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THE SOURCE FOR MEETING PLANNING MANAGEMENT

ASAE President and CEO John H. Graham IV, FASAE, CAE, identifies trends associations will need to consider in the year ahead to meet the changing needs of members and attendees.

Outlook 2017

Innovation, Learning
and Policy Will Shape
the Meetings Industry
PAGE 10

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THE SOURCE FOR ASSOCIATION MEETING PLANNING MANAGEMENT

December / January 2017

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Visit Seattle

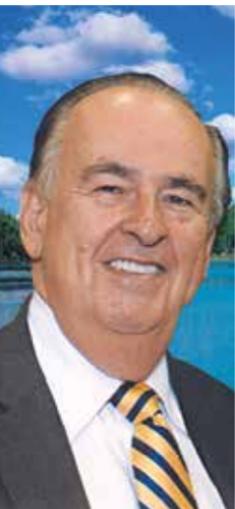


AlliedPA Dallas/Fort Worth Farm with Fort Worth cattle drovers



NBC & Company/One-World Observatory

Keeping an Eye on D+I



Among the predictions and concerns industry leaders have expressed for meetings and conventions in 2017, the issue of diversity and inclusion (D+I) has risen to hot-button status, thanks to a contentious election season that exposed how complicated and deep-seated our perceptions and opinions really are — for better or worse. Associations have an especially important stake in remaining vigilant to D+I backlash — their survival depends upon remaining relevant to their diverse communities. ASAE President and CEO John H. Graham IV, who graces our cover, writes in his "Outlook 2017" feature on page 10, "The meetings industry needs to keep an eye on policy issues that may impact the meetings business this year, and how those policies may affect your organization's attendance in states where these policies are in place. ASAE anticipates several states will try to develop legislation that discriminates and denies public accommodation." He continues, "It's important that industry partners, in particular hotels and destination marketing professionals, help to educate their local and state legislatures on the potential consequences of passing laws that are viewed as discriminatory against a segment of our society."

Graham details other issues associations need to consider in 2017 to remain inclusive and relevant to their membership: redesigning events to be more immersive and experiential; and incorporating new learning formats that are more connected and accessible to everyone. ASAE is leading the way in both endeavors: First, ASAE's Springtime Expo has been reimagined into "a new engagement model," with a learning-by-doing approach, called the Experience Design Project, which will debut May 23-24, 2017. On the education side, says Graham, "ASAE has created a variety of learning opportunities to appeal to a broad audience and learning styles" including five-minute Ignite and Story Slam sessions, 20-minute formal and informal education sessions and discussions, and social learning opportunities such as Open Space, "where attendees initiated the learning on a topic of their choice," Graham notes, adding, "These new learning formats not only will engage your attendees, but they will create cross-generational learning."

For more, read the "Top 21 Trends to Watch for Association Events in 2017" by the SmithBucklin Event and Education Services team, beginning on page 11; and "What Happens When Experiential & Exhibits Converge" on page 8.

Here's to a happy, healthy — and inclusive — New Year!

Harvey Grotsky
Publisher

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Philadelphia Convention & Visitors Bureau and Pennsylvania Convention Center Host Washington, DC, Town Hall



PHILADELPHIA, PA — The Philadelphia Convention & Visitors Bureau (PHLCVB) recently hosted a live town hall for meeting professionals in Washington, DC, that highlighted the positive changes at the Pennsylvania Convention Center, the major new developments in Philadelphia that will positively impact the meetings experience, and what it took this summer to host the American Association for Clinical Chemistry and its 20,000 attendees, which immediately followed the Democratic National Convention with its 35,000 delegates.

Posing at the event are (l to r) Greg Talley of Talley Management Group, Doreen Burse of Marriott International, Rick Staub of the PHLCVB, Gail Mutnik of the American Association for Clinical Chemistry, Steve Charamella of the Sheraton Society Hill Hotel, Sara Merriman of the Philadelphia Department of Commerce, PHLCVB's Julie Coker Graham, and John McNichol of the Pennsylvania Convention Center. www.discoverphl.com

IAEE Announces New Certified Exhibition Program

DALLAS, TX — The International Association of Exhibitions and Events (IAEE) announced the launch of its newest initiative, the IAEE Certified Exhibition Program, a certified exhibition designation that will set the “gold standard” for exhibitions and events, as well as establish a broad set of best practices that all events with exhibitions should adhere to.

“IAEE members who earn and display the Certified Exhibition symbol are telling their customers, exhibitors, members and the general public that they produce a quality exhibition that meets IAEE's best practice standards,” said Certified Event Task Force Chairperson Randy Bauler, CEM. “We look forward to the time when most of the shows produced by IAEE members meet the standards and proudly display the Certified Exhibition emblem.”

This member-driven initiative will only certify an exhibition's compliance with minimum standards of conduct and performance. Standards include those that are fact-based and easily confirmed, and that bear upon customer service to attendees, exhibitors, contractors and facilities in the broadest sense.

The exhibition must contain a marketplace in order to qualify. Organizational candidates that meet all criteria will be awarded an IAEE Certified Exhibition graphic made available to them for use on promotional materials. www.iaee.com

ASAE Launches Successful Pilot Version of XDP

WASHINGTON, DC — ASAE hosted in December a successful pilot for their newest event, Xperience Design Project (XDP). The exclusive, one-day, sneak peek of XDP was held at the Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center, and it brought together more than 80 association meeting, marketing, programming and technology professionals as well as industry partners to test and fine-tune the new format. The inaugural event, May 23–24, 2017, is expected to attract upwards of 1,800 total guests.

“XDP is an innovative, business-focused experience that will be a unique opportunity for the association industry and our members,” said John H. Graham, IV, FASAE, CAE, president and CEO of ASAE. “The pilot gave us the ability to see how the different aspects of XDP played out, so we can provide attendees with an exceptional experience in May.”

The format of the pilot was a microcosm of the two-day XDP experience. First, guests participated in The Lab — an immersive, facilitated learning journey around three core topics and each led by a prominent industry leader.

Afterwards, pilot participants took part in the Business Exchange, a series of one-on-one conversations with industry partners. Participants could engage in one of three fast-paced accelerator labs that were focused on embracing change and experience enhancements they could implement at future events. It was followed by two unique “Surprise and Delight” team-created activities.

ASAE partnered with 360 Live Media, a marketing and experience design agency based in Washington, DC, to create the XDP pilot and upcoming event in May. To reserve a spot for the inaugural XDP, members and industry partners can register on January 23, 2017. For information about XDP, visit www.xdpbyasae.org.



Credits: 1-3 Chris Williams of Zoetia Images; 2 Sabrina Kidwai; 4-6 Kelvin Bong; 5 ICCA; 7 www.alysahaway.com

1-3 The ASAE Technology Conference & Expo, held in National Harbor, Maryland, featured **1** Erik Qualman who shared five ways association professionals can reach their digital leadership goals. **2** YourMembership, a cloud-based software provider, sponsored “’Tis the Season for Giving” for attendees at the Expo and contributed to the local chapter of the Make-A-Wish Mid-Atlantic Region. **3** Attendees are all smiles at the ASAE event. **4-6** The 55th International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) Congress 2016, “Gathering of the ICCA Global Tribes,” was held at Borneo Convention Centre Kuching — one of the few second-tier destinations in Asia to host this congress. **5** An ongoing CSR project aims to save the endangered orangutan. **7** At the BestCities Global Forum in Dubai, Chair Jonas Wilstrup, convention director, Wonderful Copenhagen, hands the BestCities Global Forum baton to 2017 host Tokyo, which was accepted by Kana Nomoto, manager international association meetings, TCVB.

What Happens When Experiential & Exhibits Converge?

Darrin Jackson



A New Evolution Occurs

Often, I count my blessings to be in the exhibit industry. We get to experience the birth of some spectacular marketing campaigns. Some of them are complex threads that tell a brand story across all the marketing platforms. Others tend to be so simplistic at their core that we shake our heads and wish we could have been a fly on the wall during the pitch. There is never a dull moment in the industry. This is a product of its constant progression. In fact, the industry is on the brink of yet another evolution that will involve the convergence of two worlds: exhibit and experiential.

The exhibit industry has evolved dramatically over the years while the world of experiential marketing has gained a lot of momentum. Both may be facing their greatest evolutionary stage ever as each embraces their shared qualities to evolve in a way no one ever could have imagined.

I've been in the events industry for over two decades and have seen a lot of change, none greater than the evolving convergence of traditional trade shows and the application of cutting-edge experiential techniques.

EXPERIENTIAL IS SEXY

Experiential is sexy, very sexy. It prods, engages, moves and convinces guests to be more involved with a brand. Engagement has been a challenge for the exhibit industry. But on the other hand, experiential has embraced what the exhibit industry already knows about how the "destination" attracts attendees. What I'm seeing is a convergence that is paying off for both industries. So, how will this convergence nurture growth for experiential and exhibits? While there are many things that will affect this change — including creative thinking, technology, data and analytics to mention a few — I believe the chief driver will be the ability of both worlds to think holistically about both destination and experience.

Take for example C2 Montreal, a corporate event that helps business leaders integrate creativity and innovation into their organizations and associated events. C2 practices what it preaches. This past year's gathering featured a fog-filled igloo where discussions were held and participants were required to interact without the ability to see one another. Another

highlight was "brain dates," where guests shared thoughts in unusual places such as on stationary bikes or in Ferris wheel pods. Some of the best meetings I've attended at my company were walking meetings.

Ricard St. Pierre, head of C2 Montreal framed best what C2 was trying to achieve at the event. "This year's biggest achievement was to move from a conference to an experience. People told us 'I lived something rather than just listened.'"

