

A COASTAL COMMUNICATIONS CORPORATION PUBLICATION

Volume 11 • Number 4 \$13.00

WWW.TheMeetingMagazines.com

ASSOCIATION CONVENTIONS & FACILITIES

JULY
2018

THE SOURCE FOR ASSOCIATION MEETING PLANNING MANAGEMENT

Caesars Breaks Ground

550,000-sf CAESARS FORUM to be built
in the center of the
Las Vegas strip
PAGE 10

Caesars Entertainment President and CEO Mark Frissora, U.S. Travel Association President and CEO Roger Dow, Clark County Commissioner Chris Giunchigliani and Caesars executives break ground on CAESARS FORUM



**CLICK HERE TO
DOWNLOAD/VIEW
TABLET VERSION**

Bridging the Age Gap
Don't Let Your Meetings Get Trapped
in the Generational Divide
PAGE 38



Credit: Ormii, Louisville

22 Bigger & Better



Credit: Mohegan Sun

14 Game On



Credit: Greater Columbus Convention Center

34 Convention Center Catering Trends



38 Bridging the Age Gap

ISSN 21628831 | USPS 003500 | A COASTAL COMMUNICATIONS CORPORATION PUBLICATION

July 2018 Volume 11 • Number 4

YOUR SUCCESS IS OUR BUSINESS.

(866) 770-7268 | wynnmeetings.com

Wynn | *Encore*
LAS VEGAS

Departments

- 4** Publisher's Page
- 6** News & Notes
- 9** Snapshots
- 50** Career Track

Features

- 14** Game On
Meetings at Gaming Resorts Have Attendees Working (and Playing) Hard
By Derek Reveron
- 22** Bigger & Better
New and Improved Places to Host New and Improved Meetings
By Ron Bernthal
- 30** Blanket Security
Keeping a Meeting Safe Means Thinking of Everything
By John Buchanan
- 34** Convention Center Catering Trends
Everyone's a Foodie — Including Your Attendees
By Patrick Simms
- 38** Bridging the Age Gap
Don't Let Your Meetings Get Trapped in the Generational Divide
By Sophia Bennett

Destinations

- 44** Orlando Stays on Top
Plenty of Activities and Meeting Space Around for Planners
By Mark Rowh





Facing New Security and Safety Risks

Today we face security risks that didn't exist years ago. Some of them didn't exist a week ago. "There are countries in the world that have practiced trade show safety and security diligently and successfully over the years," says Carol Cambridge, founder and president of The Stay Safe Project. "But in North America, this is really a relatively new topic of discussion." Whether it's political upheaval or hackers targeting your server, planners can't ignore emerging risks. "Convention Trade Show Safety and Security" (page 30) covers ways to focus on keeping attendees safe.

Gaming resorts across the country continue to renovate and expand with Caesars Entertainment leading the way in Las Vegas. The construction of Caesars Forum is scheduled for completion in 2020. According to Michael Massari, chief sales officer of Caesars Entertainment, "This new build with a total of 550,000 square feet will offer planners the latest state-of-the-art conference center with 300,000 square feet of flexible meeting space only steps away from the 8,500 rooms at Harrah's, Flamingo and LINQ hotels. Harrah's newly renovated rooms offer luxurious accommodations with the other properties also scheduled to undergo renovations." MGM Resorts will add a combined 4 million square feet of meeting and convention space to its Las Vegas properties when the projects are completed by the end of the year. Also, Wynn Resorts has Paradise Park under construction. This 1,500-room hotel and convention center is scheduled for completion in 2020. Read more about "Gaming Resorts" on page 14.

Finally, "Generational Content Marketing & Engagement" (page 38) explains how millennial and Gen Z generations have become a larger part of the workforce. Striking a balance between the needs of these two generations seems challenging. So while there are a few things to keep in mind when planning meetings that appeal to attendees born in different decades, remember that content and experience building remain of utmost importance to make a successful event for attendees of all ages.

Harvey Grotsky
Publisher

www.TheMeetingMagazines.com
ASSOCIATION CONVENTIONS & FACILITIES
THE SOURCE FOR ASSOCIATION MEETING PLANNING MANAGEMENT
A COASTAL COMMUNICATIONS CORPORATION PUBLICATION

PUBLISHER/EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Harvey Grotsky
harvey.grotsky@themeetingmagazines.com

CREATIVE DIRECTOR
Mitch D. Miller
mitch.miller@themeetingmagazines.com

MANAGING EDITOR
Bonnie Schultz
bonnie.schultz@themeetingmagazines.com

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Sophia Bennett
Ron Bernthal
John Buchanan
Sara Churchville
Cynthia Dial
Maura Keller
Christine Loomis
Derek Reveron
Mark Rowh
Patrick Simms
David Swanson

PRESIDENT & CEO
Harvey Grotsky

VICE PRESIDENT OF OPERATIONS
David Middlebrook
david.middlebrook@themeetingmagazines.com

ADVERTISING SALES OFFICES
2700 N. Military Trail, Suite 120
Boca Raton, FL 33431-6394
561-989-0600 Fax: 561-989-9509
advertising@themeetingmagazines.com

MIDWEST STATES
Bob Mitchell
630-541-3388 • Mobile: 630-235-0126
bob.mitchell@themeetingmagazines.com

SOUTHWEST STATES
Kristie T. Thymes
972-435-9600
kristie.thymes@themeetingmagazines.com

Association Conventions & Facilities is published bi-monthly by Coastal Communications Corporation, 2700 North Military Trail — Suite 120, Boca Raton, FL 33431-6394; 561-989-0600. Single copies \$13.00 U.S.A. only. Yearly subscription price is \$65.00 in the U.S.A. Canada and foreign is \$135.00. Back copies \$14.00 plus shipping and handling, U.S.A. only. Distributed without charge to qualified personnel. Periodicals Postage Paid at Boca Raton, FL, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Please send Form 3579 address changes to Association Conventions & Facilities, 2700 North Military Trail — Suite 120, Boca Raton, FL 33431-6394. Nothing contained in this publication shall constitute an endorsement by Coastal Communications Corporation (Association Conventions & Facilities), and the publication disclaims any liability with respect to the use of or reliance on any such information. The information contained in this publication is in no way to be construed as a recommendation by AC&F of any industry standard, or as a recommendation of any kind to be adopted by or to be binding upon any advertiser or subscriber. Reproduction of any portion of this publication by any means is strictly forbidden. Editorial contributions must be accompanied by return postage and will be handled with reasonable care. However, the publisher assumes no responsibility for return of unsolicited photographs or manuscripts. Subscribers: Send subscription inquiries and address changes to: Circulation Department, Association Conventions & Facilities, 2700 North Military Trail — Suite 120, Boca Raton, FL 33431-6394. Provide old and new addresses including zip code. Enclose address label from most recent issue and please allow five weeks for the change to become effective. Printed in U.S.A. © 2018



KELLY CAME AS
AN EDUCATOR.

