinglecreek.com

**F**or a luxurious, upscale and naturally beautiful Florida experience, planners need look no further than Rosen Shingle Creek, a AAA Four Diamond premier meeting destination conveniently located 10 minutes from the Orlando International Airport and within one mile of the Orange County Convention Center North/South building.

Rosen Shingle Creek is one of the largest full-service convention hotels in Central Florida, and offers 1,500 guest rooms and suites and 445,000 sf of dedicated, state-of-the-art meeting and event space, including three column-free ballrooms — the 95,000-sf Gatlin Grand Ballroom; the 60,000-sf Sebastian Ballroom

and the 40,000-sf Panzacola Ballroom. In addition, there are 99 meeting rooms, 55,000 sf of breakout meeting rooms, more than 100,000 sf of prefunction space, 50,000 sf of outdoor space, a 40,000-sf outdoor event lot and 250,000 sf of exhibition space.

Meetings at Rosen Shingle Creek are a technological breeze: There is wireless Internet connectivity capability throughout the hotel, and every guest room features Wi-Fi, two phones and NDTV technology.

### AWARD-WINNING GOLF AND MUCH MORE

Named a four-star “Best Places to Play” by *Golf Digest* magazine, the Shingle Creek Golf Club is a David Harman-designed, 18-hole, 7,149-yard championship golf course featuring undulating fairways

and interconnecting waterways. Named as one of the “Top 40 Best New Golf Courses in the U.S.” by *Golfweek* magazine, the club is home to the Brad Brewer Golf Academy, rated as one of the “Top 25 Golf Schools” in the nation by *Golf Magazine*. One of *Golf Magazine’s* “Top 100 Instructors,” Brewer and his PGA staff can orchestrate the ultimate golf program for meetings and events of all sizes.

The full-service, 13,000-sf Spa at Shingle Creek features nine treatment rooms and a fitness center. Amenities include lighted tennis courts, four swimming pools, several hot tubs and much more. The area’s major theme parks and attractions are nearby and easily accessible.

Home to two of Orlando’s hottest new restaurants, Rosen Shingle Creek recently opened Banrai Sushi and Tobias’ Flats & Watering Hole, bringing its total in-house dining options to a whopping 14. Banrai features signature items, such as the Shingle Creek Roll with gator meat, along with more than a dozen traditional sushi dishes. At Tobias’ Flats, “old Florida” meets a new world of tastes in all forms of flatbreads, from appetizers and salads to sandwiches and pizzas. These new, on-the-go options provide a quick and convenient complement to the hotel’s award-winning, fine dining restaurants, A Land Remembered, a classic steak house, and Cala Bella, an Italian bistro.

### THE ROSEN PROMISE

“At the end of the day, it’s all about service,” asserts owner/hotelier Harris Rosen, whose company celebrates its 37th anniversary this year. The staff will move mountains to satisfy the needs of every attendee, which is the hallmark of a Rosen property. 



### FACTS & FEATURES

**Total Guest Rooms/Suites:** 1,500  
**Meeting Space:** 445,000 sf

### SPECIAL SERVICES & AMENITIES

Accommodates groups from 10 to 9,500; three ballrooms; 14 dining venues including the new restaurants Banrai Sushi and Tobias’ Flats & Watering Hole; spa; fitness center; tennis courts, four swimming pools, nature trail and award-winning golf. Wi-Fi in all guest rooms and all public areas.

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a better place to meet.**



*C*reating incredible meetings with impeccable service comes naturally at Rosen Shingle Creek. We’ve embraced the power of corporate responsibility, which has become an integral part of our company culture. So, when you meet here, you will be making a statement too. Here you’ll enjoy all the amenities you’d expect to find at a property of this caliber, including a 13,000-sq.-ft. spa, 14 dining venues and an 18-hole, par 72 championship golf course. We’re also known for our luxurious 1,500 guestrooms and over 445,000 sq. ft. of flexible meeting and event space. At Rosen Shingle Creek, it’s all about you and your attendees having an inspirational, productive and memorable meeting. Let us exceed your expectations in every way. Call (866) 996-9939 or email Sales@RosenHotels.com today.



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and lock-in the same package for 2013\*.**

\* Offer applicable to “NEW” meetings booked after August 1, 2011 only. Both meetings must be booked at same hotel, within same seasonality (same month each year), be of similar size/revenue and meet revenue minimums, which vary by property. 2011 meeting must be consumed by January 31, 2012, and 2013 meeting must be consumed by January 31, 2014. Based on offer and date availability and not applicable with any other discounts, definite business or citywide groups. Booking code: ROSENROI.





# The Venetian Resort Hotel Casino

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**W**ith more than 7,000 all-suite accommodations, five-diamond, four-star service and unrivaled amenities, guests know why The Venetian and The Palazzo are the most exquisite resort destinations in Las Vegas the moment they arrive.

### MEETING FACILITIES

From our standard luxury suites, designed specifically for the business traveler, to our many formal meeting spaces, you will find that our facilities and services can easily accommodate your group. If you need a business-ready venue with ample space in an intimate setting that can accommodate up to 80 people comfortably, our Hospitality

Parlors are just the thing. If you need an open floor with room for multiple booths, The Venetian Ballroom, at 85,000 sf, fits the bill. Large or small, we have the perfect venue to meet all of your needs.

The Sands Expo and Convention Center is acclaimed as one of the world's great business event destinations, offering the most modern convention, meeting and exhibit space. Combined with The Venetian | The Palazzo Congress Center, the two have more than 2.25 gross million sf of space and have become the destination of choice for hundreds of thousands of convention planners and attendees each year.

### COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY

Our Las Vegas master-planned development,

which combines The Venetian, The Palazzo and Sands Expo and Convention Center, is the largest "green" building on the planet. We have taken a leadership role with the Sands Eco360° Global Sustainable Development program. From our integrated resort properties around the globe, each of our more than 27,000 Team Members is committed to reducing our impact on the environment. These positive efforts affect our families, our friends and our communities. Our legacy is to leave a cleaner and safer world for future generations.

### ACCOMMODATIONS AND ENTERTAINMENT

We boast breathtaking accommodations at The Venetian and The Palazzo, which offer a degree of five-diamond luxury unlike anywhere else in Las Vegas. Our suites average 700 sf — roughly twice the size of most Las Vegas hotel rooms.