Software maker SAP uses iBeacons to capture data about guest movements, interactions and touch points at Sapphire Now, their flagship conference. This data is used by the sales and marketing people to build a stronger customer bond and close business well beyond show hours. This marries a lingering impression of the event with self-initiated follow-up.

NTEN, the Nonprofit Technology Enterprise Network, held its inaugural conference in 2015. NTEN used Crowdsourcing to solicit meaningful session ideas and feedback for the conference. During the suggestion period, participants could see other submissions, ask for topical ideas to be covered and use up/down voting on ideas. Submitters were encouraged to reach out to naysayers to improve submissions or provide new thinking on ideas. Not only did NTEN improve content at the conference, they got attendees well engaged leading up to the conference.

THE CHALLENGE

These examples are not isolated initiatives. Both big-budget and small-scale events are showing real traction when they embrace these practices. It is encouraging to see that this kind of innovation is percolating in the exhibit world more and more. The challenge is to get exhibit managers and brand executives to continue to innovate down this path.

An EventTrack 2015 study by experiential agency Mosaic and the Event Marketing Institute determined that 79 percent of respondents said they would execute more event and experiential programs in the future. And, 98 percent of respondents said that if they were thinking about purchasing a product anyway, seeing it or trying it at an experiential

marketing event made them more likely to buy it. Sixty-five percent of people ended up buying a product or service at an experiential marketing event.

More and more, the C-levels are asking for greater justification and better results from their organization's event spend. Many are consolidating smaller events into larger more meaningful experiences to capture the mind and emotion of prospects and customers. So, how does that translate into ROI? According to the study, when engaging in "experiential marketing campaigns," 48 percent of brands realize a ROI of between 3:1 to 5:1, and 29 percent indicated their return is over 10:1. In the study, 12 percent said their ROI was 20:1 or higher.

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?

So, if exhibits set the stage and experiential engages the audience, it just seems right that convergence points to a

I've been in the events industry for over two decades and have seen a lot of change, none greater than the evolving convergence of traditional trade shows and the application of cutting-edge experiential techniques.

bright future for sponsoring brands and their partners. In fact, the EventTrack study suggests that "more marketing dollars need to be applied to experiential event marketing, and it must be viewed as a top priority by CMOs in the coming years."

I believe there are some important conclusions marketing strategists and decision-makers can glean from this trend of convergence.

- The exhibit event offers a destination while the experiential event offers greater engagement.
- Branded environments/entertainment destinations are the perfect fit for any event venue.
 - Allows the brand to curate the visitor's journey.
 - Provides a platform for brand engagement and content development that can be extended beyond the venue through digital and word-of-mouth channels.
- Broader channels mean more measurable results.

- Bigger budgets and greater expectations.
- The brand will remain the focal point.
- An emotional connection is the goal.
- More emphasis on balancing staging and engagement.
- Content fuels reach.
- A new vocabulary will emerge:
 - Booths = branded environments
 - Visitors = guests
 - Visit = curated tour
- There will be more convergence
 - A new definition of brand engagement, backed by predictive measurements, is emerging, and experience is at the center of it. A few things are certain to drive this forward:
 - **IoT (Internet of Things).** Basics plus virtual reality, animatronics, holography, location-based, etc.
 - **Mobility.** It's affecting almost everything.

- **Destination re-defined.** Bring the brand to all the people and certain people to the brand.
- **Brands will ask for more.** Delivering more memorable experiences will require vendors to become partners (and brands to accept them as that) with broader thinkers who can figure things out, cross the finish line, make the brand look good and infuse "wow."
 - As the evolution of these two great industries move forward, it gives all of us a sense of renewed spirit, creativity and the fact that I, along with many others, are part of an exciting and adventurous future — a future of convergence. AC&F

Darrin Jackson is Director of Creative Services for Dimension Design, a collaborative and innovative branding partner. He oversees creative contributions to display projects for the firm's clients and their clients. He brings more than 20 years of experience in the creative field to Dimension Design, focusing on design, events and media.

Outlook 2017

Innovation, Learning and Policy Will Shape the 2017 Meetings Industry

By John H. Graham IV, FASAE, CAE

As we start 2017, there are several trends that organizations and the teams involved in designing and implementing meetings will need to consider in order to meet the changing needs of their members and attendees. A few trends to consider are to incorporate new learning offerings and innovate how meetings are created and executed. In addition, organizations need to stay apprised of local and state policies that are evolving around diversity and inclusion. These decisions can have a significant impact on the meetings industry, and potentially, participation at your events if your events are held in the affected states.

BE INNOVATIVE: REDESIGN MATURE PRODUCTS AND EVENTS

One area of change happening in organizations is adapting their events in order to meet the changing needs and expectations of attendees and industry partners alike. ASAE starts with a holistic view of all the products, services and events we offer our members. It's important to conduct a high-level scan of your products and services to accurately assess stakeholder and audience mindset, audience size and the competitive market position.

When examining the data, organizations need to decide whether the event meets the expectations of their customers, especially if it's a mature event. Factors to consider are: the performance against all of the relevant business objectives as well as format, stakeholder feedback and market position. The primary question evolves around asking whether the show is positioned for future success. If not, what steps should the organization take to evolve the show or reimagine it?

In 2014, ASAE decided to reimagine its Springtime Expo, an event that served the community for over 40 years. After a thorough review, it was determined that ASAE needed to innovate a new engagement model. After scanning the marketplace, ASAE engaged its stakeholders and went through an experience strategy and design process, which led to the co-creation of Experience Design Project (XDP). XDP will launch on May 23–24, 2017 at the Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center at National Harbor, Maryland. Over the past couple of years, several other industry organizations

[John H. Graham](#)



ASAE has reimaged its Springtime Expo, replacing it with a new model: Experience Design Project (XDP), which will launch on May 23–24, 2017.

have decided to change how their events are delivered. For example, the Convention Industry Council tweaked its evening event for the Hall of Leaders from a sit-down dinner to a reception. The Professional Convention Management Association redesigned their Foundation Dinner to a more interactive and engaging model as well. NCTA - The Internet & Television Association (NCTA) decided to sunset its INTX trade show after 65 years.

INCORPORATE NEW LEARNING FORMATS

Along with rethinking how a meeting is designed, another trend is new learning formats. From boomers to Generation Z, everyone learns differently. Some are audio or visual learners and others like short education formats. The key is empowering and motivating your attendees, so they pursue the knowledge and skills necessary for lifelong learning and productive contributions to their organizations.

There's a fresh approach called connected learning, which is based on research, learning theories and using social and digital media. This new form is still evolving, but regardless of the format, learning needs to be accessible to everyone, allow for full participation, interaction with peers, intellectual growth and social connection. The new learning format builds on existing models and engages with stakeholders across generations, so organizations can remodel the learning experience for their attendees.

There's also a cultural and cognitive shift towards micro-

Top 21 Trends to Watch for Association Events in 2017

By
The SmithBucklin Event and Education Services Team

What can associations anticipate for their events in 2017? We — the Event and Education Services team at the association management and services company SmithBucklin — gazed into our crystal balls and compiled a list of trends, predictions and forecasts for meetings and conventions, including education, food and beverage, sponsorships and technology. Here is a selection of trends we are looking forward to in 2017:

MEETINGS AND CONVENTIONS

- 1** Data analysis no longer will be a “nice to have” — it is table stakes in 2017. The gathering, analysis and synthesis of data and using it to design event strategies will be the standing elements in every event project plan.
- 2** Organizations that view their hotel, convention center and other third parties as “partners” will gain more long-term value from their relationships, especially during negotiations. Partnering in good times and bad will help in particular when addressing new contract fees or seeking additional concessions.
- 3** In an uncertain world, a well-designed and communicated emergency plan and crisis communication strategy are essentials for all meetings and conventions. Make sure your crisis plans are comprehensive and shared with the entire team.

- 4** Meeting attendees and hosts will increase their awareness of social issues surrounding meeting destinations. Organizations are more likely to consider local laws and their potential impact on attendance and their attendees as they consider future sites.
- 5** Events will have a greater emphasis on “structured distractions.” Watch for formal opportunities to “doodle” during general sessions. Displaying these creations is a great way to show attendee interaction at the conference.
- 6** Interactive installations that connect attendees will be great additions to lobby spaces, lounges, reception events, etc. Simple exhibits such as graffiti walls, sharing or story boards, and photo collages will provide fun visuals and foster great networking energy.
- 7** People will come to meetings for something more than what they can get on their own. They will want an experience that will change their hearts and minds, and they are looking to your event to do just that.

EDUCATION

- 8** Association education programs will support more micro-credentials — discrete, competency-based credentialing programs that supplement the larger certification programs that associations offer.
- 9** Death by PowerPoint will take on new meaning as new session formats and “facilitated conversations” will be the key to driving engagement. Additionally, education is not only for the classroom — attendees will engage before, during and after events sharing the application of their learnings.
- 10** Education-focused podcasts will be a trend for associations. This format allows learners to listen to their topics of interest on-demand, on-the-go and in smaller chunks of time from various experts in their industry. Podcasts are relatively low-cost to produce but pack a big professional-development punch!



The Convention Industry Council tweaked its evening event for the Hall of Leaders from a sit-down dinner to a reception.

Credit: Convention Industry Council

learning, and organizations must embrace it. Self-directed learning is also gaining in popularity, but the overall goal is to incorporate a variety of formats and learning levels. These changes can range from the length of sessions and how you deliver education to different levels of learning sessions from foundational to strategic.

It's essential to provide attendees with lots of choices, so they can develop their own learning pathway. As you plan education sessions, it's important to incorporate different lengths and types of formats that range from formal to informal opportunities as well as one-on-one networking. For example, ASAE has created a variety of learning opportunities to appeal to a broad audience and learning styles. Two examples of five-minute learning opportunities include Ignite and Story Slam. For longer forms of shorter learning, organizations can create 20-minute education sessions. This could be formal (similar to TED Talks) or informal learning (discussion dens).