AND LEFT WITH A LOVE
FOR MAYPORT SHRIMP.



You may be coming to Jacksonville for a convention, but you will leave as so much more. A paddle boarder, shell collector, professional shopper – the activities are endless in Jacksonville. Do what you love or try something new. **Meet yourself in Jacksonville.**

To learn more about hosting your next event in Jacksonville, visit meetinjax.com.

NCVC's Deana Ivey Elevated to Executive Vice President

NASHVILLE, TN — Deana Ivey, who has been with the Nashville Convention & Visitors Corp for 21 years, has been promoted to the newly created position of Executive Vice President. She will also retain the role of Chief Marketing Officer.



Ivey

"Deana was both the logical choice and the perfect fit for this important new position," says Butch Spyridon, president and CEO of the Nashville Convention & Visitors Corp. "After 21 years, there isn't anything she hasn't seen or done within our organization. Her knowledge, experience, reputation and productivity are outstanding."

As executive vice president, Ivey will work more closely with Spyridon in handling the growing demands on the organization as the city's tourism and convention business continues to boom, visitation and hotel room sales keep setting records and more events come to Nashville. The city's tourism industry is at an all-time high with 14.8 million visitors in FY 2018 and \$6 billion in direct visitor spending.

"Working for this organization and promoting Nashville to the world as a destination is an honor and a privilege," Ivey says. She started with the NCVC as its first Director of International Marketing in 1997. Before her work in Nashville, Ivey served the tourism industry in Pigeon Forge and Gatlinburg, Tennessee, for 10 years. www.visitmusiccity.com

Arlington's Texas Live! Announces Grand Opening Date



ARLINGTON, TX — The Texas Rangers, The Cordish Companies and the City of Arlington recently announced the grand opening of Texas Live!, Arlington's brand-new entertainment complex with more than \$1 billion in development.

Ideally positioned between the Texas Rangers' Globe Life Park and the Dallas Cowboys' AT&T Stadium, Texas Live! will be a spectacular location for meetings, special events and conventions, as well as a special destination for sports fans, visitors and families.

Texas Live! will also debut a new \$150 million flagship hotel and Grand Event Center to open in 2019. The result of two powerhouse brands, Loews Hotels & Co. and The Cordish Companies, Live! by Loews will anchor Texas Live! in the heart of the Arlington Entertainment District.

Designed by HKS Architects, the 14-story-tall contemporary glass tower will feature 302 luxury guest rooms, one-of-a-kind amenity space and 35,000 square feet of meeting, event and convention space, including the Grand Event Center. www.texas-live.com

Air Marshals Have Conducted Secret In-flight Monitoring of U.S. Passengers for Years

WASHINGTON, DC — For years, federal air marshals have been quietly monitoring small numbers of U.S. air passengers and reporting on in-flight behavior considered suspicious, even if those individuals have no known terrorism links, the Transportation Security Administration recently reported.

Under a sensitive, previously undisclosed program called "Quiet Skies," since 2010 the TSA has tasked marshals to identify passengers who raise flags because of travel histories or other factors and conduct secret observations of their actions — including behavior as common as sweating heavily or using the restroom repeatedly — as they fly between U.S. destinations.

The Boston Globe first revealed the existence of the Quiet Skies program. In response to questions, TSA spokesman James O. Gregory offered more details of the program's origins and goals, comparing it to other law enforcement activities that ask officers to closely monitor individuals or areas vulnerable to crime.

According to the TSA, the program uses travel records and other information to identify passengers who will be subject to additional checks at airports and observed in-flight by air marshals who report on their activities to the agency.

The initiative raises new questions about the privacy of ordinary Americans as they go about routine travel within the United States and about the broad net cast by law enforcement as it seeks to keep air travel safe.

Gregory says the program did not single out passengers based on race or religion and should not be considered surveillance because the agency does not, for example, listen to passengers' calls or follow flagged individuals around outside airports. www.tlo.org

Kentucky International Convention Center Set to Reopen



LOUISVILLE, KY — The Kentucky International Convention Center went through a major facelift in downtown Louisville and is set to reveal the new look.

The major renovation project has taken place over the past two years, expanding the exhibit space by more than one-third — from 146,000 to more than 200,000 square feet — within the existing footprint. There is also a 40,000-square-foot ballroom, 175-seat, state-of-the-art conference center, 52 meeting rooms and advanced Wi-Fi.

The new design is filled with glass and light, creating an inviting open-air environment inside and outside the facility. The sustainable design will also promote energy and water efficiency.

"Open space, opportunity for huge trade shows and convention, and then we have another section with 40,000 square feet without any columns, which is big priority now in the convention business," says David Beck, president and CEO of Kentucky Venues. "We'll be able to produce and serve over 15,000 meals in one day."

The convention center has been closed for 24 months to allow \$207 million worth of building renovations. The grand reopening of the Convention Center will be August 6. www.kyconvention.org

Delta Adding Service Between Chicago and North Carolina

MORRISVILLE, NC — Delta Air Lines is increasing its service between North Carolina and Chicago with the addition of three nonstop daily flights.

Starting on April 1, 2019, Delta will add flights between Raleigh-Durham International Airport and Chicago O'Hare International Airport with a convenient schedule designed for business and leisure travelers. To serve the route, Delta will utilize the 70-seat

Embraer E-175 regional planes. The aircraft will feature 12 first-class seats, 20 Delta Comfort+ seats and 38 main cabin seats, as well as power ports, access to Wi-Fi and streaming in-flight entertainment at every seat.

"Delta is already the No. 1 airline in RDU, and we're pleased to add a new nonstop link to our largest unserved destination from the Research Triangle area," says Joe Esposito, Delta senior vice

VisitPITTSBURGH Executive Named Chairman of Destinations International Foundation

PITTSBURGH, PA — Jason Fulvi, CDME, executive vice president of VisitPITTSBURGH, has been named



Fulvi

chairman of the Destinations International (DI) Foundation Board of Trustees for the 2018-2019 term. The appointment was made at the annual DI conference recently

held in Anaheim, California. Fulvi served two consecutive terms as the chair of DI's Sales and Marketing Committee and was previously the chair of DI's Meetings Industry Network Committee (MINT).

"I am looking forward to working with the board of trustees to advance the many initiatives of Destinations International Foundation, focusing on research and initiatives that will highlight the significance and inspire the tourism industry," says Fulvi.

Fulvi has worked in the hospitality industry for more than three decades. He began his tenure at VisitPITTSBURGH as a senior national sales director 16 years ago. Having proven himself as an effective leader, Fulvi was promoted to executive director of convention sales and, most recently, to the position of executive vice president in 2012. www.destinationsinternational.org

president. "With the addition of our new service to Chicago-O'Hare, Delta will offer the RDU customer service to the majority of top destinations in the U.S."