We also offer outstanding amenities, such as world-class cuisine from celebrity chefs, Broadway-caliber shows such as "Jersey Boys," two incredible casinos, shops featuring the latest from top designers and the hottest nightlife on The Strip.

The Venetian boasts the world-famous Canyon Ranch SpaClub, renowned as the ideal place to relax, renew and re-energize.

Located in the heart of The Las Vegas Strip, just minutes from McCarran International Airport, The Venetian and The Palazzo offer the finest in meeting space, accommodations and amenities all set in a luxurious resort. These are just a few of the infinite number of reasons to bring your meetings and conventions to The Venetian and The Palazzo. This is where business gets done. ACC&F



### FACTS & FEATURES

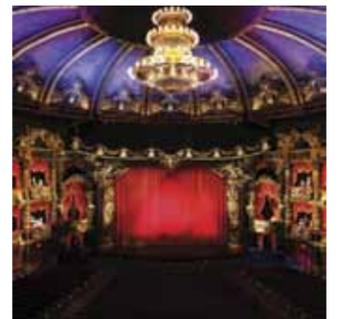
Guest Suites: 7,093  
Meeting Space: 2.25 million sf.

### SPECIAL SERVICES & AMENITIES

Three venues (The Venetian, The Palazzo, Sands Expo and Convention Center) form the ultimate destination for business and pleasure — Venetian | Palazzo Meetings. It's the perfect choice for meetings of any size with a vast array of astounding facilities.



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# Colorado

## Affordable Meetings With Million-Dollar Views

By Karen Brost

At the end of his organization's annual assembly in Denver, Tom Pellet, director, meetings and conventions for the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), had that satisfied feeling every planner wants to have after an event. "It was a great meeting," he says. "It was fantastic, actually."

AAFP's annual assembly draws more than 10,000 attendees, including 4,000 doctors, and requires approximately 70,000 sf of meeting space. The event was held at the Colorado Convention Center, and the group used the 1,100-room Hyatt Regency Denver at Colorado Convention Center as its headquarters hotel. The Hyatt, which offers more than 60,600 sf of meeting space, was also the site of AAFP's congress of delegates meeting, which took place the week before the assembly.

Pellet describes some of the factors that make Denver an appealing meeting destination. "First of all, it's a very affordable city. It has tremendous airlift

going into the city, which was great for us." As the fifth busiest airport in the U.S., Denver International Airport (DIA) is served by 14 airlines offering non-stop service to more than 150 U.S. cities and 19 international cities.

"The hall (at the convention center) itself was sized perfectly for us and was very well-received by the attendees," he adds. "But, I think the biggest thing was the overall atmosphere of the city and the bureau and what they did to make us feel special. When you look at the layout of Denver, it has a good convention center and a good array of hotels within the downtown area. We do about 5,500 (rooms) on peak night, so the downtown hotels were able to accommodate us very well."

"The nice thing about it is that the downtown is also alive, and that means that it has entertainment," he continues. "It has a lot of restaurants within walking distance of the hotels, and a lot of museums and entertainment facilities that are within a short taxi ride or, in some cases, walking distance. And, it's a safe downtown. The attendees just loved it."

Pellet had high praise for Visit Denver, The Convention & Visitors Bureau, under the direction of president and CEO Richard Scharf and Rachel Benedick, vice president of sales and services. "They just did a fantastic job. They were there for us. There was never 'no,' it was 'we'll see what we can do,' so they always made things happen. When we needed help, they would empty the office and come help us and bring people if they needed to." Pellet also appreciated the signs and banners the city put up to welcome the group. "It really made the attendees feel like it was their town."

Pellet commended the staff of the Colorado Convention Center, especially for their attention to detail. "They made sure they covered all of our re-

quirements before we got there. Our planning along with their planning made for a flawless meeting with very few problems," Pellet says. The Colorado Convention Center offers 584,000 sf of exhibit space on one level as well as 63 meeting rooms that provide 100,000 sf of meeting space on a single level. An iconic feature of the center is the playful, 40-foot sculpture of a blue bear that looks like he's peeking into the lobby of the building. The sculpture was designed by Denver artist Lawrence Argent.

AAFP's assembly took place in October, and Pellet said that some people were concerned about the weather. As it turned out, they had nothing to worry about. "It was like 70 degrees," he explains. "The weather was so beautiful, people said, 'The heck with buses, we'll walk.' We walked all of the hotels, and the furthest one was 10 minutes (from the convention center)."

"All in all, my CEO said to me, 'This was probably the best assembly that we've had in modern times,'" Pellet adds. "Not only that, but because of the affordability of the city, not only for the attendees but for us, it was a financial success. We walked out, and within the first six months after we left, we said, 'Let's book again for 2015.'"

The American Thoracic Society (ATS) also chose Denver as the site of its 2011 International Conference, which took place in May. The event included more than 400 sessions over a six-day period and drew 11,300 attendees, of which 45 percent came from international destinations.

"We felt that the location (of Denver) in the middle of the country was great for us for international attendance," explains Deborah Richardt, CMP, senior director, meeting services for ATS. She also cites the importance of having an international airport available. "Visit Denver also made us feel special with banners and flyers around the city welcoming ATS."

Richardt describes what she liked best about the Colorado Convention Center. "Beside the meeting rooms, the prefunction space was ideal for registration, and the flow of the building." ATS also used the Hyatt Regency Denver at Colorado Convention Center as its headquarters hotel. Some of the conference's sessions were also held at the Hyatt as well as at the 1,231-room Sheraton Denver Downtown Hotel, the 403-room Embassy Suites Denver — Downtown/Convention Center and the 516-room Grand Hyatt Denver Downtown.

Since Hyatt Hotels of Denver Downtown oper-

**"But, I think the biggest thing was the overall atmosphere of the city and the bureau and what they did to make us feel special. When you look at the layout of Denver, it has a good convention center and a good array of hotels within the downtown area."**



Tom Pellet  
Director, Meetings & Conventions  
American Academy of Family Physicians  
Leawood, KS

ates two major meeting properties in downtown Denver that offer a combined total of more than 120,600 sf of meeting space and 1,616 meeting rooms, the company has joined the sales teams of both properties to create a single point of contact for planners. Now, planners can book whatever space and accommodations they need at each of the two properties by making a single phone call.