In practice, learning is becoming increasingly social, and informal learning outside of a classroom is very important. At the 2016 ASAE Annual Meeting & Exposition, ASAE debuted Open Space, where attendees initiated the learning on a topic of their choice. They facilitated the conversation in a reserved discussion pod, shared takeaways with others and extended the conversation in the meeting app.

Connected learning is active, hands-on, networking and

personal. These new learning formats not only will engage your attendees, but they will create cross-generational learning, especially when it's centered on a common interest and goal. For example, an organization could engage members from all generations to create a Massive Open Online Course or record a podcast that is member-only content.

MONITOR POLICY ISSUES IMPACTING THE MEETINGS INDUSTRY

Along with innovating new programs and learning formats, associations and the meetings industry needs to keep an eye



The Professional Convention Management Association redesigned their Foundation Dinner to a more interactive and engaging model.

Credit: Edلية Avrossi Photography

- 11** Informal educational opportunities during live events will continue to grow in popularity. These opportunities will take place on the exhibit show floor or in common spaces where attendees will gather in small groups to discuss ideas. Sometimes, they will work with a facilitator. The key is keeping it short. Instead of sitting through an entire planned session, they will network, brainstorm and ultimately learn with their group of like-minded professionals.

FOOD & BEVERAGE

- 12** Event planners will work with culinary and catering teams to discard the chafing dishes and Sternos, and find innovative food delivery options. Also, finding ways to eliminate food waste will be important.
- 13** More beverage offerings will be available at hotels and convention centers. They've already started providing fruit-infused waters and, moving forward, we'll see more requests for beverage alternatives to soda and sugary juices.
- 14** Personal preferences will be an integral part of attendee participation. Attendees will choose the bread, open the wine, and help in the selection of the food. For example, at a recent board meeting dinner, the board president supplied his favorite wine, opting to add his personal touch on the meeting.

- 15** Healthy food options will continue to drive event meals in 2017, especially during breakfast. Attendees are gravitating to lighter morning fare versus the heavier options you find on many breakfast buffets. For example, an avocado toast station with various toppings was a huge hit, and another association's event breakfast in 2017 will feature a make-your-own-smoothie bar.

SPONSORSHIP

- 16** Sponsors will be looking at the quality of the audience, not just the quantity, and their expectations will be higher for connecting to the right audience to achieve their objectives.

Sponsors also will request to activate their sponsorships with specific segments. They will want to track specific actions of each desirable audience segment and understand how these audiences interact within the association.

17 Associations will listen to exhibitors and treat them as valued partners so they can better understand their exhibitors' marketing goals and objectives in order to develop a custom booth and sponsorship packages.

18 Exhibitors and sponsors will expand their one-on-one or small group meetings with attendees — separate from their traditional booth space. Associations will be helping these companies find more quiet time with their customers and prospects, away from the show floor.

TECHNOLOGY

19 Virtual book clubs will evolve in associations in 2017. A virtual book club allows members from all over the world to come together and share ideas and perspectives on relevant topics in the industry. Associations will leverage a dynamic platform that allows for collaborative discussion and assign a facilitator to lead the sessions.

20 Virtual reality has been buzzing at association trade shows. With the continued rise of mobile apps that create a VR experience and the low cost of VR headsets (you can buy one for less than \$15!), more exhibitors will turn to VR in 2017. What a great way to showcase a new product or unveil new ideas.

21 Engagement-driven technology will deliver new ways for like-minded attendees to connect and network. Attendees want to define their experience but don't want "forced fun." Associations will understand their audiences' wants and needs, and be willing to take risks to try out new tools to meet those goals.

For information about what to anticipate for your association event in 2017, contact SmithBucklin's Event and Education Services team at cmcgury@smithbucklin.com or call 800-539-9740.



on policy issues that may impact the meetings business this year, and how those policies may affect your organization's attendance in states where these policies are in place. ASAE anticipates several states will try to develop legislation that discriminates and denies public accommodation.

It's important that industry partners, in particular hotels and destination marketing professionals, help to educate their local and state legislatures on the potential consequences of passing laws that are viewed as discriminatory against a segment of our society. ASAE is not alone in its concern about the impact of state laws on its members and events. Such laws have been viewed as discriminatory by other associations, corporations, sports teams and leagues.

ASAE's intent is not to tell other associations where they should hold their own meetings and events. Each association has its own decision-making model and criteria for determining where to host a meeting and convention.

With a new administration and Congress, it's a great opportunity for the association community to communicate how they impact the economy. For example, associations represent a major piece of the meetings and conventions industry with nearly 1.8 million jobs and accounting for \$280 billion in direct spending by attendees. Trade and professional associations generated \$142 billion in revenue in 2013, up 13.8 percent since 2008.

The meetings industry continues to thrive because we have more face-to-face and online learning opportunities as well as growth within the association industry. As we move into 2017, it's vital the community pays attention to trends in their specific industry as well as meetings to see if any will disrupt it. It's important to remember associations are stronger together as we advance the meeting industry forward. AC&F

John H. Graham IV, FASAE, CAE, is president and CEO of ASAE, the essential organization for association management, representing both organizations and individual association professionals. Organizational members are trade associations and individual membership societies that represent almost every sector of the economy and countless professions.

AN ALL-NEW PERSPECTIVE ON MEETINGS AND EVENTS



All-New Walt Disney World Dolphin Lobby Concept - Scheduled for completion in September 2017

The Walt Disney World Dolphin lobby will undergo a \$12 million re-design, the final stage of a \$140 million renovation project, the largest makeover in the resort's history. It will be completely transformed into a sleek, contemporary space featuring new food and beverage options and offer an inviting area for guests to relax or network. A recipient of the prestigious Meetings & Conventions Hall of Fame Award, the Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin is a nationally respected and recognized leader in the convention resort arena. The resort offers more than 329,000 sq. ft. of meeting space, 84 meeting rooms, and 2,267 guest rooms and suites which feature the Westin Heavenly® Bed. Attendees can also relax in the luxurious Mandara Spa, indulge in one of our 17 world-class restaurants and lounges or enjoy our unique Disney Differences.



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AlliedPRA Dallas/Fort Worth Fam guests pose at the sculpture signifying how "BIG things happen in Dallas."

How to Get the Most Out of Fam Trips

And Do the Right Thing Ethically

By Maura Keller

After months of planning your company's annual offsite meeting, you are excited to arrive and have the meeting begin. This year, you've selected a completely new locale, with new accommodations and uncharted venues. But you've heard great things about your selected city from fellow meeting planners and are confident the meeting will be a success. Unfortunately, you arrive and realize that this isn't the ideal locale for your company or the 200 attendees who have traveled near and far to this destination. The venue is smaller than expected, the hotel lacks the amenities it prom-

ised, and the city is difficult to navigate. You should have accepted the Fam trip invitation for this location that crossed your desk months before.

Many cities, hotels, resorts and other meeting venues offer familiarization trips, often referred to as Fam trips, to meeting planners on a fairly regular basis. Fam trips are a way for professional meeting planners to familiarize themselves with a destination and determine if it is a good fit for a future meeting or event.

While Cookie Walner, CMP, CEM, CMM, CAE, the director of events at American Hardware Manufacturers Association, doesn't attend as many Fam trips as in years past, she believes meeting planners should always determine if the trip

is worth the time out of the office. Walner says, "You need to evaluate if the 'stops' on the trip will be appropriate to the organization's needs. I personally recall a Fam trip that included a site of the city's large university's meeting space and dorm rooms for attendees," Walner says. "That would be great for high school and college groups. But this would never have been a consideration for my meeting. Instead, my time would have been better spent elsewhere."

WHERE TO START

What deciding factors should planners evaluate when determining whether to attend a Fam trip? Michelle Crosby, CMP, CTA, DMCP, senior national sales manager, AlliedPRA Dallas/Fort Worth, says that some of the key questions meeting planners need to ask are:

- Is this destination on my radar for a future meeting, conference or incentive trip business?
- Does this destination make sense for my group's demographics?
- Would we be able to afford this destination (airfare, hotel, meals, transportation, offsite excursions, etc.)?
- Is there good airlift in/out of the local airport for my attendees?
- Is the time I host my meetings in the appropriate season for this destination?
- Do I have the time to participate in the complete Fam?
- What is the Fam going to showcase and is that something that is needed or will be utilized by my organization?

Crosby also suggests that planners "have a specific program in mind prior to attending the Fam so that activities offered can stay focused around what the actual attendees

"Have a list of questions regarding hotel lodging rates, inclusions, CMP packages and how flexible the venues are. Request information about who their destination management partner is and how they can assist with onsite and offsite needs and requests."



Michelle Crosby, CMP, DMCP
Senior National Sales Manager
AlliedPRA Dallas/Fort Worth
Dallas, TX

of your meeting may be participating in." Crosby adds, "Have a list of questions regarding hotel lodging rates, inclusions, CMP packages and how flexible the venues are with these items. Request information about who their destination management partner is and how they can assist with onsite and offsite needs and requests."

Walner also says it's important for planners to do the research about the city, hotels and unique venues. "Come prepared with questions and as many details as possible about your program," Walner says. "Remember, this is not a vacation. As a Fam attendee, the planner is a guest. Show up on time, be engaged, courteous and respectful to the hosts. This is a working, onsite opportunity to learn about the city and the hotels and venues. And potentially book business."

Deborah Cohen, CMP, director of meeting and convention sales at Branson Convention & Visitors Bureau, sees many Fam promotions throughout the industry and feels it is still the best tool for developing new relationships and introducing destinations to new potential clients.