The Raleigh-Durham airport is one of Delta's largest non-hub airports, with nearly 80 flights per day to 27 destinations worldwide. The carrier is the largest at the North Carolina airport. www.delta.com



Tampa Marriott Waterside Hotel & Marina Offers Board Meetings on the Bay

TAMPA, FL — For companies looking to up the ante during their next board meeting or company trip, the Tampa Marriott Waterside Hotel & Marina in Tampa, Florida, is a hidden gem along the Florida Gulf Coast, offering a unique experience called Board Meetings on the Bay.

The Tampa Marriott Waterside Hotel & Marina is located on this scenic waterfront of Tampa Bay and is just steps away from some of the most coveted attractions in Tampa, including the buzzy Riverwalk. The property is in the midst of a multimillion-dollar renovation and recently debuted new guest rooms. The second phase will include upgrades to the lobby and public spaces, addition of new restaurants, transformed meetings space and more. The hotel boasts premiere accommodations in a comfortable

atmosphere and a patio bar that overlooks the bustling Tampa Riverwalk and is perfect for evening cocktails. The hotel's Board Meetings on the Bay experience offers companies a day out to reconnect and regroup with light refreshments on a floating "breakout" pavilion space before a crash course on the art of Stand Up Paddle Boarding. This relaxing and unique waterway tour experience of Tampa Bay includes all the equipment needed for the board meeting adventure. www.marriott.com

Cvent Unveils Lists of Top Meeting Destinations Worldwide for 2018

Cvent, Inc., a market leader in meetings, events and hospitality technology, released its annual lists of the top cities for meetings and events worldwide. Three new regions are highlighted this year: The Caribbean and Latin America (CALA), Canada and Europe. The lists were compiled based on sourcing activity through the Cvent Supplier Network. In 2017, more than 40 million room nights worldwide and \$14.7 billion of business were sourced through the Cvent Supplier Network — helping to support more than 715,000 events around the globe. "When we first launched Top Destinations in 2012, the only cities highlighted were located in the United States. Now, six years later, Top Destinations includes six lists covering every

region in the world," says Chris McAndrews, vice president of marketing for the Cvent Hospitality Cloud. "The cities featured in this year's Top Destinations lists have invested significant time, energy and resources into building premier locations that entice organizations, large and small, to plan meetings and events in their areas," McAndrews says. "With meetings representing more than 13 percent of total travel and tourism spending and generating \$845 billion in sales in the U.S. alone, they have become a major economic driver for these markets. Because of this positive impact, destinations are pulling out all the stops to attract group business, and we expect to see this healthy competition continue." www.cvent.com

The top 10 cities in each region for 2018 are:

UNITED STATES	CANADA	MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA
1. Orlando, Florida	1. Toronto, Ontario	1. Dubai, United Arab Emirates
2. Las Vegas, Nevada	2. Vancouver, British Columbia	2. Johannesburg, South Africa
3. Chicago, Illinois	3. Montreal, Quebec	3. Cape Town, South Africa
4. San Diego, California	4. Calgary, Alberta	4. Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates
5. Atlanta, Georgia	5. Ottawa, Ontario	5. Marrakesh, Morocco
6. Dallas, Texas	6. Mississauga, Ontario	6. Doha, Qatar
7. Nashville, Tennessee	7. Banff, Alberta	7. Durban, South Africa
8. New York, New York	8. Edmonton, Alberta	8. Nairobi, Kenya
9. Washington, D.C.	9. Whistler, British Columbia	9. Sandton, South Africa
10. San Francisco, California	10. Quebec City, Quebec	10. Cairo, Egypt
CARIBBEAN AND LATIN AMERICA	EUROPE	ASIA-PACIFIC
1. Cancún, Mexico	1. London, England	1. Singapore
2. Nassau, Bahamas	2. Barcelona, Spain	2. Sydney, Australia
3. Playa del Carmen, Mexico	3. Berlin, Germany	3. Bangkok, Thailand
4. Punta Cana, Dominican Republic	4. Amsterdam, Netherlands	4. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
5. San Juan, Puerto Rico	5. Madrid, Spain	5. Hong Kong
6. San José del Cabo, Mexico	6. Paris, France	6. Shanghai, China
7. Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands	7. Frankfurt, Germany	7. Melbourne, Australia
8. Guanacaste, Costa Rica	8. Rome, Italy	8. New Delhi, India
9. Riviera Maya, Mexico	9. Munich, Germany	9. Tokyo, Japan
10. Los Cabos, Mexico	10. Lisbon, Portugal	10. Mumbai, India



1 (L-R) MPI's President and CEO Paul Van Deventer with Helms Briscoe Executive Vice President Richard Harper. **2** Attendees at the 2018 PCMA Education Conference in Cleveland, OH. **3** (L-R) Bill Peeper and President and CEO George Aguel, Visit Orlando. **4** Louisville Tourism President and CEO Karen Williams-Goetz. **5** (L-R) At Destinations International Annual Meeting Tourism Australia's Eleanor Wilkie, Mary Ann McDonald, Lisa Verbeck and Jason Thomas. **6** Attendees at the 2018 PCMA Education Conference in Cleveland, OH. **7** (L-R) NBA legend "Dr. J" Julius Erving with David S. Cordish, Chairman of The Cordish Companies at the grand opening celebration of the world's first Live! Hotel. The addition of the Live! Hotel provides a luxury hotel, spa and 4,000-seat event center to Live! Casino & Hotel in Hanover, MD. **8** Ground-breaking ceremony for Caesars Forum, Las Vegas. **9** (L-R) Publisher/Editor-in-Chief Harvey Grotzky and President of Hospitality for Caesars Entertainment Bob Morse. **10** U.S. Travel Association President and CEO Roger Dow.



Caesars Breaks Ground

Caesars Entertainment Corporation, the world's most diversified gaming and entertainment company, broke ground on their newest development — CAESARS FORUM, a \$375 million, 550,000-square-foot conference center in Las Vegas. Within walking distance to more than 20,000 Caesars Entertainment hotel rooms, connected to 5,000

Caesars Entertainment hotel rooms and adjacent to the LINQ Promenade retail district, this state-of-the-art and LEED silver-rated facility provides a unique option for meetings and events. CAESARS FORUM will be the first facility of this size built on one level and will feature the two largest pillarless ballrooms in the world, equivalent to 27 tennis courts or

three ice hockey rinks. It will also feature FORUM Plaza, the first 100,000-square-foot dedicated outdoor meeting and event space in Las Vegas.

"Caesars Entertainment is an undisputed leader in the meetings industry having hosted more than 1.9 million meeting participants, 1.6 million room nights with 17,300 meetings and events last

year alone," said Mark Frissora, President and Chief Executive Officer for Caesars Entertainment. "CAESARS FORUM will be a gateway to Caesars Entertainment's unmatched network of exclusive offerings that guests and organizations have come to expect. In the center of the Las Vegas Strip with direct access to three of our premiere resorts and freshly redesigned hotel rooms, CAESARS FORUM builds on our strategy to invest in infrastructure that enhances long-term value for our guests."