ATS also offered several services to make its conference more enjoyable and productive. Attendees were offered a choice of more than a dozen optional Denver tours, and those who brought their kids along could check them into "Convention Camp," an activity and entertainment program for children aged six months to 12 years organized by Accent on Children's Arrangements Inc. ATS also provided attendees with "My ATS 2011" desktop and mobile software that enabled attendees to see who else would be at the conference so they could make plans to connect with them and network. "All of these marketing tools worked for us and are helpful and are necessary," Richardt says.

In other Denver news, Gaylord Entertainment Company recently announced plans to build a new 1,500 room resort and convention hotel featuring 400,000 sf of meeting and exhibition space. The company expects to break ground on the \$800 million project located in Aurora, which is less than 10 minutes from DIA, in mid to late 2012 with an anticipated opening in 2015.

### COLORADO SPRINGS

Located just 70 miles south of Denver on I-25, Colorado Springs is the state's second largest city. Colorado Springs Airport, which is served by eight airlines, offers non-stop service to 13 U.S. cities and convenient connections to virtually all cities in

Watched over by Denver's iconic Big Blue Bear, the Colorado Convention Center is conveniently serviced by the 19-mile Denver area light rail.



Photo by Steve Crecellius courtesy of Visit Denver



Deborah Richardt, CMP  
Senior Director, Meeting Services  
American Thoracic Society  
New York, NY

**“We felt that the location (of Denver) in the middle of the country was great for us for international attendance. Visit Denver also made us feel special with banners and flyers around the city welcoming ATS.”**

North America. According to Experience Colorado Springs, the city is an affordable destination, with a lodging tax of only two percent and a car rental tax of just one percent.

The most famous meeting property in Colorado Springs is The Broadmoor. The historic property, which is set on 3,000 acres near the base of Cheyenne Mountain, first opened in 1918 and has been hosting meetings and events ever since. Today, the property offers 700 guest rooms and 44 cottage bedrooms, 185,000 sf of flexible meeting space, 18 dining outlets and lounges, three golf courses, a tennis club and a spa. The Broadmoor is the longest-running consecutive winner of both the AAA Five Diamond and the Forbes/Mobil Travel Guide Five Star awards.

The Society of Corporate Secretaries & Governance Professionals held its annual national conference at The Broadmoor in June. The event attracted nearly 800 attendees. “The hotel is located in a most spectacular setting with the mountains as your background,” explains Suzanne Walker, senior vice president of the Society. “The property grounds are beautiful, and they try to keep all of the public space and sleeping rooms renovated and fresh. We did an outside event by the pool and everyone agreed it was a most beautiful setting.

“The Broadmoor has some of the best meeting space I’ve used,” she continues, “not to mention they are a world-class resort. Your meeting can grow, and they can accommodate changes because they have a vast variety of meeting space.”

Walker also appreciates the service she received. “I’ve worked with The Broadmoor in the past, and I’ve gotten to know some of the staff. You develop relationships with key players. You know who to call if you have a problem, and they really do work with you. I’ve worked with the same reservations coordinator for 18 years, (which is) most helpful when your

room block sells out, and you need to keep tight reins on your waitlist. Or if you are trying to obtain any additional rooms as they become available. Folks who work in convention services — not just the managers, but the staff — recognize you and go out of their way to be helpful. Most often, the staff tries hard to exceed your expectations and they succeed. All in all, The Broadmoor adds a personal touch — greeting you as you arrive and seeing you off when your meetings have concluded, and you are finally going home.”

She describes another advantage of working with The Broadmoor. “I have found that The Broadmoor is willing to renegotiate with you after a contract has been signed. They want you to have a successful meeting so you’ll return, and they do whatever they can to make that happen.”

The conference was so successful that the Society is planning to return to The Broadmoor. “I’m already working with them for a future conference,” Walker says. “As a professional association whose members are corporate secretaries for the Fortune 500 companies, we were worried about perception — meeting at a resort. But our business program is very strong, and we had better than anticipated attendance. Room rates at the hotel were no more expensive than in most major cities, actually not as expensive. So on all fronts we felt we received great service, our members/attendees were impressed, and therefore we are planning to come back to The Broadmoor in the next few years.”

Returning to the same property year after year is a sure sign of a successful event. The Colorado Academy of Family Physicians (CAFP) has held its annual scientific conference at the Cheyenne Mountain Resort in Colorado Springs for the past three years, and the organization just signed a contract for three more years.

The 316-room Cheyenne Mountain Resort is a AAA Four Diamond property that contains a conference facility certified by the International Association of Conference Centers (IACC). More than 40,000 sf of specially designed conference space is available in the resort’s 38 meeting rooms and tiered amphitheater.

The resort recently completed a \$20 million property-wide renovation, which included the Mountain View Restaurant Terrace and other outdoor spaces, all of the meeting space and each of the resort’s guest rooms. In the process, the resort donated more than \$200,000 worth of furniture to

Pikes Peak Habitat for Humanity ReStore to help raise money for the nonprofit organization.

The property was also recently recognized as an official Green Seal resort for its environmental practices. At the time of the award, Cheyenne Mountain Resort was one of only four properties in Colorado to achieve this designation.

“It’s a beautiful place,” explains CAFP’s CEO Raquel Rosen, MA, CAE. “The conference services staff is excellent. They really know our organization and what we need. They are right on top of things all the time. The entire hotel staff is great. They recognize us and greet us. They’re all very friendly, very helpful. The dining room has excellent food. It’s a huge buffet for breakfast, lunch and dinner. I’ve never had better food at any conference.

“And there are local activities,” she continues. “The site is beautiful, there’s a gorgeous view of the mountains. You can go up to Pikes Peak and there are other things around there like Garden of the Gods.” The Pikes Peak Cog Railway takes visitors to the scenic summit of the famous 14,110-foot peak. Garden of the Gods is a registered National Natural Landmark and nature center filled with unusual rock formations. It is a popular spot for hiking, rock climbing and other outdoor activities. The property offers 18 holes of championship golf, a tennis club, full-service health club and an aquatics center. Jogging, hiking and biking paths are also available.