"We now offer one to two Fams per year," Cohen says. "The challenge for us is that we select a set of dates that works for our team, our destination and does not conflict with any industry events — but it can still conflict with planners' personal schedules or meeting calendar." Cohen and her team invite planners who have not visited their destination in the last five years.

"The exception is a scenario where someone has been here on vacation, but did not tour our convention center and hotels," Cohen says. "We would invite them to come back and learn more about how Branson can also host meetings and conventions."

MAKING THE MOST OUT OF A FAM

It's important for meeting planners to accept a Fam invitation only if they have a real piece of business and have sent out an RFP. Planners



All eyes are on The Orlando Eye, a highlight of the new I-Drive 360 shopping and dining complex on International Drive in Orlando.



Cookie Walner, CMM, CAE
Director of Events
American Hardware
Manufacturers Association
Schaumburg, IL

“Remember this is not a vacation. As a Fam attendee, the planner is a guest. Show up on time, be engaged, courteous and respectful to the hosts. This is a working, onsite opportunity to learn about the city and the hotels and venues. And potentially book business.”

should be prepared to share the history of the meeting, what the deciding factors are and when a decision will be made.

Industry experts agree that planners should ask themselves if the destination is one they'll really utilize, book business in or seriously consider in the coming years. They should determine if they have the time to attend, the knowledge of the potential of putting business there and if realistically their budget would accommodate such a location.

Phyllis Klasky, director of events at the NYC-based American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME), advises planners to come prepared to discuss their potential meetings and their specs when visiting the city.

“Planners should be able to provide a real date when a decision for the respective meeting/conference will be made and the other cities under consideration,” Klasky says.

According to Klasky, in-

vitations for familiarization trips are sent to ASME meeting planners as a result of the volume of meetings ASME conducts and their buying power.

“Acceptance of Fams is one of ethics,” Klasky says. “If ASME is seriously contemplating holding a conference in a certain city to which a site visit is required and the planner is not familiar with the site or hotel and time is available, and an invitation for a Fam is received at that time, then ASME will accept the invitation.”

She adds, “Fams should be accepted by planners who make decisions about meetings and have a real piece of business — it should not be used as a vacation.”

Gregorio Palomino, CDMP, CEP, CWP, CMP, CSEP, the executive officer at San Antonio, Texas-based CRE8AD8, an International Event Management Agency, has this rule of thumb: A Fam shouldn't be taken unless a planner seriously thinks



The Louisiana Memorial Pavilion exhibits (above) and the American Sector bar at The National WWII Museum are must-see attractions in New Orleans.



they can place business in that location within one to three years or they already have business there and need to finalize their plans.

“I also believe that a planner should have a ratio of 1:3 for events to Fams,” Palomino says. “So if an organization annually plans three events a year, they should limit their Fams to about nine annually.”

Crosby adds that it's tempting to bring along a spouse on a Fam trip to the Bahamas instead of a colleague who helps plan meetings. “This turns into a vacation, and the focus turns away from the reason for the Fam invitation in the first place,” Crosby says. “This takes advantage of the generosity of the destination and the vendor partners that have spent time and money preparing for the Fam trip and the invited guests.”

Preparing for Fams means planners should have some questions and be ready to share those questions about the events they are willing to place — from numbers of attendees to budget constraints to entertainment needs. The planner also needs to take photos and make notes about the options at the location.

It also may be helpful to create a customized briefing guide to share with salespeople at hotels and various venues. The briefing guide should capture any open or anticipated RFPs and other high-level information.

Most companies have a policy that only one individual from the organization may attend a Fam, and that individual is often required to provide a Fam report, which can include these questions and observations:

- Flight time and ease of arriving at the destination.
- Hotel facility and ease of check-in process.
- Size, service and cleanliness of all properties and venues.
- Quality (and safety) of food/water.
- Travel time to activities and off-property venues.

“Fams should be accepted by planners who make decisions about meetings and have a real piece of business — it should not be used as a vacation.”



Phyllis Klasky
Director, Events Management
American Society of Mechanical
Engineers
New York, NY

- Risk management: Is local/national government stable?
- Currency exchange.
- Customs and ease of shipping materials to the destination.
- Language barrier: Will translation services be required?

All the paperwork should be completed during the Fam registration process; the more information provided, the better the suppliers can prepare.

“Every planner prepares differently, but it's obvious who's there for the trip and those who are there for the free trip,” Palomino says. “To make the most out of your Fam, prepare to walk a lot, see a lot, hear a lot of numbers and try to remember it all. Some destinations don't do a good job at preparing for a Fam. Some pack conference space one after another and before the third one, you've lost it. Only go on Fams you can keep up with. Make the Fam your own, and be ready to move at your pace.”

And while attending a Fam, it's important to meet as many local service professionals as possible, and to participate in as many activities as possible, all of which allow planners to speak from firsthand experience and more confidently sell the destination to their stakeholders.

Vacation? Bribe? or Work?

When a familiarization trip is being offered to a professional meeting planner, there are some inherent ethical questions you need to ask yourself. As the Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) explains, “a lack of universally adopted professional guidelines or enforceable restrictions often leaves people to make their own personal rules.”

According to Jess Tiffany, president of Marketing and Networking

University, an online marketing training company, some of the questions to ask include:

- Is the familiarization trip being given as a bribe or is it intended to help you become familiar with an area to know if it is the right destination for the planned event?
- Does the familiarization trip help you make a sound decision based on what is best for the organization you

represent, or would it be considered excessive and for personal gain?

- Are you requesting extras to treat yourself without your organization's knowledge?
- Is your trip for you to work and learn about a destination or a cheap way to take a vacation?

“Familiarization trips can be a great way to learn about a property or group of properties or a cruise company,” Tiffany says. “However, when things become excessive or violate your morals or company policies, then you should re-

fuse to participate and find the next opportunity that is in line with your values.”

There are instances when you definitely should not accept a familiarization trip:

- The host is insistent that they are the only choice and tries to win you over with excessive swag items, limo rides and other amenities that do not make sense based on the venue and budgets.
- You should not accept a gift that may cause a perceived detriment to your organization or your reputation.

- Components of the trip are not allowed because of policy. You are not allowed to take cash or cash equivalent such as gift cards or gambling chips.
- Anything that you would be embarrassed about if your organization or family knew about.

The Convention Industry Council (CIC) has a CMP Code of Ethics for people who have attained CIC's Certified Meeting Professional credential, which includes a prohibition on using one's “position for undue personal gain and

to promptly disclose to appropriate parties all potential and actual conflicts of interest.”

In addition, PCMA's Principles of Professional and Ethical Conduct calls for members to avoid conflicts of interest or activities that would reflect poorly on an individual, organization or the industry. The principles also call for professionals to “refuse inappropriate gifts, incentives, and/or services in any business dealings that may be offered as a result of my position and could be perceived as personal gain.”

— MK



The "Baltimore Hons," made famous by the award-winning musical "Hairspray," welcome attendees to the Baltimore Convention Center.

Credit: Robb Cohen Photography

Mid-Atlantic States

Planners Find Matches Made in Heaven for Events Up and Down the Coast

By Sara Churchville

Baltimore

When Windy Christner, CMP, senior director, meetings and expositions for the DC-based American Pharmacists Association, planned a conference in March for about 5,800 attendees — pharmacists, pharmacy students and educators, and exhibitors from about 200 companies — she chose Hilton Baltimore as the headquarters hotel. The hotel is connected to the 1,225,000-sf Baltimore Convention Center, where Christner held a pirate-themed opening reception in the exhibit hall, working with the convention center caterers to come up with a menu.

The closing reception took place at the Camden Yards baseball stadium, immediately across from the Hilton and the convention center. Attendees partook of traditional ballpark food and drinks on the concourse level, took photos with the scoreboard and field in the background and browsed through stadium photos and memorabilia while a local "Tonight Show"-style band played.

"As the last event of the meeting, the one people go to and then go home, it has to go well and be impressive — and I had to be able to afford to do it," Christner says. Mission accomplished, as she was able to negotiate one price that included both the rental and the food. "Baltimore was more on the budget-friendly side compared to union-labor cities, one

of the easier cities to work within my budget and not continually try to scale things down," she says.

As a member of the Customer Advisory Board of Visit Baltimore, Christner says she got to see firsthand the renaissance of the harbor area. "Baltimore is a very attractive destination, easy to get around, a lot of choices — culture, history, restaurants," she says. Many attendees asked why the association hadn't been to Baltimore before, Christner says, and they commented on how friendly and welcoming the hotel staff and community in general were.

After her experience of having a formalized process for reviewing emergency plans with not only hotel security but with the harbor and local police, a process Visit Baltimore introduced her to, Christner says this is a standard practice she will use with all destinations. "Including local law enforcement was brilliant," she says. "Having extra partnership is an added bonus that bumps up everyone's level of really trying to assist onsite — if you know one another, it's easier if something should happen. Luckily I never had to see them, but I really felt I had another part of the team there in place."

NEW AND NOTEWORTHY

The \$200 million, 350,000-sf, 17-story Live! Hotel expects to open in late 2017 to supplement the Maryland Live! Casino in Hanover, Maryland, with 310 rooms, a 1,500-seat theater, banquet space for 800 attendees, a gelato bar, spa and salon, and 1,000 new parking spaces.

A 150-room, Edgar Allen Poe-referencing Delta Hotel by Marriott at Inner Harbor Baltimore was slated to open in December offering free Wi-Fi and bottled water, a fitness center, cocktails-and-high-end-burgers restaurant TellTale and the 2,000-sf Raven Ballroom.