The groundbreaking ceremony took place on the future site of the conference center, located directly behind The LINQ Promenade. For the first time, Caesars Entertainment shared a 360 fly-through experience of the conference center. Frissora was joined on stage by Clark County Commissioner Chris Giunchigliani and other Caesars Entertainment executives for the official groundbreaking.

CAESARS FORUM secured its first booking with the American School Counselor Association in July 2021, which will include 3,500 attendees from all over the U.S. Since then, Caesars Entertainment has gone on to contract over \$70 million in conference business for CAESARS FORUM.

The conference center will create 1,000 local construction jobs and more than 450 permanent jobs upon opening

in 2020. It will also be globally recognized for its sustainability with a LEED Silver rating. Opening in 2020, CAESARS FORUM will provide direct access via skybridge to Harrah's Las Vegas and The LINQ Hotel and Casino; be connected by pedestrian bridge to LINQ Promenade and Flamingo Las Vegas; feature 300,000 square-feet of flexible meeting space, including two 110,000-square-foot pillarless ballrooms, two 40,000-square-foot ballrooms and six state-of-the-art boardrooms; accommodate more than 10,000 participants and offer more than 100 break-out rooms; be built on one floor for convenient move-in, along with nine easily accessible loading docks; feature FORUM Plaza, a 100,000-square-foot space, ideal for outdoor events, wellness breaks, opening cocktail receptions, meals or entertainment; be conveniently located within walking distance to eight to Caesars Entertainment's Las Vegas properties; divide into limitless configurations for customers, utilizing more than two miles of airwalls.

Caesars Entertainment offers 40 first-class properties nationwide that have 2.1 million square feet of meeting and event space. In 2017, more than 17,000 meetings and events were hosted annually at Caesars Entertainment, with over 1.9 million participants nationwide. For more information, visit www.CAESARSFORUM.com.

Clockwise from top left: Caesars Entertainment President and CEO Mark Frissora, U.S. Travel Association President and CEO Roger Dow, and Clark County Commissioner Chris Giunchigliani flanked by Caesars executives as they break ground on CAESARS FORUM; Giunchigliani addresses the audience; renderings of the FORUM gala room and the FORUM plaza, the first 100,000-square-foot dedicated outdoor meeting and event space in Las Vegas.



**YOUR
QUÉBEC
CITY**

**BUSINESS
DESTINATION**

QUÉBEC CITY, YOUR SUCCESS MAKES HISTORY.

QuebecBusinessDestination.com



ON NOVEMBER 27, 2015,
P. MURPHY, J. PEREZ, AND T. HILL COULDN'T
HELP THE CHEESY HIGH FIVE THAT FOLLOWED
THE RECORD-BREAKING ATTENDANCE REPORT
FOR THEIR 2015 CONVENTION IN QUÉBEC CITY.

Ville et région
Québec **l'accent
d'Amérique**



WHY QUÉBEC CITY

Beautiful Québec City | Photo: Emmanuel Coveney

European charms

A stone's throw away
from most major U.S. Cities

Best gastronomic city

Top 10 in the world
- Condé Nast Traveler

More than 350 direct flights weekly

U.S. customs preclearance
facility (2019)

More than
17,250 rooms

Enjoyable city to walk

Top 5 in the world
- TedCity2.0

1st destination in Canada 6th in North America

- Travel + Leisure World Best Awards

Culture city of the year

- Leading Culture Destinations
Awards: Traveller's Awards 2016

Follow Us



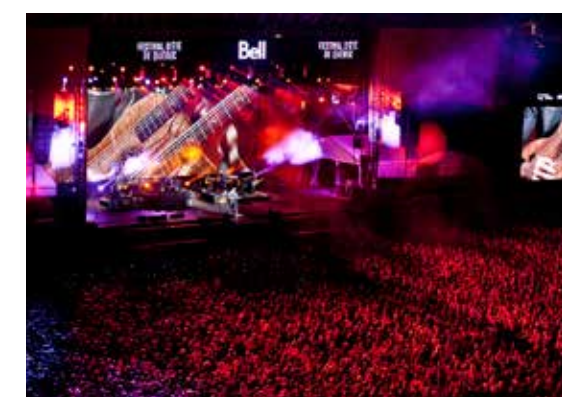
#MeetQuébecCity



Québec, accessible via major U.S. cities | Photo: Québec City Business Destination



Cheers at Pot de Vin Restaurant | Photo: Jeff Frenette



Festival d'été de Québec, Bell scene | Photo: Philippe Renaud



Québec City Convention Centre | Photo: Emmanuel Coveney

SPOTLIGHT ON QUÉBEC CITY

Founded 400 years ago, Québec City is the cradle of French civilization in North America. With its European old-world charm and modern-day flair, Québec City features a wide variety of chain and boutique hotels that offer an entire spectrum of state-of-the-art facilities. The renowned Québec City Convention Centre is centrally located in the heart of the city. Québec City, one of Canada's leading meeting destination, has assisted countless meeting planners around the world to organize successful meetings, conventions, tradeshows and incentive experiences.

Contact Carissa Koral,*
our U.S. based sales rep, and ask
her about our exclusive incentive
program for U.S. meeting
planners.

508 630-6607
ckoral@meetquebeccity.com

*Don't worry, she has our contagious joie de vivre.



Game ON!



The Mohegan Sun's new Expo Center (above) has over 275,000 square feet of usable space; (left) Kevin Brown, Nancy Wyman & Ray Pineault attend.

Meetings at Gaming Resorts Have Attendees Working (and Playing) Hard

By Derek Reveron

Competition among gaming resorts for meetings is heating up as more venues nationwide expand and open new properties. Las Vegas and Atlantic City remain the top casino resort destinations, however, a variety of smaller destinations also aim to attract more events. Burgeoning competitors range from properties in the Southwest nestled amid stunning scenery to small-town destinations in Pennsylvania.

CONNECTICUT

The Madison, Connecticut-based Wire Association International (WAI) took full advantage of the Mohegan Sun's new, recently opened \$80 million Earth Expo & Convention Center, which offers 275,000 square feet of event space. The WAI's Operations Summit & Wire Expo attracted 1,435

attendees. It was the WAI's first meeting at the Mohegan Sun, although the association's New England Chapter has met annually at the property for the past 10 years. According to Steven Fetteroll, CAE, WAI executive director and planner, "It was the Chapter's long-term favorable partnership with Mohegan Sun that made us comfortable with booking our larger annual event. The near-unanimous feedback and strong value from the Chapter event made it easy for the association to contract to return in 2020. We will be excited to use the new Earth Expo Center." Fetteroll raves about the several ways the Mohegan Sun helped deliver value. "For us, it was outstanding," he says. "Regardless of your industry or audience, every dollar matters. It's a good sign when your guests can valet or self-park in a covered garage for free and have free Wi-Fi in the entire facility. It allows attendees and organizers to redirect their money to other cat-

egories. The uniqueness of Mohegan Sun is that the food and rooms are of the highest quality, without the inflated prices of some destinations."