Rosen’s conference attracts 120–150 attendees. “The meeting space is really outstanding,” she says. “It’s very comfortable for our group. They have very comfortable chairs. We have a large exhibit hall and a very large classroom. The AV people are amazing. They can fix anything. They’re right there when you need them. Everything was great.”

Two hours northwest of Colorado Springs is the ski resort town of Breckenridge. RockResort, a subsidiary of Vail Resorts Inc., recently opened One Ski Hill Place, a luxury property in Breckenridge that offers 88 ski-in-ski-out condominiums, 3,600 sf of indoor meeting space and 10,000 sf of outdoor function space. Planners who book a meeting at One Ski Hill Place will receive a free ride on the new Gold Runner Coaster for everyone in their group. The Gold Runner is an alpine roller coaster located on Breckenridge Mountain directly outside the resort.

## PLANNING TOOLS

Planners who are considering bringing their

**“Cheyenne Mountain Resort is a beautiful place. The conference services staff is excellent. They really know our organization and what we need. They are right on top of things all the time. They recognize us and greet us. They’re all very friendly, very helpful. I’ve never had better food at any conference.”**



Raquel Rosen, MA CAE  
CEO  
Colorado Academy of Family Physicians  
Aurora, CO

events to Colorado have plenty of tools at their disposal. Visit Denver recently launched a new website [www.visitdenver.com/conventions](http://www.visitdenver.com/conventions). Designed for meeting planners by using input from planners, the site features information on the Colorado Convention Center and the city’s hotels, venues and vendors, as well as promotional tools and a digital marketing kit. Planners can also submit RFPs directly through the site.

Visit Denver also has launched a new smartphone app that works on iPhones, iPads and all Android phones. It lists more than 2,000 events, attractions, restaurants, hotels and shopping options, as well as current Denver weather, maps and other information.

Snowmass, a year-round resort area located nine miles from Aspen, is planning to launch a new website in the fall. The new site [www.snowmassmeetings.com](http://www.snowmassmeetings.com) will promote the area as “The Ultimate Whiteboard,” meaning that planners can start with a clean slate and create the exact meeting they want. The area offers more than 70,000 sf of meeting space.

Destination Colorado, a member-based association that targets meeting planners, is offering a free 2011 Meeting Planner Guide that features more than 100 meeting venues and services. Visit [www.destinationcolorado.com](http://www.destinationcolorado.com) to request a copy. The organization also maintains a “Hot Dates” section on its website that lists special offers for meetings.

## A DESTINATION WORTH EXPLORING

As Pellet says, “What we’re seeing is that more and more associations are beginning to look at the cities that aren’t the tried-and-true ones that everybody always goes in and out of.” For his organization, Colorado was the right choice. “I couldn’t speak more highly about Denver,” he states. “People should take a look at it.”

AC&F

# Florida

## The Sunshine State's Can-Do Attitude and Infrastructure Help Planners Pull It All Together

By Stella Johnson

Florida might be billed as the “Sunshine State,” but as far as association meeting planners are concerned, it also should be known as “The State That Pulls It All Together,” especially in times of group emergencies. The International Foodservice Distribution Association (IFDA) found that out firsthand when the group had to cancel its originally booked destination, which was devastated by flooding. Visit Orlando and Walt Disney World Resort came to the rescue with only several months’ notice to arrange accommodations and event facilities that are normally booked years in advance.

Says IFDA’s director of conferences Kathleen C. Devey, CMP, “We wound up booking Disney’s Coronado Springs Resort for some meetings and lodging, but primarily needed one huge flat sur-

face for a driving contest we schedule every year for dozens of truck drivers who come together to compete for one of nine prizes.”

It’s a family affair, one that spans three days from Friday to Sunday. “Disney’s Coronado Springs was our host hotel, and the big huge surface? Epcot’s parking lot!” Devey exclaims.

### BIG WHEELS IN ORLANDO

All in all, there were approximately 375 attendees, 115 of whom were the truckers. The competition included a written examination measuring driver knowledge of safety and operating procedures, a vehicle inspection to uncover five planted equipment defects that could affect vehicle readiness, and a driving course competition where drivers are evaluated on their ability to handle a series of six course problems simulating everyday conditions.

“The CVB worked wonders for us in arranging all that,” says Devey. “We’re not an easy group to accommodate, especially since the event includes 115 standard, three-axle and five-axle trucks.”

Orlando truly is a “big-wheel” destination, with the Orange County Convention Center (OCCC), the second-largest convention center in the country, boasting 2.1 million sf of exhibition space. New infrastructure includes the Amway Center sports and entertainment venue, which opened last fall, and Medical City, growing into a \$2 billion medical campus promising to be a major draw for medical meetings. On the cultural scene, the first phase of the downtown Dr. Phillips Performing Arts Center celebrated its groundbreaking ceremony in June.

Orlando also boasts world-class hotels, such as the 1,641-room Peabody Orlando, which was recently expanded and renovated, including the addition of a covered walkway to the convention center. The Peabody has 300,000 sf of meeting space and features the famed parade of Peabody Ducks into the lobby each day.

The new 1,400-room Hilton Orlando, which opened in 2009, connects to the North/South Building of the OCCC by covered open-air walkway. The hotel offers 175,000 sf of meeting space, including 21 meeting rooms, nine boardrooms and two ballrooms: the 50,000-sf Orlando Ballroom and the 30,000-sf Orange Ballroom. The Hilton Orlando was designed with a dual identity in mind, as both a convention hotel and a resort hotel. Yet the meeting space is smartly segregated from the resort-style amenities, which include a water slide and lazy river, 15,000-sf spa and fitness center, nine-hole executive putting course, jogging track, basketball/tennis/volleyball/bocce ball courts, and more.

Rosen Hotels & Resorts has a portfolio of four convention hotels in the Orlando area: the 1,334-room Rosen Centre Hotel, with 106,000 sf of meeting space, recently completed a pedestrian bridge to the OCCC; the 800-room Rosen Plaza Hotel sits next to the convention center and offers 60,000 sf of meeting space; and the 1,500-room Rosen Shingle Creek, within one mile of the OCCC, has 445,000 sf of meeting space featuring one of the nation’s largest column-free ballrooms. The property also includes the championship Shingle Creek Golf Club.