Sagamore Pendry Baltimore Hotel plans to debut in early 2017 in the century-old Recreation Pier at Fell's Point, the Ellis Island of Baltimore. The 128-room hotel has a pool, ballroom, restaurant, whiskey bar and 24-hour fitness center.

Renaissance Baltimore Harborplace Hotel has seen \$4.5 million in renovations, with updates to its 27,000 sf of meeting space that includes new furniture, color palette and fixtures, and a foyer expansion with an atrium view that offers an extra 1,300 sf of prefunction space. The fine-dining Watertable with its harbor views also got a spit and polish. It can accommodate functions for up to 22 attendees.

The 323-room Radisson Hotel Baltimore Downtown-Inner Harbor features a rooftop swimming pool, free Wi-Fi and breakfast, a 24-hour fitness center, and 18,500 sf of meeting space that can work for up to 1,500 attendees.

Planners looking for intriguing offsite venues can consider Westminster Hall, which with its stained glass windows, pipe organ and wood floor, can work as a banquet space for

"Including local law enforcement was brilliant. Having extra partnership is an added bonus that bumps up everyone's level of really trying to assist onsite — if you know one another, it's easier if something should happen. Luckily I never had to see them."



Windy Christner, CMP
Senior Director, Meetings and Expositions
American Pharmacists Association
Washington, DC

250 or a lecture or conference space for up to 350, with AV available onsite.

The B&O Railroad Museum offers a 10 percent discount to nonprofit organizations that rent the facilities, which are manifold and include Roundhouse, which can fit 450 for a seated dinner or 2,800 for a reception; 12,000 sf of outdoor space; the Harry C. Eck Education Station, which has AV capability and can hold 110 attendees in 1,200 sf; and a WWII observation car with a bar that can seat 20.

The workers who built the B&O railroad in the 1840s established Pigtown, today a historic community with boutique shops and restaurants for attendees to browse. When it opens in early 2017, the Sagamore Spirit Distillery will serve the rye it distills from the local spring water on a five-acre complex on the waterfront in Port Covington, which itself is undergoing a \$5.5 billion redevelopment. A 40-foot, 3,700-pound, hand-made copper still is among the memorable sights on the new campus, which along with the 22,000-sf distillery will include a water tower, a 27,000-sf welcome center with one indoor and one outdoor tasting room, and an as-yet-unnamed restaurant from James-Beard Award-winning chef Andrew Carmellini.

Atlantic City

While the last few years have been challenging for Atlantic City, ultimately it remains, as Caesars Entertainment Senior Vice President of National Meetings and Events Michael Masari has noted, "within a tank of gas of one-third of the U.S. population." As such, the shifting sands of the casino-hotel model haven't dampened association planners' enthusiasm for meeting here. Patrice Maillet, director of business development for the Trenton-based New Jersey School Boards Association, for example, says, "Shakeups haven't affected our conference." Her 102-year-old organization routinely holds its annual training meeting there because "there really is no place in New Jersey" that can accommodate groups as large as hers: 8,100 school board members, school administra-



Credits: Nicholas & Partners

Attendees at MPI's WEC enjoyed a beach party in Atlantic City earlier this year with casino resorts and The Boardwalk in the background.

tors, and exhibitors and vendors for the three-day Workshop 2016 held in October at the Atlantic City Convention Center, which has 486,600 sf of connected exhibit space and an additional 109,100 sf in the form of 45 meeting rooms. There's also a covered walkway connection to the 502-room Sheraton Atlantic City Convention Center Hotel, which itself has 27,000 sf of meeting space that includes the nearly 12,000-sf Crown Ballroom.

Maillet aims to bring something fresh to the proceedings each year, and she relies on her strong relationships with Meet AC and the convention center to make that happen. "We all know each other. Everybody does what has to be done to get it done," she says.

An annual challenge for her is "to figure out how to promote companies, but also keep the integrity of our training component. We're constantly trying to come up with ways to increase the floor traffic — we're about creating destinations throughout the exhibit floor." Solution: small classrooms on the perimeter of the conference floor, so exhibitors can have a booth but also contribute to the educational component of the conference. "It's not good enough that we got their contract. We want them to feel it's worthwhile for them and for our attendees; then it's a match made in heaven," she says.

NEW AND NOTEWORTHY

Caesars Entertainment's \$200 million show of faith in Atlantic City continues apace: Harrah's Resort is beginning a \$30 million renovation of its 450 guest rooms and suites in Bayview Tower, ready in third-quarter 2017. Glass-domed nightclub The Pool After Dark, the fitness center and the food court also will get makeovers. The Claridge Hotel had a busy fall, joining the Radisson brand as well as introducing its new 15,000-sf Conference Center at the Claridge and The VUE Rooftop Bar & Lounge at the Claridge.

The bankruptcy-beleaguered former Revel Atlantic City

is tentatively scheduled to reopen (perhaps without a casino, as Showboat Atlantic City recently did) in early 2017 as TEN, hiring several senior executives from the now-shuttered Trump Taj Mahal.

Resorts Casino Hotel offers planners an All Inclusive Meeting Package that includes three daily meals onsite (with dinner at Gallagher's Steak House, Capriccio, Jimmy Buffett's Margaritaville or LandShark Bar & Grill), meeting space, snack breaks, AV, Wi-Fi, parking and guest room starting at \$199 per attendee per night double occupancy, \$239 single occupancy, week nights only. Resorts offers approximately 39,000 sf of meeting space.

Michael Symon will be the latest of the Iron Chefs to join the Borgata Hotel Casino & Spa lineup when he opens the 223-seat Italian eatery Angeline by Michael Symon in spring 2017.

Tropicana Atlantic City in November opened 10 North Lounge, a smoker-friendly space inside the casino that also has a house piano man who plays weekly.

Washington, DC

When Helen Kutska, senior director, convention services for American Fuel & Petrochemical Manufacturers, was casting about for the right place to bring 120 board directors, oil company executives and member company representatives, plus spouses, for the biannual board business meeting in September, she had particular criteria in mind. To work, the property had to be within an hour's drive of a major airport; it also had to be in a "proper resort setting." The 168-room Salamander Resort & Spa on 340 acres of horse country in Middleburg, Virginia, about a 30-minute ride from Dulles Airport, more than fit the bill.

"The accommodations were fabulous," she says, noting that the resort staff were very attentive and the food "got a lot of compliments from our guests, and they have discerning palates. And the activities for downtime were great and offered

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The Marriott Marquis Washington, DC, boasts more than 105,000 sf of meeting space and is adjacent to the Walter E. Washington Convention Center.



Credits: www.washington.org

a lot of alternatives." Attendees participated in a golf tournament, a walking tour of Middleburg, clay shooting, an art class and a tour of the local wine country. On property, trail rides and zip-lining tempted participants, as did watching a dressage demonstration as part of an outdoor reception.

Victor Parra, president and CEO of Alexandria, Virginia-based United Motorcoach Association, also convened his annual board meeting in June (about 40 attendees including partners) at Salamander, with which his chairman was already familiar. "Providing an environment that is enjoyable really adds to the success of the event," he says. In the afternoons, attendees enjoyed on- and off-property activities. At night, "the grounds had little areas where people could smoke cigars around the property and have after-dinner drinks — little fire pits throughout the evening. It was a really pleasant experience."

One event that really resonated with the group was a dinner at Red Fox Inn and Tavern, established in 1728. "Having the entire upstairs in this historic building was just a real treat," Parra says. Overall, Parra's experience was "probably one of the best board meetings we've had. I really like the service and culture that's been instilled in the hotel. The staff all treated you individually as if you were a special guest and made good eye contact. People knew the answers when you asked questions. You really felt you were being taken care of."

NEW AND NOTEWORTHY

Fourteen hotels — 2,200 rooms — opened in the DC region in 2016, and 16 more are scheduled to open in 2017. The 263-room Trump International Hotel, a \$200 million renovation of the Old Post Office, opened in September with 38,000 sf of meeting and event space, including a 13,200-sf ballroom; the 10,000-sf Spa by Ivanka Trump, and DC's first BLT Prime. One of the three Presidential Suites, the \$20,000-per-night, 6,300-sf Trump Townhouse, has a private entrance on Pennsylvania Avenue.

The once-infamous Watergate Hotel, opened in 1967 and

closed 40 years later, has reopened after a \$125 million renovation. The new space has 336 naturally lit guest rooms with marble bathrooms, granite vanities and multiple suites, including two Presidential Suites; a restaurant, Kingbird, that serves "American cuisine with a French twist" with both indoor and riverfront seating; design marvel The Next Whisky Bar, with curving walls of backlit whisky bottles; a rooftop lounge Top of the Gate, with wraparound vistas of the skyline and river; 12,500-sf Argentta spa; the brand new 7,000-sf Moretti Grand Ballroom; and 10,000 sf of outdoor space.

The \$1.4 billion MGM National Harbor, less than 1 mile from the city, opened in early December with a 308-room hotel, 125,000-sf casino, 3,000-seat concert venue and 18,000-sf retail hub. Planners can work with 50,000 sf of meeting space, including a 16,200-sf ballroom and a 6,000-sf terrace. Sting, Cher, Bruno Mars and Ricky Martin are just a few of the entertainers already booked to perform in the Theater at MGM National Harbor, which planners also can book for fixed-seat meetings as well as large receptions. Two cocktail lounges, a 27,000-sf spa, seven dining options (including restaurants by chefs José Andrés, Marcus Samuelsson and the Voltaggio Brothers) and the pastry shop Bellagio Pâtisserie, which boasts a 26-foot fountain of melted chocolate are or soon will be available.

A 4,200-seat, as-yet-unnamed Events DC-shepherded "Entertainment and Sports Arena," which will house the Washington Mystics and be a practice facility for the Washington Wizards, is scheduled to break ground in 2017 and be ready in fall 2018.