The value of the WAI's sponsorships also increased. "We sold more sponsorships than any previous year because Mohegan Sun found ways to help make it happen," says Fetteroll. "Sponsorship revenue is critical for most events, and this is true for the Wire Association. Mohegan Sun understands this and offered ideas that incorporated the facility. Their approach was not to try to sell us options, but to truly service our needs."

Value combined with a variety of venues and activities proved to be a winning combination. "You have an endless supply of options for functions onsite," says Fetteroll. "We held our welcome reception at Jimmy Buffett's Margaritaville Restaurant Mohegan Sun. Imagine trying to decorate an event in the Jimmy Buffett theme. You wouldn't have money left for F&B. For us, it was perfect. The palm trees, a massive tequila bottle dropping on schedule and an airplane suspended from the ceiling, all with windows overlooking the Thames River. It was perfect."

ALL UNDER ONE ROOF

Another group booked Mohegan Sun largely because everything it wanted was onsite. The 2018 Tristate Society for Human Resources Professionals (SHRM) Conference in April at the Mohegan Sun included about 650 human resource professionals and exhibitors, mostly from Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

According to Regan Traub, chair and planner of the 2018 Tristate SHRM Conference, attendees experienced much of what the Mohegan Sun offers. The conference started with a Mohegan Sun tribal welcome reception. "It also included experiential team building, golf, a tribal scavenger hunt and a cake decorating competition at Carlo's Bakery Mohegan Sun," says Traub. "There was also a Gala Event at the resort's Vista Lounge



The 2018 Tristate Society for Human Resources Professionals team wins a cake decorating competition at Carlo's Bakery Mohegan Sun.

"The near unanimous feedback and strong value from the Chapter event made it easy for the association to contract to return in 2020. We will be excited to use the new Earth Expo Center!"



Steven Fetteroll, CAE
Executive Director
Wire Association International
Madison, CT

at Wombi Rock that included a DJ, magician, poker and a Captain Jack Sparrow impersonator."

Traub hopes to return to Mohegan Sun and build on the conference's successful attendance. "It exceeded past records, and the breakout rooms in the Uncas Ballroom area during some sessions were too crowded," says Traub. "We are starting to look at their new Expo Center now to consider how it would fulfill our needs in the future."

Connecticut's other major gaming property, Foxwoods Resort Casino, is the largest resort casino in North America. Foxwoods offers the 47,533-square-foot Premier Ballroom, 15,000-square-foot Celebrity Ballroom and the 25,000-square-foot, column-free Foxwoods Grand Pequot Ballroom, divisible into five sections. Other venues include the 1,400-seat Fox Theater and the 4,000-seat Grand Theater.

ATLANTIC CITY

The newly renovated Resorts Casino Hotel, Atlantic City's first casino hotel, celebrated its 40th anniversary in May with additional options for groups. The Ocean Tower's recently renovated 480 rooms include 139 mini-suites, 15 parlor suites and one Presidential suite. Renovations also include the onsite Jimmy Buffett-themed Margaritaville entertainment complex. Resorts Casino Hotel's 64,000 square feet of meeting space includes the new, high-tech Resorts Conference Center, which offers 24 function and meeting rooms, four ballrooms and a multipurpose showroom. The hotel's largest ballroom accommodates up to 750 people. Two theaters seat 300 and 1,350 guests, respectively. Overall, Resorts Casino Hotel can host up to 140 square feet of meeting and function space per guest room, nearly twice that of the typical conference hotel.

The iconic Tropicana Atlantic City has completed a \$200 million refurbishment of its 21 meeting rooms in the Havana Tower, the 18,000-square-foot Ballroom and the 20,000-square-foot Grand Exhibition Center. In addition, the North, South and Havana towers offer renovated guest rooms. Other new Tropicana offerings include three new restaurants by award-winning chef



Tony Campisi
Executive Director
PA & DE Valley Chapter, Pennsylvania
and Delaware Valley Chapter,
Community Associations Institute/
PA Legislative Action Committee

“The presence and availability of [Valley Forge Casino Resort] staff during our event and their responsiveness to last minute issues stands out to me as particularly good service and attentiveness to our needs.”

Jose Garces — Olon, Bar Olon and Okatshe — and AtlantiCare LifeCenter Fitness. Tropicana also increased its total number of guest rooms to 2,629 and added 5,600 square feet of meeting space following last year’s acquisition of the Chelsea hotel, which is being linked to the Tropicana as its fifth hotel tower.

Last summer, Harrah’s Atlantic City completed upgrades of 450 guest rooms and suites in the hotel’s elegant Bayview Tower. Other Harrah’s improvements include new dining venues and renovation of The Pool After Dark, the property’s nightclub. In addition, Harrah’s new \$125 million, 100,000-square-foot Waterfront Conference Center is the largest such facility between Baltimore and Boston, boasting two 50,000-square-foot ballrooms, 125,000 square feet of meeting space and LEED Silver Certification.

Borgata Hotel Casino & Spa spent \$50 million to debut several new projects over the last two years, including the new bi-level, 18,000-square-foot Central Conference Center, which increased the resort’s total meeting space to more than 106,000 square feet, including the Event Center and The Water Club’s 39,000 square feet of meeting space. Other completed projects include an outdoor pool, and beer garden and eatery.

MORE COMPETITION

Major northeastern casino resorts are getting more competition from up-and-coming gaming properties, including Valley Forge Casino Resort in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania. The resort’s recent \$6 million makeover, which includes its 100,000-square-foot Event Center, helped attract the Automobile License Plate Collectors Association (ALPCA), which recently held its annual International Convention on the property for 500 attendees.

The ALPCA found that Valley Forge Casino Resort met all of its requirements. Upon visiting the resort, ALPCA convention manager Ned Flynn cited the association’s meeting space needs with the property’s staff. “These included an exhibition hall of at

least 40,000 square feet or enough to hold 350-400 eight-foot tables,” he says. “In addition, we needed a full-service host hotel which is either connected to the exhibition hall or within short walking distance. Our RFP requested 600 room nights with a peak of 150 on both Wednesday and Thursday nights.”

Flynn liked what he saw in the Event Center and hotel accommodations. “Its three rooms could be combined into one with a total of 54,000 square feet,” says Flynn. “There are two hotels on property, a high-rise Radisson and the Casino Tower. The Event Center is located on the bottom floor of the Casino Tower. Thus, both of our basic physical requirements were met.”

Value, of course, was also a high priority. “We must have a positive bottom line coming out of the convention, and the hotel rates must be within the ability of most members to pay,” he says. “I was pleased with the response from Valley Forge on all of these matters and decided to make a site visit.”

Valley Forge Casino Resort also met the ALPCA’s need to have the gaming floor located away from other areas attendees frequented. The association desired such a layout after having previously met at another resort that required attendees to walk through the casino floor to reach meeting rooms and restaurants. “That issue does not exist at Valley Forge, as one does not have to walk through the casino to enjoy the fine food in several restaurants, visit one of the taverns or get to the Event Center,” says Flynn.