Walt Disney World Resort offers six convention resorts — including Coronado Springs Resort



The Orlando Ballroom at the Hilton Orlando offers 50,000 sf of state-of-the-art meeting space.

with its 220,000 sf of function space — with a total of 5,000 guest rooms and more than 700,000 sf of function space. The Disney draw for attendees is all about its theme parks and attractions including the Magic Kingdom, Epcot, Hollywood Studios, Animal Kingdom, Typhoon Lagoon, Blizzard Beach and Downtown Disney. The Disney draw for planners is the Disney Institute and the Disney Event Group, which works its magic pulling together imaginative and flawless programs.

Universal Orlando Resort has three Loews properties onsite: The 750-room Loews Portofino Bay Hotel, which is four miles from the OCCC and minutes to upscale shopping at the Mall at Millenia, has 42,000 sf of meeting space. The 650-room Hard Rock Hotel has 6,000 sf of meeting space — plus event space at the Hard Rock Live and Hard Rock Cafe, which together offer a complex buyout accommodating up to 4,000 attendees. The 1,000-room Loews Royal Pacific Resort offers 85,000 sf of meeting space plus a lagoon-style swimming pool and sandy beach.

Universal features six themed street sets, Islands of Adventure, Universal CityWalk with a plethora of themed venues, Universal Music Plaza, Blue Man Group and the newest addition, the Wizarding World of Harry Potter, among others.

Kathleen Devey’s bottom-line evaluation of Orlando comes down to its customer service. “The people we dealt with were right there with us at our events and really took an interest in our group and what we were doing,” Devey says. “Yes, we’ve already booked Orlando for future dates.”

### MIAMI SPICE

The Greater Miami Area can produce similar results for groups, including the National Minority Supplier Development Council (NMSDC), which attracts 6,000 attendees for its meetings. NMSDC’s Director of Conferences Suzette Eaddy, CMP, notes, “It’s a city of diversity and international flavor, and we love it!” Eaddy, a 40-year veteran of meeting planning, the last 22 with the NMSDC, states that providing a direct link between corporate America

From downtown Miami to Miami Beach, spectacular vistas and venues are as plentiful as the sunshine.



Photo courtesy of Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau

and minority-owned businesses is the primary objective of the NMSDC.

To date, Eaddy has booked Miami three times for various events, the last of which was an annual meeting for four days in October 2010. "Originally, we were booked in a Southwest city, one that we had to cancel the last minute due to unforeseen circumstances happening in that destination," Eaddy

Miami Convention & Conference Center and the Hyatt Regency Miami (612 rooms and 100,000 sf of meeting space).

The Miami Beach Convention Center, which currently offers 500,000 sf of exhibition space, is planning an expansion project that will add 300,000 sf of meeting and exhibit space.

The Miami Airport Convention Center is located minutes from downtown Miami and features a fresh redesign of its 172,000 sf of high-tech meeting, conference and trade show space. There is also a DoubleTree hotel adjacent to it.

There are also dozens of offsite venues and attractions that range from the Adrienne Arscht Center for the Performing Arts in downtown to the early 20th century Vizcaya mansion to Everglades Safari Park.

What was Eaddy's offsite venue of choice? "This year, we booked the Ice Palace, which gave us the red carpet treatment, complete with a star tracker outside the venue as we arrived. People are still talking about it," claims Eaddy. The Ice Palace, in the arts and entertainment district, is an old ice factory that's now a movie studio.

For Eaddy, working with the Greater Miami CVB is a personal thing. In fact, she says, "It's like going home."

### HOSPITABLE JACKSONVILLE

Jacksonville in Northeast Florida on the St. Johns River is blessed with a double dose of hospitality — Floridian and Southern — as newcomers and conventioners will readily experience in any one of its popular neighborhoods. Some of these are Northside, home to the Jacksonville Zoo & Gardens and the Budweiser Brewery, always open for public tours and group events; Southside, home to Avenues Mall and the St. Johns Town Center; and, of course, "the Beaches," where Jacksonville Beach is home to the Sea Walk Pavilion and Adventure Landing amusement park.

Then there's downtown Jacksonville which is divided into three districts: Riverfront Area with entertainment and dining at Jacksonville Landing located on both banks of the St. Johns; Riverside/Avalon (listed on the National Register of Historic Places and home to an artsy community called Five Points; and San Marco, another historical neighborhood with a popular square for upscale activities.

The downtown/riverfront part of Jacksonville

says. "So we went to Miami in June for an annual event that would be in October. That's not much lead time for a group of some 6,200 attendees that needed the convention center and four major hotels (Fontainebleau Miami Beach, Loews Miami Beach Hotel, Royal Palm and Eden Roc Renaissance Miami Beach, all recently renovated)."

This is when maintaining professional relationships really help as the people at the Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau knew the drill from their prior events. As Eaddy declares, "They had the space, the timeslot, the know-how, and it was like a gift," she says.

Located between the Florida Everglades to the west and Biscayne Bay to the east, Miami plays host to some 850,000 delegates per year and, during the past several years, has spent millions of dollars on sprucing up the beaches, hotels, transportation systems and attractions. Among the 47,000 hotel guest rooms citywide is the new JW Marriott Marquis in downtown Miami with 313 guest rooms, 80,000 sf of meeting space and a 10,000-sf NBA approved basketball court.