New York City

"There's an absence of this type of event in the market in New York," Travis Rush, vice president, business development of NYC-based Kellen Company says of the third annual Kellen Conference, a one-day event for 100 senior leaders of associations to discuss the future of the association industry. He says Kellen's strong network of industry partners, knowledge

of the New York market and desire to provide a convenient locale for such a short meeting, especially for the about 20 percent of attendees who flew in, were factors in choosing to host the conference in NYC for all three years.

This year, Kellen worked out a partnership with Midtown hotel Intercontinental New York Barclay. First opened in 1926, the hotel emerged in April from a \$180 million renovation with seven meeting spaces at more than 15,000 sf, as well as 704 redesigned guest rooms and 31 suites. Event space includes the 4,954-sf Grand Ballroom and the 3,500-sf Empire Ballroom, and The Gin Parlour, which offers 88 gins. Kellen's June conference was the second major hotel event after the renovation.

Rush was impressed with the "highly attentive" service, as well as the way the hotel worked with his and with presenter Rudy Giuliani's teams on security. His advice to association planners considering New York City: "Look around. There are lots of different types of event space, special event venues, old converted banks, luxury venues with rooftops, and not all are connected to a hotel or a major brand. Recognize that you have a lot of options, and there's probably one that's perfect for the personality of your event."

NEW AND NOTEWORTHY

New York City expects to have 135,000 total hotel rooms by the end of 2019. The 189-room Four Seasons Hotel New York Downtown opened in September, with some 6,815 sf of meeting space, including a nearly 3,000-sf Greenwich Ballroom that can house up to 175 attendees. Cut by Wolfgang Puck, the chef's first NYC restaurant, offers seating for 64 in the main dining room and can accommodate about half that number in two additional spaces: the lounge and a private dining space. A rarity in space-deprived Midtown is the 75-

"I really like the service and culture that's been instilled in the (Salamander) hotel. The staff all treated you individually as if you were a special guest and made good eye contact. People knew the answers when you asked questions. You really felt you were being taken care of."



Victor Parra
President and CEO
United Motorcoach Association
Alexandria, Virginia

foot indoor pool, as are the large bathtubs provided in the guest room marble bathrooms. A spa and a 6,000-sf fitness center round out the offerings.

The 1,306-room Grand Hyatt New York, connected by a passageway to Grand Central Terminal, offers attendees guided architectural tours of the train station; 20 percent discounted group tickets to One World Observatory at the top of One World Trade Center, the tallest building in the Western Hemisphere, with 9,000 sf of its own event space; and a 10 percent Visitor Savings Pass to nearby Macy's Herald Square to attendees who have traveled more than 100 miles. Macy's also offers group wine tastings, cooking classes and chef demonstrations.

If all goes as planned, the expansion of the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center will culminate in 1.2 million additional sf of event space, including a 60,000-sf ballroom. The project is to some degree bolstered by an adjacent project, Hudson Yards, which when complete will have more than 17 million sf



Views of New York Harbor and Delmonico's, a New York classic steakhouse, which opened in 1837 in the Financial District of Manhattan.



Travis Rush
Vice President, Business
Development
Kellen Company
New York, NY

“Look around. There are lots of different types of event spaces, special event venues, old converted banks, luxury venues with rooftops. ...Recognize that you have a lot of options, and there’s probably one that’s perfect for the personality of your event.”

of commercial and residential space, a 150-room luxury hotel, meeting spaces and an observation deck. What it already has: a new, dedicated subway stop on the 7 line.

March saw the debut of Renaissance New York Midtown Hotel. Billed as the city’s first “digitally enhanced hotel,” the space offers 4,500 sf of event space, 348 guest rooms and the 8,000-sf rooftop restaurant Rock & Reilly’s.

This past summer, Midtown East event space Convene Park Avenue opened with 12,000 sf of flexible meeting space and multiple room configurations that can accommodate groups as small as eight and as large as 275. A video wall, fireplace and all-inclusive packages that include space, AV, food and production service are a few of its notable components.

Richmond

With more than 200,000 sf of convention and ballroom space, and “within a few hours’ drive of half the population of the United States,” as Richmond Region Tourism notes, the city has more importantly positioned itself as the mid-Atlantic’s nexus of “history and hip.”

The preponderance of the city’s convention space is to be found at the Greater Richmond Convention Center, which offers planners a 178,159-sf exhibit hall, a 30,550-sf ballroom, 36 meeting and banquet rooms, and a nearly 260-seat hall.

Some 650 rooms are an easy stroll away from the convention center, including the Crowne Plaza Richmond Downtown, which when completely renovated will morph into the more upmarket Delta Hotel by Marriott, and The Jefferson, whose 262 rooms have become 181 more commodious chambers that include foyers, boudoirs and marble baths. The two lobbies and the Lemaire restaurant — which features a New American menu served under high ceilings and amid marble columns — were refurbished, and three ballrooms were redecorated.

NEW AND NOTEWORTHY

All 194 rooms at the Four Points by Sheraton Richmond were recently renovated, as were all 10,000 sf of indoor meeting space. Next up for refurbishing: the fitness center and pool.

The Homewood Suites by Hilton Richmond-Chester, a 20-minute ride from the Richmond International Airport, is currently upgrading its lobby decor. Along with its 118 suites, it offers 2,250 sf of meeting space that can accommodate 150 attendees for a reception.

For planners looking to step away from hotel meeting and banquet space, Richmond offers a wealth of options, including the Amtrak Main Street Station, which can seat 100 for a banquet or hold up to 200 attendees for a reception; Boathouse at Rocketts Landing, in an old waterfront power plant building that can do 230 standing/150 seated on the ground level and offers more intimate spaces on the upper levels with sweeping views of the James River; the 1920s-

era John Marshall ballrooms: the Virginia Room, which has a balcony overlook and can seat 350, and the 30-foot-high Marshall Room with floor-to-ceiling windows, which can seat 175; and Bolling Haxall House, a nationally registered mansion that can seat 200 for dinner and offers reduced fees for nonprofits to negotiate individually.

The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts’ five-gallery, 400-piece Fabergé collection is back from an international tour as of late October and once again ready to wow attendees, who also can tour the Virginia Capital and Executive Mansion, designed by Thomas Jefferson and still occupied, as it has been since 1813, by the sitting governor. Attendees can tap into Richmond’s burgeoning craft beer scene — 20 breweries

NEW AND NOTEWORTHY

A veritable skyscraper on the Boardwalk, the 18-story Oceanaire Resort Hotel reopened after a \$70 million upgrade that now includes retro touches, the Ultra Martini Lounge, five pools — including the indoor Aqua 21 infinity pool — and 2,600 sf of meeting space, privileges at the nearby Ocean Beach Club and special association meeting packages.

The Hilton Garden Inn Virginia Beach Oceanfront opened on the Boardwalk in 2014 with 36 suites among its 167 all-oceanfront rooms and 5,000 sf of meeting space, a 3,500-sf ballroom, and restaurants Lager Heads and the Garden Grille among its offerings.

Along with B&B-style features in certain of its 240 rooms, such as fireplaces or views of the lake or garden, The Founders Inn and Spa also offers 25,000 sf of meeting space that includes the 13,000-sf Virginia Ballroom, which can seat 1,000 for a banquet, as well as a total of 18 meeting spaces that can accommodate groups much smaller than that. The hotel also offers food prep-based teambuilding activities as well as the elegant, naturally lit Swan Terrace Grill steak and seafood house, and the more casual Hunt Room, where attendees can shoot pool after a burger or pizza.

The Military Aviation Museum will transport attendees back in time with its collection of aircraft from the World Wars, some of which are still flown on occasion by volunteer pilots. Far older is the 1759 Georgian-style Upper Wolfsnare Plantation, built by a ratifier of the U.S. Constitution, where planners can arrange group tours.

Attendees can spend downtime at the 94,000-sf Virginia Beach Tennis and Country Club, with its 10 indoor and 28 outdoor courts along with a Junior Olympic pool; fitness center with Technogym equipment; and spin, Zumba and yoga classes. The club has an arrangement with its sister property, the nearby 295-suite Virginia Beach Resort Hotel and Conference Center, to allow 1.5 hours of complimentary access for each night attendees stay at the resort. The resort is ensconced on a private beach and offers 16,000 sf of meeting and event space, free parking, an indoor and an outdoor pool, and complimentary niceties such as bike rentals.

Lynnhaven Mall recently welcomed a Dave & Buster’s to its lineup that can accommodate groups of up to 200. The intrepid can head out for ziplining at the The Adventure Park at Virginia Aquarium, which offers 13 “treetop trails” potentially suited to teambuilding activity. The more earthbound can explore the Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center, with its 800,000 gallons of aquariums and habitats principally devoted to Virginia’s marine life.

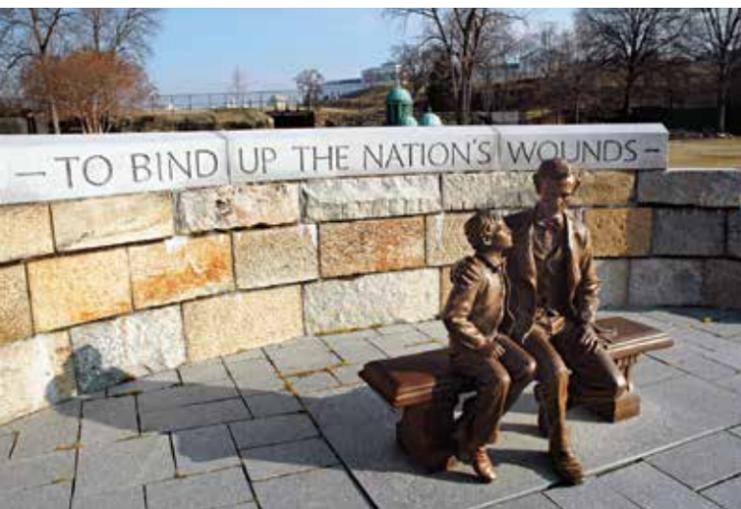


Meeting attendees network in a local waterfront restaurant in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

and counting — with Richmond Brewery Tours or wander at will using the Richmond Beer Trail Map and earn points toward prizes at each stop.