CONVENIENT ACCESS

While the ALPCA featured international attendees, another recent convention at Valley Forge Casino Resort consisted mostly of people who lived within driving distance of the property. The Pennsylvania and Delaware Valley Chapter, Community Associations Institute/PA Legislative Action Committee, held its Annual Conference & Expo at Valley Forge Casino in April 2018.

According to Tony Campisi, executive director of the association, proximity to members was a key reason for choosing the resort. “We chose the property primarily for its location in relation to where the majority of our members live and work,” says Campisi. “The property is accessible from various highways, is one of few in the region large enough to accommodate our exhibit hall needs and has recently undergone various renovations that make the property an attractive location.”

Meeting space for the convention’s 800 attendees was also a factor. “We don’t have a significant need for guest rooms, so that’s not really a factor for us,” says Campisi. “The meeting rooms and space available to use are more important to our event along with updates that have been made to the facility. The most significant portion of our event is the exhibit hall, and the size of the space at Valley Forge is perfect for an event our size with 150 to 160 exhibitors.”

Where the Fun Begins!



Whether you are planning a detailed conference or an employee retreat Isleta Resort and Casino has the perfect meeting space, guest rooms and resort activities all waiting for you!

Come experience the thrill of winning on one of our 1,800 slot machines or our Vegas-style table games. Then dine at any of our many restaurants or rejuvenated at our world-class spa.

**Discover why Isleta Resort and Casino is
Where the Fun Begins!**

**Call today 1-877-475-3827 and mention code: Association18
to book your customized package that will fit all your needs.**

11000 BROADWAY SE | ALBUQUERQUE, NM 87105 | 505.724.3800 | ISLETA.COM





Credit: Tropicana Atlantic City

One of Tropicana Atlantic City's 21 recently renovated meeting rooms.

In addition, Campisi describes the cuisine and service as near-perfect. "The presence and availability of staff during our event and their responsiveness to last-minute issues stands out to me as particularly good service and attentiveness to our needs," says Campisi. "The food and beverage are also very good, and our attendees were very complimentary regarding that."

LAS VEGAS

Caesars Entertainment continues to reinvent Las Vegas, implementing its vision for the future. Part of the vision is Caesars new, state-of-the-art \$375 million conference center called Caesars Forum in Las Vegas, which is scheduled to open in 2020. Aimed directly at attracting large conventions, Caesars Forum offers 300,000 square feet of flexible meeting space that includes two of the world's largest pillarless ballrooms, each measuring 110,000 square feet. There are also two 40,000-square-foot ballrooms. Caesars Forum attendees will have access via a pedestrian bridge to Harrah's Las Vegas, LINQ, the LINQ Promenade and Flamingo Las Vegas. Caesars Entertainment is also enhancing its properties. A \$100 million renovation of the Palace Towers at Caesars Palace offers 1,181 guest rooms and suites, including 10 luxurious villas on the 29th floor. Meanwhile, Flamingo Las Vegas is completing a \$90 million renovation of 1,270 rooms.

MGM Resorts is also among the leaders in expanding its Las Vegas properties. Projects underway will add a combined 4 million square feet of meeting and convention space to MGM's properties when they are completed by the end of this year. The projects include the MGM Grand Conference Center which is undergoing a \$130 million, 250,000-square-foot expansion that will add a total of 850,000 square feet, including a 49,000-square-foot ballroom and a 32,000-square-foot ballroom.

Another MGM property, the AAA Five Diamond Aria Resort & Casino, is a top destination for technology-oriented conferences and events. Aria added to its reputation recently by premiering a \$170 million, 200,000-square-foot expansion of its meeting space spread over four stories. Including the expansion, Aria now offers a total of over 500,000 square feet of convention space, including a distinctive ballroom on the top floor that includes two open-air verandas accommodating up to 2,000

attendees. Aria's expansion includes indoor/open-air verandas with retractable windows and scenic views of T-Mobile Arena and The Park, both of which provide a range of venues and entertainment. In addition, the expanded Cypress Executive Lounge has a conference room, three private suites for personal workspaces and flexible furniture for up to 30 people.

MGM Resorts continues to lead the way in providing online connectivity for meetings by recently partnering with Cisco Systems to offer faster downloads and high-density coverage at all MGM Resorts' meeting and convention spaces in Las Vegas except for Circus Circus.

INNOVATIVE VENUES

Groups seeking novel meeting spaces have several choices at Park MGM, the former Monte Carlo property. Phase One of Park MGM's new 77,000-square-foot conference center offers non-traditional spaces and flexible design to small groups. Planners can now book meetings at recently completed Madison Meeting Center, the first of its kind in Las Vegas, located within the new meetings and conference center in the Park MGM. The Madison Meeting Center caters to groups of 10 to 50 people with 10,000 square feet of modern conference space and 10

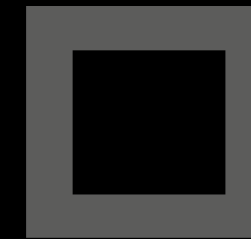
"[The conference] exceeded past records, and the breakout rooms in the Uncas Ballroom area during some sessions were too crowded. We are starting to look at their new Expo Center now."

Regan Traub
Chair and Planner
2018 Tristate SHRM Conference
New Haven, CT

meeting rooms configurable into several layouts. The rooms are ideal for classroom-style training sessions, seminars and workshops. The Madison Meeting Center complements 58,600 square feet of new conference space featuring large ballrooms and 43 flexible meeting rooms. The high-tech meeting spaces feature natural light and overlook the resort's pools. Another venue aimed at small groups, the Ideation studio, will open later this year and complete the resort's new 77,000-square-foot conference and event space.

Wynn Resorts Ltd. started construction on its major Las Vegas Strip development, Paradise Park, in January. The 1,500-room hotel and convention center, which replaces the golf course at Wynn Las Vegas and Encore, will include a nearby 38-acre, hourglass-shaped lagoon encircled by a one-mile boardwalk and white-sand beach. Plans also call for a nightly Carnivale parade of floats on the lagoon.

M E E T T H E F U T U R E



CAESARS FORUM



**\$375 MILLION CONFERENCE CENTER OPENING
IN 2020 IN LAS VEGAS**

CAESARSFORUM.com | CaesarsMeansBusiness.com



CAESARS

Harrah's

HORSESHOE

THE CROMWELL

BALLY'S

Flamingo

THE LINQ

NOBU HOTEL

Paris

planet hollywood

rio

HARVEYS

ROADHOUSE

WSOP

TOTAL REWARDS



Credit: Isleta Resort & Casino

The Isleta Resort & Casino has three golf courses with a combined 27 holes.

SOUTHEAST

In the South, Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino in Hollywood, Florida, is adding a guitar-shaped tower with 860 rooms, 60,000 square feet of function space and new dining and entertainment venues. The project is scheduled for completion by mid-2019. Currently, the Hard Rock's meeting space totals 120,000 square feet, including a 38,000-square-foot exhibit hall divisible into 10 spaces, the 6,500-seat Hard Rock Live arena, and a 7,000-square-foot poolside function area.