Convention facilities include the following:

The James L. Knight International Center is comprised of the James L. Knight Center, the

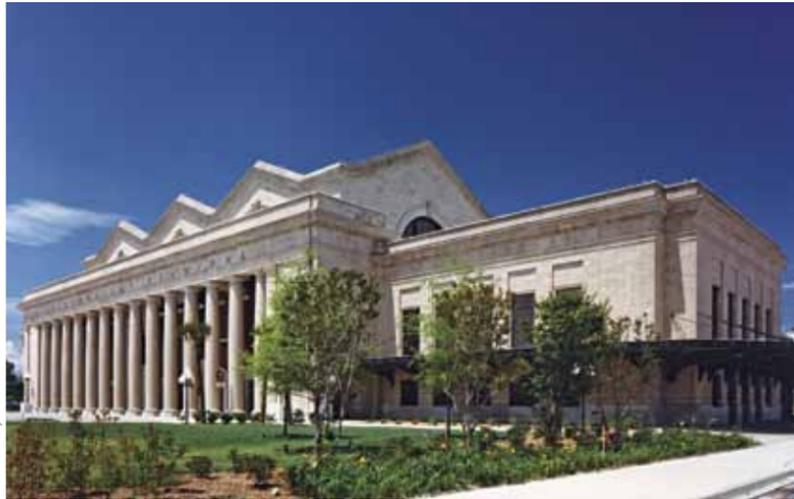


Photo courtesy of Visit Jacksonville

The Prime F. Osborn III Convention Center in Jacksonville was constructed around the railroad's 19th century Union Station building.

is where the city's convention core is based. The Prime F. Osborn III Convention Center offers 160,000 sf of flexible meeting space and is less than a mile from 1,000 hotel rooms. The convention center's historic structure dates back to the 19th century when it was Jacksonville's Union Station. Also in downtown is The Times-Union Center for the Performing Arts, which offers renovated meeting and event spaces with views of the St. Johns River. In the heart of downtown adjacent to Jacksonville Landing on the St. Johns is the Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront, recently renovated with 963 rooms and 110,000 sf of meeting space.

The Greater Jacksonville area encompasses historic St. Augustine and Ponte Vedra Beach to the south, where the five-diamond, 250-suite Ponte Vedra Inn and Club offers 25,000 sf of meeting space and all the luxury amenities and caché required for executive board meetings and retreats. To the north is Omni Amelia Island Plantation, a golf and spa resort overlooking the Atlantic Ocean that features 249 oceanfront accommodations and 49,000 sf of meeting space. Omni has announced plans to add 125 guest rooms and 16,000 sf of meeting space to the property.

### WINNING IN DAYTONA BEACH

Cut in two parts by the Halifax River Lagoon, Daytona Beach also overlooks the Atlantic and has 23 miles of popular beaches.

While the general public knows Daytona mostly for its No. 1 attraction on the mainland, the Daytona International Speedway, meeting planners know it for its No. 1 convention facility, the Ocean Center, located across the causeway on the barrier island 400 feet from the ocean. Newly renovated and expanded, the Ocean Center now



Photo courtesy of Ocean Center

Daytona Beach's Ocean Center now boasts 200,000 sf of interior meeting space following a 2009 expansion.

**"Originally, we were booked in a Southwest city, one that we had to cancel the last minute due to unforeseen circumstances happening in that destination. So we went to Miami in June for an annual event that would be in October. That's not much lead time for a group of some 6,200 attendees."**



Suzette Eaddy, CMP  
Director of Conferences  
National Minority Supplier  
Development Council  
New York, NY

has 200,000 sf for meetings and exhibitions. But planners also can consider using event spaces at Daytona International Speedway that include the Daytona 500 Club, accommodating up to 500 attendees. In addition, there are new tours for groups with never-before-seen areas of the complex

Adjacent to the Ocean Center is the Peabody Auditorium, home to the Daytona Beach Symphony Orchestra and Civic Ballet; and chosen venue for touring recording artists, theater productions and visiting groups that can book a general session there.

Across the street is Ocean Walk Village, which incorporates The Hilton Daytona Beach Oceanfront Resort, the Wyndham Ocean Walk and six square blocks of shops, restaurants, retail and places of entertainment. In total the village offers 300,000 sf of meeting space and 1,200 guest rooms.

Five miles south of Daytona Beach is Daytona Beach Shores, home to the four-diamond, 212-room Shores Resort & Spa with 20,000 sf of meeting space featuring oceanview meeting rooms, a grand ballroom and a private beachfront terrace.

### TAMPA/ST. PETE'S A PLEASER

Tampa gets rave reviews from planners like Abby Giffin, senior meeting manager for the American Medical Directors Association (AMDA) based in Columbia, MD. According to Giffin, 2,100 attendees were attracted to AMDA's annual conference in March in Tampa, the highest attendance ever for the organization.

"Our annual conference is for those working in geriatrics, long-term healthcare, hospice and other areas of the health field," says Giffin. "We had record attendance at our last meeting be-



**Kathleen Devey, CMP**  
Director of Conferences & Sponsorships  
International Foodservice  
Distributors Association  
McLean, VA

**“The people we dealt with were right there with us at our events and really took an interest in our group and what we were doing. Yes, we’ve already booked Orlando for future dates.”**

cause one, our market is growing, two, Florida is always a popular destination; and three, Tampa is extremely convenient.”

For AMDA’s workshops and meetings, the Tampa Convention Center was active from Thursday to Sunday and had a two-day trade show representing 68 companies. A post-event evaluation survey noted, “We all liked the spacious layout of the convention center with all meeting rooms on one level — easy to get to and easy to find. Add the fact that it was conveniently located in the downtown area, making the highlights of the city very ac-



Meeting rooms at The Tampa Convention Center overlook the waterfront.

cessible to everyone. Tampa also has a multitude of hotel options, making it even more desirable.”

The waterfront, 600,000-sf Tampa Convention Center is in the heart of downtown along the Riverwalk. The facility includes 200,000 sf for exhibits, a 36,000-sf ballroom and 42,000 sf for meetings.

Photo courtesy of Tampa Bay & Company

The bayfront Tampa Marriott Waterside Hotel & Marina is located adjacent to the convention center in Ybor City, Tampa’s own Latin Quarter. The hotel features 683 guest rooms and 36 suites, as well as a total of 50,000 sf of meeting space.

On St. Pete Beach, the TradeWinds Island Resorts, which overlook the Gulf of Mexico, comprise two sister hotels: Island Grand (71,000 sf of indoor/outdoor meeting space), characterized by a family-oriented atmosphere with its new 20,000-sf Splash Island Water Park; and Sandpiper (more than 7,600 sf of indoor meeting space), a more tranquil and intimate property, especially noted for Winding Waterways, which not only showcases lush vegetation but resident swans, Koi and Florida waterfowl.

Attractions with group event options include Busch Gardens/Adventure Island, the new Florida Aquarium, the David A. Straz, Jr. Center for the Performing Arts, the waterfront Channelside entertainment district, Raymond James Stadium — home of the NFL’s Tampa Bay Bucs — and the Ybor City Historic District.