Virginia Beach

Apart from its laidback coastal vibe, with the Atlantic Ocean on one side and the Chesapeake Bay on another, one of this city’s chief draws is its military history. It also groups naturally into a few hubs: some 7,000 of the city’s 10,000-plus hotel rooms are within three miles of the Virginia Beach Convention Center (150,000 sf of exhibit space and a 31,000-sf ballroom), itself a five-minute drive from the Boardwalk. The city’s VB Wave trolley system makes it easy for attendees to stop at the aquarium, water park and malls, and Town Center, with its preponderance of restaurants, nightlife, shopping and entertainment, also is a natural hub, with at least a dozen economical hotel options.



Richmond, Virginia, boasts many historical attractions such as this statue of Abraham Lincoln and a Segway tour of the American Civil War Museum.



Credits: Richmond Metropolitan CVB



The Pacific Northwest

The Seattle skyline.

Credit: Visit Seattle

From Seattle to Boise, Meeting Options Are as Impressive as the Great Outdoors

By Sophia Bennett

Pacific Northwest communities are leaders in many areas that are important to the modern meeting industry: farm-to-table, quality and healthy cuisine; walkability and access to public transportation; and green facilities, to name a few. Combine these features with beautiful settings and interesting options for offsite events, and you have a winning combination for event destinations. Here are a handful of cities worth exploring for future meetings or conventions.

Washington

SEATTLE

The Association for Research in Vision & Ophthalmology (ARVO) first held their 11,000-person annual meeting in Seattle in 2013 — the first time in 18 years the meeting wasn't in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. The experience was so positive that the association returned in 2016.

The proactiveness and excellence of Visit Seattle (the

local CVB) and other partners was a big part of the draw, according to Lancey Cowan, JD, ARVO's senior director of meetings. "The CVB was very flexible and very attentive to our specific needs," she says. "It wasn't a cookie-cutter process." ARVO goes through several steps and does multiple site visits before booking a meeting location, and Visit Seattle happily helped them during the entire process.

Their staff also went above and beyond when ARVO ran into a potential problem. The association unwittingly organized an offsite party at the Experience Music Project on the same day as Seattle's annual Mayday protest. Two thousand meeting attendees needed to get from the convention center to the museum, and there was some concern that people might struggle to reach the venue, especially if the protest turned violent.

Two Visit Seattle staff members trailed behind the protestors to track their route and watch for problems. They reported back to ARVO's staff, who also were watching the protest live online. In the end, the protest didn't interfere

with the event, but Cowan was impressed by their dedication to keeping meeting attendees out of harm's way.

The Washington State Convention Center (WSCC) proved to be a quality and responsive venue. In 2013, Cowan provided them with feedback about problems with room labeling. When they returned in 2016, the problem had been fixed. "They really do listen to their clients' feedback and take action as a result of it, which is great and fairly unique," she says.

Meeting attendees also gave a big thumbs up to Seattle. They liked the convention center's downtown location because it gave them easy access to restaurants, coffee shops and attractions. Many local businesses hung up customized signs welcoming attendees. Even the fishmongers at Pike Place Market created a special welcome message, which Cowan says people were photographing and tweeting like crazy.

"The thing about Seattle is that they have the facilities that can compete with the bigger cities, but they have more of a small town feel," Cowan says. "It's laidback, but it's also intellectual and progressive. People really liked the vibe." These and the city's many other attributes are the reason the association has already booked the WSCC for two future meetings.

ARVO isn't the only group to fall for Seattle. Rob Hampton, senior vice president of convention sales at Visit Seattle, says about 65 percent of the convention center's business is repeat business.

While the venue has much to offer, "we're fortunate to have lots of great facilities for offsite events, including the Space Needle, Chihuly Garden and Glass, the Seattle Center and the Museum of Flight at Boeing Field," Hampton says. Pike Place Market, a popular tourist attraction, is being re-



Credit: ARVO

The fishmongers at Seattle's Pike Place Market found a unique way to welcome the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO) to town.

"The thing about Seattle is that they have the facilities that can compete with the bigger cities, but they have more of a small town feel. It's laidback, but it's also intellectual and progressive. People really liked the vibe."



Lancey Cowan, JD
Senior Director, Meetings
Association for Research in Vision & Ophthalmology
Rockville, MD

furnished for the first time in 40 years and is adding an indoor/outdoor event space that will overlook the water.

SEATTLE SOUTHSIDE

The area surrounding Seattle-Tacoma International Airport has so many meeting facilities and outstanding destinations that it deserves its own examination. Depending on the needs of attendees and planners, it may be a better fit than Seattle's downtown core.

The biggest draws to south Seattle are its proximity to the airport, and its significant room and meeting space availability. The area has more than 60 hotels with more than 10,000 rooms. Rates are typically 20 to 30 percent lower than those in downtown Seattle. Yet the city center is easily accessible by the Link light rail system.

Although there's no convention center in the area, the CVB can help meeting planners find appropriate spaces at major hotels such as the Hilton Seattle Airport and DoubleTree Seattle Airport. South Seattle also offers some unusual choices for smaller meetings and offsite events. They include the Museum of Flight, Des Moines Beach Park and Cedarbrook Lodge, which sits on 11 acres of wetlands.

South Seattle's capacity to host meetings is only growing. Upcoming openings include a 347-room Hyatt Regency in nearby Renton; a 165-room Residence Inn by Marriott that's being developed on Angle Lake; a 189-room private hotel called Washington Place that's slated to open in summer 2017.

BELLEVUE

Bellevue (population 133,000) lies just east of Seattle. It also can serve as a nice alternative for associations that like Seattle's amenities but don't want to be in the center of the city.

The community's four-story, 54,000-sf Meydenbauer Convention Center underwent a \$12.5 million renovation earlier this year. Four major hotels with

their own event spaces are within a 0.7-mile radius of the convention center. The largest is a 732-room Hyatt Regency with 70,000 sf of meeting space. The 353-room Hilton Hotel, which has 60,000 sf of meeting space, comes in second in terms of event capacity. Both the Seattle Marriott Bellevue Hotel and The Westin have around 350 rooms and 25,000 sf of event space.

Bellevue has been voted one of the safest cities in America. It has a highly walkable downtown with many interesting shops, restaurants, spas and museums. It's a quick public transit ride to downtown Seattle or nearby hiking trails and beaches.

TACOMA

Tacoma's flourishing arts district, manageable size and easy-to-navigate convention district make it a must-consider for planners looking at the Pacific Northwest.



Amy Norris
Manager of Global Accounts
HelmsBriscoe for PLA
Wheaton, MD

"A lot of participants hadn't been (to Spokane) before, but once they got there, they understood why the event would be held there. You can see pictures of Spokane and they're beautiful, but being there really seals the deal."

"The Greater Tacoma Convention Center is located in downtown Tacoma within walking distance of several hotels, dining, shopping and even the Foss Waterway Waterfront," says Nick Mann, group marketing manager for Travel Tacoma & Pierce County. "It's a modern facility with glass walls reaching from the ground floor to the top floor." On clear days, meeting-goers can see Puget Sound and Mt. Rainier from the top floors. Like many in the region, the convention center has an advanced sustainability program to help minimize its carbon footprint.

Two blocks away is the stylish Hotel Murano, which honors Tacoma's legacy as a center of glass art by displaying numerous glass sculptures throughout the property. The Courtyard Tacoma Downtown can accommodate up to 450 people in its nearly 16,000 sf of event space, and is also within walking distance of the convention center. Both hotels have their own meeting spaces.

Other major venues in the region include the McGavick Conference Center in Lakewood and the Washington State Fairgrounds in Puyallup (home to one of the largest fairs in the world).

Among Tacoma's cultural attractions are the Museum of Glass, Tacoma Art Museum, America's Car Museum, Slater Museum of Natural History and theater district. Event attendees also may enjoy visiting Point Defiance Park, which has beaches, a zoo and aquarium, gardens and hiking trails.

SPOKANE

Because of its mission and member interests, the Public Lands Alliance (PLA) seeks destinations with abundant public lands, parks and natural spaces for their annual convention and trade show. Spokane, an eastern Washington city with 210,000 people, fit that bill to a "T." Features such as Manito Park, a 90-acre park and arboretum; Riverfront Park and its 40-mile Centennial Trail; and the scenic Spokane Waterfall in downtown were among the features that got planners excited about visiting the community. At soon as they did, they knew Spokane was an ideal destination for a future gathering.

PLA received outstanding service from Visit Spokane, the local CVB, even before they arrived. Amy Norris, manager of global accounts for HelmsBriscoe, says a Visit Spokane representative attended PLA's meeting the year before they came to Spokane to promote the upcoming conference, and created special marketing materials and other resources for them.

Meeting attendees spent the bulk of their time at the recently renovated, 500,000-sf Spokane Convention Center. "The exhibit hall has floor-to-ceiling windows that overlook the river," Norris says. "Their footprint definitely has the 'wow' factor."

The staff at the convention center went above and beyond to provide good service. On the final day of the event, PLA hadn't met their food and beverage minimum. With an hour's notice, the kitchen staff arranged a champagne toast to accompany a major announcement the organization was making.