Along the Mississippi Gulf Coast, in Biloxi, MGM's Beau Rivage Resort & Casino, recently completed a \$10 million renovation and redesign that provides more comfort and options for guests. Upgrades include new, 60-inch LED televisions, additional sound bars and media hubs to connect

& Casino provides old-world Southwest hospitality and top hospitality and conveniences. Looking to offer even more to visitors, Isleta is undergoing a \$40 million renovation that is expected to be completed by the end of 2019. The project includes the property's 60,000 square feet of flexible indoor and outdoor meeting space as well as a new concert venue and expanded casino floor. More dining and bar options are on the way as Isleta will expand the Triple Sevens Saloon to four times its original capacity and provide a new food court. Demonstrating its dedication to providing top dining options, Isleta recently named a new executive chef with over 30 years of culinary experience. Activities include the 27-hole Eagle Golf Club, the Southwest's premiere golf destination.

"We must have a positive bottom line coming out of the convention, and the hotel rates must be within the ability of most members to pay. I was pleased with the response from Valley Forge on all of these matters."

Ned Flynn
Convention Manager
Automobile License Plate Collectors Association
Lake View, NY

electronic devices. The makeover is the last stage of a multi-year renovation project that includes an expanded VIP check-in area. The AAA Four Diamond Beau Rivage offers 50,000 square feet of meeting space, including the 17,000-square-foot Magnolia Ballroom and a 1,550-seat theater.

SOUTHWEST

Located just seven miles from Albuquerque, Isleta Resort

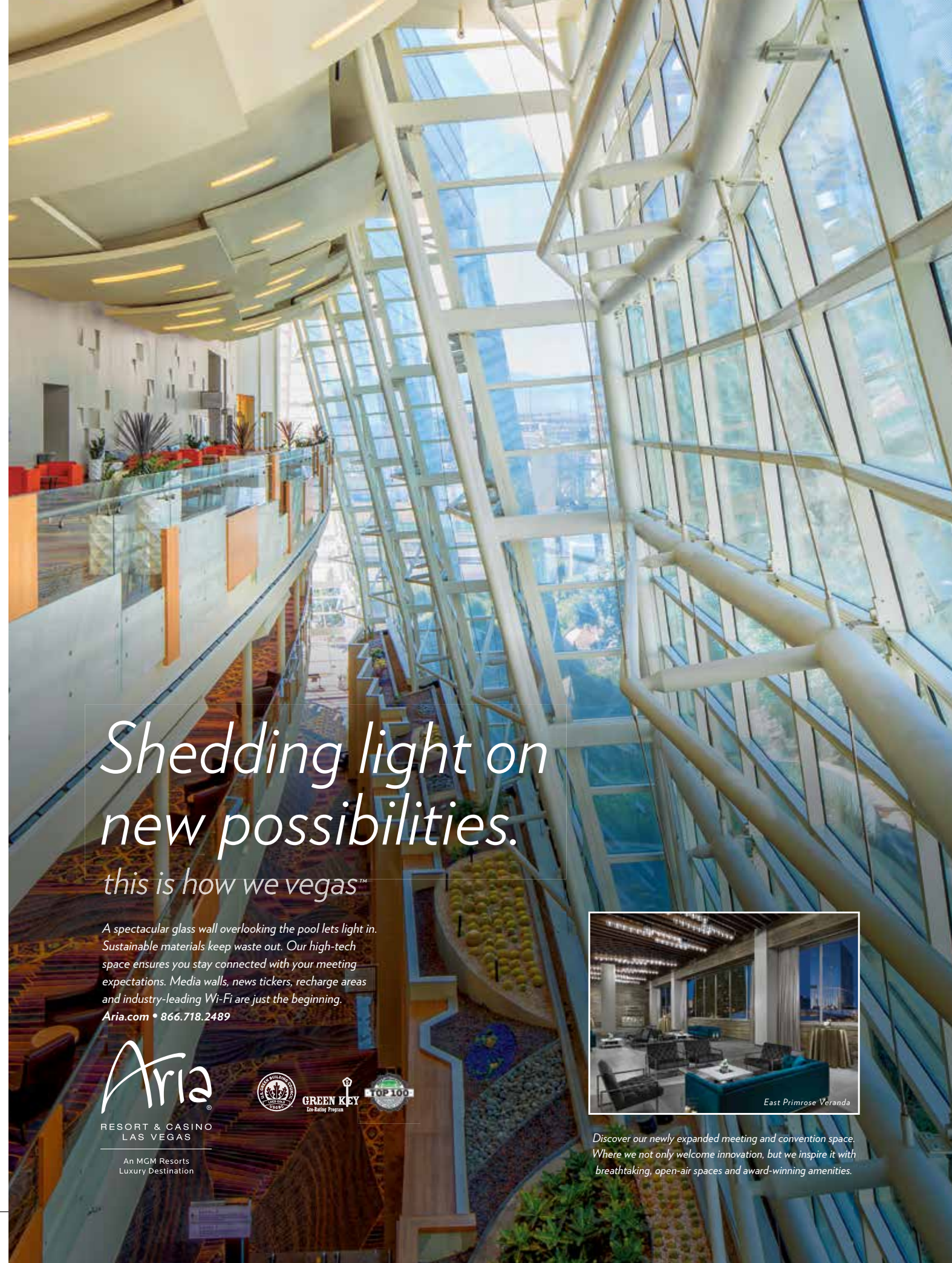
NORTHWEST

One-year-old Ilani Casino Resort, located on the Cowlitz Indian Tribe's 156-acre reservation in Washington state, is a large and luxurious property that expects to draw 4 million visitors a year. Ilani is the closest casino to the Portland-Vancouver metropolitan area and offers top-notch entertainment. Recent acts that have performed at Ilani's new 30,000-square-foot Meeting & Entertainment Center include comedian Jay Leno and rapper Vanilla Ice. Attendees can also enjoy a 100,000-square-foot gaming floor and restaurants that include Michael Jordan's Steak House.

And Talking Stick Resort in Scottsdale, Arizona, is known for its variety of entertainment in The Showroom, the Salt River Grand Ballroom and three pools. The resort offers over 100,000 square feet of flexible meeting space. Activity options include the 36-hole Talking Stick Golf Club, Topgolf Scottsdale at Riverwalk and OdySea Aquarium.

Association groups tend to meet in casinos located in geographic regions where most of their members are based. Now, with the growing variety of casino resorts nationwide, planners have more options.