In St. Petersburg, renovations doubled the size of the Dali Museum, which reopened in January. The innovative geodesic glass structure houses the largest collection of Salvador Dali’s work outside of Spain. A variety of group options are available.

For an offsite reception, the venue of choice for Giffin’s group was the George M. Steinbrenner Stadium, home field of the Tampa Yankees and spring training home of the New York Yankees. “We rented the entire stadium, provided food and beverage, and staged a number of events including Running the Bases and Home Run Derby. The off-site event was the largest and drew 800 registrants.”

Overall, Giffin concludes, “Tampa’s got everything in that it is flyable and drivable and has the right hotel/convention center infrastructure. The city is more than engaging and got positive post-convention evaluation comments. While we’re already booked in other cities for the next several years, we’re going back to Tampa as soon as is possible.”

That’s a common refrain from association meeting and convention planners everywhere, who quickly discover the attendance boost and value that Florida delivers — not to mention the meetings infrastructure and customer service that pull it all together.

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Pitroski

Seattle's Convention & Visitors Bureau, Seattle, WA, has named **Kelly Peiffer** as national account director, Midwest office. Most recently she served as national account executive for Visit Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI.

The Corpus Christi Convention & Visitors Bureau, Corpus Christi, TX, has named **Erica Lozano** as senior sales manager, responsible for SMERF markets. She formerly served as sales account manager for Best Western Marina Grand Hotel in Corpus Christi.

**Len Valka** was named sales manager for specialty markets for the George R. Brown Convention Center, Houston, TX. He most recently served as sales manager for the Houston Hilton North.

**Marissa Pitroski** was named convention sales manager for Visit Milwaukee. She most recently served as account executive for the National Basketball Association's Milwaukee Bucks.

The San Diego Convention & Visitors Bureau has named **Jennifer Pesicka** as national sales director, responsible for the Northeast region. Her most recent position was senior sales manager for the Hiltons of San Diego Sales Complex.



Pesicka

The Indianapolis Convention & Visitors Association has named **Wendy Petersen** as national sales manager based in Chicago targeting corporate and association organizations based in Illinois, Minnesota and Wisconsin. She was most recently director of sales for Seattle's Convention & Visitors Bureau, Seattle, WA.

**Alan Sims** was named vice president of sales and services for the Little Rock Convention & Visitors Bureau, Little Rock, AR. He most recently served as director of sales for the Dallas Convention & Visitors Bureau, Dallas, TX.

InterContinental Tampa, Tampa, FL, has named **Dan Hepler** as senior sales manager responsible for entertainment, education, religious and Southeastern association markets. He most recently served as sales manager for The Peabody Orlando, Orlando, FL.

The Dallas Convention & Visitors Bureau, Dallas, TX, has named **Darren Temple** as senior vice president, sales and services. He previously served as executive vice president, global sales for PSAV Presentation Services.

Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront, Jacksonville, FL, has named **Pat Trammell**



Petersen



Temple

as senior director of sales and marketing. With more than 25 years of hotel and meetings industry experience, she most recently served as senior director of sales and marketing at Hyatt Regency Atlanta, Atlanta, GA.

Riviera Palm Springs, Palm Springs, CA, has named **Michael Islava** as director of sales and marketing. He was director of sales and marketing for Lakeway Resort & Spa, Austin, TX.