"I was extremely impressed at how the chef and catering staff pulled together this really beautiful last break," Norris says. "It was certainly something they didn't have to do because they would have gotten the money one way or another."

The Davenport Grand, which is attached to the convention center, served as the main conference hotel. Service there also was excellent, Norris says. In fact, every aspect of the event impressed PLA's membership.

"A lot of participants hadn't been (to Spokane) before, but once they got there, they understood why the event would be held there," she says. "You can see pictures of Spokane and they're beautiful, but being there really seals the deal."

Oregon

PORTLAND

"Portland does meetings right," says David Tharp, CAE, executive director for the International Association for Food Protection (IAFP). From the beginning of his planning experience to the last moments of IAFP's four-day annual meeting, Oregon's largest city met or exceeded his expectations.

IAFP wanted to take their 2015 gathering to the Pacific Northwest because it was a region they hadn't been to in a long time. When they started looking for locations, Portland stood out for several reasons. "Compared to other cities in the Pacific Northwest, costs were very affordable," Tharp says.

He and his team also liked the environment and accessibility of the airport. "Twenty percent of our attendees come from outside North America, so we need good airline connections," he says.

Travel Portland, the local CVB, provided IAFP's first brush with Portland's welcoming residents. "The CVB was very helpful in scheduling our site visit and getting us around to all the hotels," Tharp says. "They had outstanding staff and were always checking back with us to see if we had any trips planned to Portland and if we needed anything while we were there."

The Oregon Convention Center was excellent and excelled

in an area where it's often hard to please attendees: meals. "Overall we had really good comments on food and beverage and the variety of foods offered," Tharp says. "The labeling of food is very important now, and the staff there at the convention center did a great job of doing that labeling properly and providing the special request meals."

Because Portland doesn't have an adjoining convention center hotel, many attendees had to stay in the city's downtown, which is on the opposite side of the Willamette River. The CVB provided people staying downtown with free passes to take the MAX Light Rail service to the convention center.

IAFP doesn't plan many evening gatherings for their meetings, but people looking for entertainment had plenty of choices. The annual Organic Beer Fest happened to coincide with the event and was one of many things that gave people a good taste (literally) of the Northwest experience.

"The atmosphere in Portland had people excited," Tharp says. "I think everybody was generally overjoyed with being there in Portland and had a great experience."

For associations that do need venues for offsite events, there are plenty of good choices. Plus, "We are constantly adding new and innovative facilities for meetings and conventions," says Desiree Everett, director of convention sales for Travel

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Portland. "Since sustainability is a huge part of our culture, many of our facilities also have a sustainability or green meetings focus. Some of our most interesting new meeting venues bring new life to historic buildings, and offer planners creative options for meeting spaces."

Recent openings of interest in Portland include Wayfinder Beer, a 110-seat craft brewery located less than a mile from the convention center; and Pine Street Market, an informal eatery that offers plenty of choices for locavores and foodies.

EUGENE

Eugene, which is located 100 miles south of Portland, provides a quality meeting experience in a small-town setting. Major hotel and event facilities include the Hilton Eugene, which has 274 rooms and 30,000 sf of meeting space; and the Valley River Inn, a 257-room hotel with 15,000 sf of meeting space.

Looking for something out of the ordinary? Matthew Knight Arena is home to the University of Oregon basketball team, but the 12,500-seat facility also can be utilized for lectures, concerts and more. The Hult Center for the Performing Arts has two theaters, the largest of which can seat nearly 2,500 people.

Eugene offers approximately 6,000 overnight rooms now and is adding seven new hotels in the next few years. They include a 124-room Hyatt, 120-room Home2 Suites by Hilton Eugene Downtown University Area and 81-room Fairfield Inn.

Eugene is the county seat for Lane County. The whole area is rich with opportunities for offsite events and pre- or post-meeting travel. Drive west to the town of Florence and the Oregon coast. Going east takes visitors along the stunning McKenzie River and into the Cascade Mountains. Head south and southeast to visit Cottage Grove and Oakridge, two towns with small-town charm, funky dining establishments and ample opportunities for outdoor recreation.

Idaho

BOISE

Boise is Idaho's state capital and largest city. It has the biggest convention center and only major airport. And these are just a few of the things that make Boise a great destination for meetings.

The downtown Boise Centre just went through a major expansion. It now offers 85,000 sf of meeting and exhibit space in two buildings. A more unusual option for meeting space is Jack's Urban Meeting Place (JUMP), a community and enter-



International Association for Food Protection annual meeting attendees enjoyed Portland's sights, sounds and tastes, including a sampling of the city's famous Voodoo Doughnut.

tainment venue that also can host meetings and other types of events. Among its unusual features: a collection of vintage toy trucks and tractors; an adjoining park and amphitheater that are great for outdoor entertaining; and a five-story slide that allows visitors to skip the stairs.

Boise has solid hotel offerings now and continues to add new facilities. The largest space for overnight guests is the Riverside Hotel on the banks of the Boise River. It has 303 rooms, 22,000 sf of meeting space and a resort-like feel. The Grove Hotel is a block from the convention center and has 250 overnight rooms and 14,000 sf of event space. Coming soon are the Inn at 500, a 111-room boutique hotel; a 186-room Residence Inn; and a 152-room Hyatt Place hotel.

The community has a number of cultural attractions, unusual venues and outdoor recreational opportunities that meeting attendees may enjoy. "The largest concentration of Basque people outside of Spain live in Boise," says Terry Kopp, director of sales for the Boise Convention and Visitors Bureau. Downtown's Basque Block has restaurants, a heritage museum and meeting venues.

Groups also may enjoy hosting smaller events at the Old Idaho Penitentiary, a territorial prison that's how a historical site; the Stueckle Sky Center, which overlooks Boise State University's famous blue football field; and the Owyhee Rooftop, a historic hotel that offers 270-degree views of the city. Folks interested in outdoor adventures don't have to travel far for hiking and biking, whitewater rafting, golf courses, skiing and more.

New and Noteworthy

Seattle. In 2017 Seattle will break ground on an expan-

sion of the Washington State Convention Center. The new building will be one block away from the existing center, and has a unique "stacked" design that allows it to provide 435,000 sf of meeting and exhibit space in a relatively small footprint. Construction should be finished in 2020.

To provide additional room capacity, downtown Seattle is also adding a 1,264-room convention hotel (with 105,000 sf of meeting space) that will be adjacent to the new convention center building. Hyatt will manage the property, which will be the largest hotel in the Pacific Northwest. Construction should be finished by late 2018.

An additional four hotels will open in downtown in 2017. They include a 309-room Residence Inn by Marriott, 282-room Embassy Suites Hotel, 184-room SLS hotel and 147-room Moxy Hotel by Marriott.

Tacoma. Two new hotels are expected to open in 2018. The four-star Marriott Downtown Tacoma will be adjacent to the convention center and provide 300 rooms and new meeting space. The Silver Cloud Hotel Point Ruston will add 180 rooms (80 percent of which will have views of Commencement Bay).

Bellevue. A Hilton Garden Inn with 254 rooms and an AC Hotel by Marriott with 234 rooms are expected to open in

"The atmosphere in Portland had people excited. I think everybody was generally overjoyed with being there...and had a great experience."

David Tharp, CAE
Executive Director

International Association for Food Protection, Des Moines, IA



the first quarter of 2017. A 250-room W Hotel is coming in the summer of 2017.

Portland. Metro, which owns the Oregon Convention Center, is currently in negotiations with Hyatt and a private developer to build a 600-room, \$230 million hotel that will be adjacent to the convention center. Assuming construction moves ahead on the scheduled timeline, the hotel should open in 2019.

The Portland Hilton and Executive Tower is in the midst of a major remodel. The 782-room downtown hotel is currently adding two meeting spaces, two breakout rooms and a ballroom. That will bring the property's total meeting space to 60,000 sf. Hilton also is reconfiguring the hotel's lobby, adding communal gathering spaces and regional-themed décor to make it a more inviting place for guests to gather.

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WILLIAMS

Hilton Anaheim, Anaheim, California, has named **Frost Williams** as senior sales manager responsible for the Midwest market. He was convention sales development manager at Visit Milwaukee.

Shane Sorenson was named SMERF and government sales manager for Visit Plano, Texas. He most recently served as convention services coordinator for Visit Plano.

Sagamore Pendry Baltimore has named **Jon Chocklett** as the director of sales and marketing. He most recently held the position of director of marketing at the Beverly Wilshire, a Four Seasons Hotel.

Anita Cerana was named national ac-



CERANA

count director for Visit Seattle. She most recently served as public affairs assistant at the U.S. Embassy in Seoul, Korea.

Team San Jose has promoted **Cheryl Little** to director of sales and destination services. She most recently served as associate director of sales.

Gayla Guyse was named director of sales and marketing for the Omni Frisco Hotel in Frisco, Texas, set to open in June 2017. She formerly was director of sales and marketing at Omni Dallas Hotel at Park West.

Visit Baltimore has named **Brian Chung** as senior national sales manager for



LITTLE



CHUNG

the Maryland, DC and Virginia markets. He formerly was national sales manager within the DC market for Choose Chicago. **Christina Ghani** was named national sales and sports manager. She previously worked at various Hilton Hotel properties as a sales manager.

The Reno-Sparks Convention and Visitors Authority has named **Nathan Fillion** and **Don Goodman** as national convention sales managers. Fillion previously was a national sales manager for Courtyard by Marriott Mission Valley and Kona Kai Resort and Spa in San Diego. Goodman was formerly with Circus Circus Reno and Atlantis Resort Casino Spa and Eldorado Casino Resort, both in Reno. AC&F



GHANI

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