Trammell

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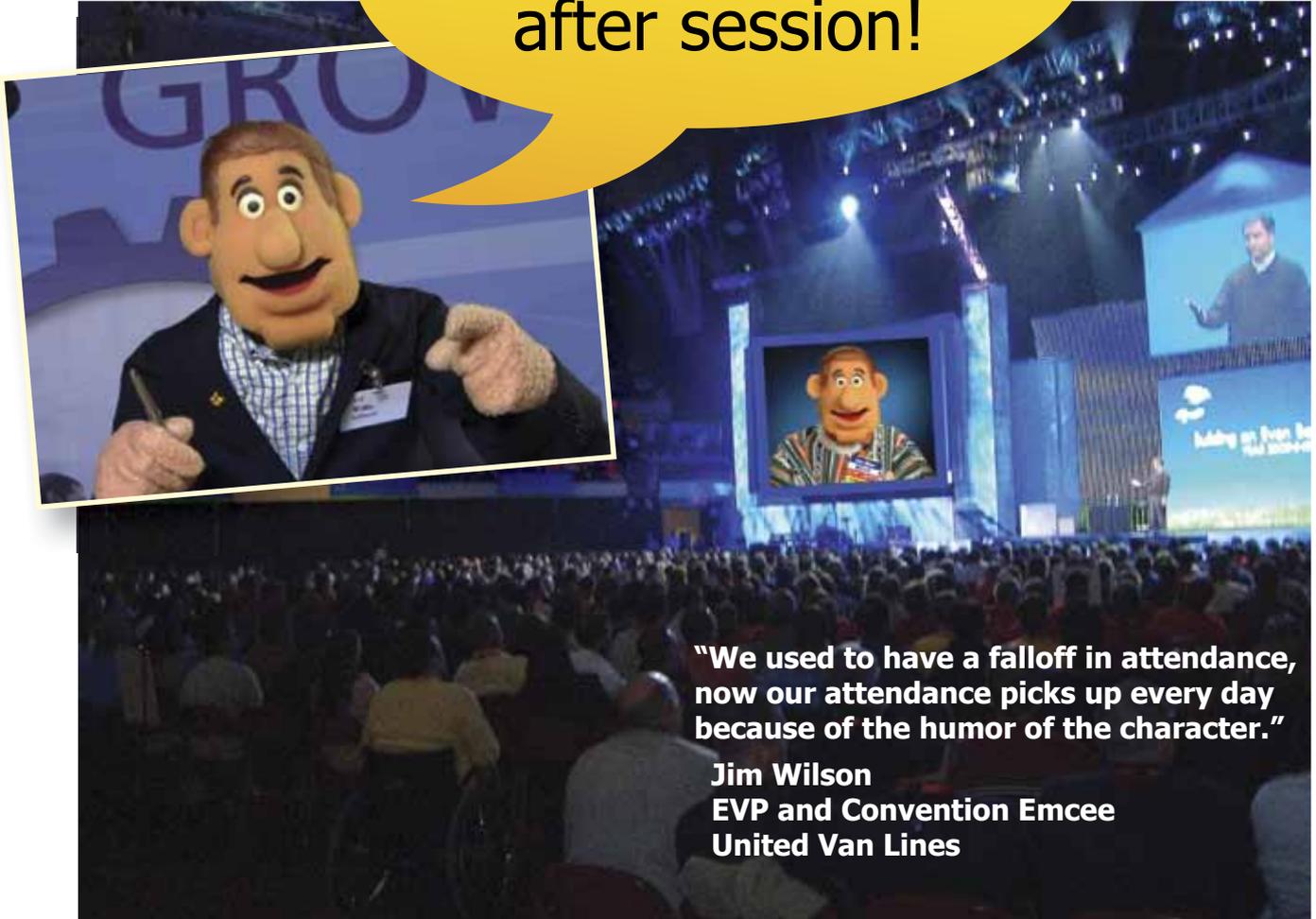
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Anaheim/Orange County Visitor & Convention Bureau	714-765-8888	www.anaheimoc.org/meetings	Mindy Abel	meeting.inquiry@anaheimoc.org
ARIA Resort & Casino	866-718-2489	www.ariaslasvegas.com	Tony Yousfi	meetings@ariaslasvegas.com
Borgata Hotel Casino & Spa	609-317-7729	www.theborgata.com	Group Sales	meetings@theborgata.com
The Broadmoor	719-577-5777	www.broadmoor.com	John Rovie	jrovie@broadmoor.com
Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau	800-933-8448	www.miamimeetings.com	Ita Moriarity	meetingsinfo@miamimeetings.com
Greensboro Area Convention & Visitors Bureau	800-344-2282	www.visitgreensboronc.com	Ava Pope	apope@visitgreensboronc.com
Hilton Orlando	407-313-4300	www.thehiltonorlando.com	William McKay	orloc-salesadm@hilton.com
Inn of the Mountain Gods Resort & Casino	800-545-6040	www.innofthemountaingods.com	Jo Kazhe	jokazhe@innofthemountaingods.com
Jack Fiala's Corporate Sidekicks	877-856-1160	www.corporatesidekicks.com	Jack Fiala	jack@corporatesidekicks.com
Loews Hotels at Universal Orlando	888-322-5531	www.uomeetingsandevents.com	Group Sales	meetings@universalorlando.com
Long Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau	800-452-7829	www.visitlongbeach.com	Iris Himert	irish@longbeachcvb.org
MGM Grand Las Vegas	800-929-1112	www.mgmgrand.com	Ruth Leis	hotelsalesleads@lv.mgmgrand.com
The Naples Beach Hotel & Golf Club	800-866-1946	www.naplesbeachhotel.com	Group Sales	groupsales@naplesbeachhotel.com
Oklahoma City Convention and Visitors Bureau	405-297-8912	www.visitokc.com	Elizabeth Richardson	erichardson@okccvb.org
Omni Orlando Resort at ChampionsGate	407-238-6526	www.omnihotels.com/findahotel/orlando-championsgate/meetingfacilities.aspx	Group Sales	mcocha.leads@omnihotels.com
Palm Beach County Convention & Visitors Bureau	561-329-3753	www.palmbeachfl.com	Donna Del Gallo	ddelgallo@palmbeachfl.com
Pointe Hilton Resorts	602-870-8188	www.pointehilton.com	Staci Valentino	PHXSP-salesadm@hilton.com
Ponte Vedra Inn & Club	800-234-7842	www.pontevedra.com	Tony Fitzjohn	sales@pvresorts.com
Reunion Resort	407-396-3183	www.reunionresort.com	Linda Scott	lscott@reunionresort.com
Rosen Centre Hotel	407-996-9939	www.rosencentre.com	Todd Frappier	sales@rosenhoteles.com
Rosen Plaza Hotel	407-996-9939	www.rosenplaza.com	Victoria Hall	sales@rosenhoteles.com
Rosen Shingle Creek	407-996-9939	www.rosenshinglecreek.com	Leslie Menichini	sales@rosenhoteles.com
Royal Caribbean International	800 762-0458	www.royalcaribbeanincentives.com	Lori Cassidy	royalmeetingsandincentives@rccl.com
Santa Fe Convention & Visitors Bureau	505-955-6210	www.santafe.org	Mary Pat Kloenne	mpkloenne@santafenm.gov
The Scottsdale Plaza Resort	480-922-3300	www.meetatplaza.com	Kelly Moenter-Nofal	meet@scottsdaleplaza.com
Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino	954-797-5502	www.seminolehardrock.com	Mark P. Tascione	mark.tascione@seminolehardrock.com
South Point Hotel, Casino & Spa	702-797-8050	www.southpointmeetings.com	Maureen Robinson	sales@southpointcasino.com
Station Casinos	702-495-4247	www.stationcasinos.com	Michael Toney	michael.toney@stationcasinos.com
Talking Stick Resort	480-850-7777	www.talkingstickresort.com	Group Sales	sales@talkingstickresort.com
Universal Orlando Resort	888-322-5531	www.uomeetingsandevents.com	Group Sales	meetings@universalorlando.com
The Venetian Resort Hotel Casino	702-414-4202	www.venetianpalazzomeetings.com	Chandra Allison	chandra.allison@venetianpalazzo.com
Virginia Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau	800-700-7702	www.vbmeetings.com	Al Hutchinson	ahutchin@vb.gov
Walt Disney World Resort	321-939-7112	www.disneymeetings.com	Anne Hamilton	meetings@disneyworld.com
Washington Hilton	202-328-2080	www.hiltonsofcd.com	Group Sales	dcawh-salesadm@hilton.com
The Westin Casuarina Las Vegas Hotel, Casino & Spa	702-836-5934	www.westin.com/lasvegas	Sandra Horvath	shorvath@westinlv.com
The Westin La Cantera Resort	210-558-2229	www.westinlacantera.com	Group Sales	info@westinlacantera.com
Wild Horse Pass Hotel & Casino	520-796-4923	www.wingilariver.com	Denise Heintz	denise.heintz@wingilariver.com
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