AC&F



Shedding light on new possibilities. this is how we vegas™

A spectacular glass wall overlooking the pool lets light in. Sustainable materials keep waste out. Our high-tech space ensures you stay connected with your meeting expectations. Media walls, news tickers, recharge areas and industry-leading Wi-Fi are just the beginning.
Aria.com • 866.718.2489

Aria
RESORT & CASINO
LAS VEGAS

An MGM Resorts
Luxury Destination



GREEN KEY
Eco-Rating Program



East Primrose Veranda

Discover our newly expanded meeting and convention space. Where we not only welcome innovation, but we inspire it with breathtaking, open-air spaces and award-winning amenities.



Credit: Omni Louisville/Mark O'Tyson

The 612-room Omni Louisville offers 70,000 square feet of meeting and event space, 33 meeting rooms and a reception venue with great views of the downtown skyline as the backdrop.

Bigger & Better

Some New & Improved Places to Host New & Improved Meetings

By Ron Bernthal

In the 1990s, in an attempt to lure more conventions and events to their downtown districts, many U.S. cities invested millions of dollars constructing beautiful convention centers. Of course, if the new convention center had all the amenities that meeting planners desire — efficiency, sustainability, flexible meeting space, F&B options, good public transit and airport accessibility — and many newly built ones did, the question became: “Where are we going to put all the groups that now want to come to our city?”

Pre-convention center hotels began to renovate. Developers and hotel companies met to discuss real estate and financial options for expensive, new hotels that would be physically connected to the convention centers. Downtown business leaders finally took a serious look at revitalization plans.

After nearly a decade of modest growth, the development pipeline for massive, meetings-oriented, full-service hotels is finally back, and in a big way. Several new hotels in this category are set to open in the next few years, and these properties will then stimulate new demand. New or recently renovated convention center hotels have seen

an increase in overall group business, a result of favorable macroeconomic trends that are currently boosting budgets for corporate events.

“When business is healthy like it is now, companies have a tendency to have more meetings and events, and celebrate success and bring people together to set new direction,” says Mike McMahon, director of sales and marketing for the 1,048-room Fairmont Austin, which opened in March and includes 140,000 square feet of meeting space.

“We’re seeing a lot of that right now in the market. I think it’s as healthy as it’s been in a number of years. We went through a significant downturn in 2009 through 2012, and then we started coming out of that, so we’ve been in a fairly healthy recovery since then.

“Fairmont Austin’s location in the Central Business District and its connectivity to the Austin Convention Center are game changers for citywide events and festivals,” says McMahon. “The Red River Canopy Walk connects our guests with the Center, and its design and views of Waller Creek are truly unique. Within our property, we have significant in-house meeting capacity that allows us to host association gatherings for up to 2,000 guests. Partnering with neighboring hotels on Red River and Rainey streets, [there is] more than 2,200 total guest rooms within two blocks of the Fairmont Austin.”

“Austin has been on our list of highly desirable destinations for our annual meeting for a number of years, but the hotel package was insufficient,” says Amy Lynn Phillips, CMP, senior director, meetings and exhibits for the Washington, DC-based American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. “When Fairmont announced their new hotel back in 2015, we began working with Visit Austin, the Austin Convention Center, the Fairmont people and the entire downtown hotel community

“We’re not necessarily taking business from our competitors; we’re bringing new business to the market because of the destination and the brand.”

Mike McMahon
Director of Sales and Marketing
Fairmont Austin
Austin, TX

on a housing package which allows our attendees to walk between the hotels and the Center.”

Phillips emphasized that the Fairmont’s direct physical connection to the Convention Center was very important in her decision to use the not-yet-opened hotel. “Fairmont’s Canopy Walk provides direct connection to the Center, and that was critically important to us as we considered our headquarter hotel options,” she says. “This is the first time I contracted a hotel prior to opening. We understood the risk in contracting during pre-opening, and we were absolutely concerned about the potential delays, but it worked well in the end. The hotel is stunning and lived up to the hype.

“The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists has used Fairmont hotels for other meetings and events, and the brand resonates well with our member physicians, sponsors and their spouses/guests,” says Phillips. “Fairmont Austin has an incredible Spa and Fitness facility along with a resort-style pool and fabulous restaurants, all of which were used by many of our attendees.”

McMahon says they’re able to help attract a higher level of citywide activity. “In addition to our own space, we have the ability to help activate larger programs that may need upward of 2,000 to 3,000 rooms in the CBD,” he says. “We’re seeing groups that have never been here that are intrigued by all the things that are cool about Austin. You combine that with the ability to have a meeting in a Fairmont, and that’s creating new demand. We’re not necessarily taking business from our competitors; we’re bringing new business to the market because of the destination and the brand.”

At 37 stories and 590 feet, Fairmont Austin is the tallest hotel and second-tallest structure in Austin, and with a total footprint of 1.4 million square feet, it is the city’s biggest hotel by area and the country’s largest Fairmont.

Seven hotels scheduled to open in the U.S. this year have at least 50,000 square feet of meeting space. The top three new hotels by meeting room square footage are the Gaylord Rockies Resort & Convention Center (485,000 square feet of meeting space) in Aurora, Colorado; the Hyatt Regency Seattle (103,000); and the Marriott Delta Dallas Allen & Watters Creek Convention Center, with 90,000 square feet of meeting space.

MARRIOTT MARQUIS CHICAGO

The 40-story Marriott Marquis Chicago, which will open in early September on the McCormick Place campus features 1,205 guest rooms and 93,000 square feet of meeting space, including up to 48 breakout rooms. The new property joins the existing 1,258-room Hyatt Regency McCormick Place hotel on the campus.

“This property offers a new opportunity that the other hotels don’t necessarily have in Chicago,” said Cindy Ruchman,

“It makes it easy for someone to plan something all in-house, as opposed to using packages where you have different hotels that you’re trying to leverage to make a group fit at a certain destination.”

Cindy Ruchman
Director of Sales and Marketing
Marriott Marquis Chicago
Chicago, IL

director of sales and marketing for the Marriott Marquis Chicago. “Having the event space, and guests just walk across the street through the pedestrian walkway, it offers a unique opportunity on the campus that didn’t exist before. It really speaks to ease of flow for meetings, and utilizing the space so it makes it easy for someone to plan something all in-house, as opposed to using packages where you have different hotels that you’re trying to leverage to make a group fit at a certain destination.”

LOEWS KANSAS CITY CONVENTION CENTER HOTEL

Kansas City’s longtime desire to build a downtown convention hotel took a giant step forward this spring when developers broke ground for the Loews Kansas City Convention Center Hotel, a 24-story, 800-room, \$323 million project expected to be completed by late April 2020. The hotel will include 60,000 square feet of meeting space, 15,450 square feet of restaurant, bar and retail, a 450-space garage, 9,913 square feet of recreational facilities and a 4,500-square-foot terrace.

Local business leaders believe the new convention hotel will elevate the city’s opportunities to land large conventions. The Shriners already have scheduled a July 2020 convention expected to draw 20,000 attendees, and the American Association for Laboratory Animal Science was the first group to book Kansas City solely based on the new hotel. It’s scheduled to bring 4,500 attendees in October 2021.

Adjacent to the new Loews property site is Bartle Hall, one of the six venues within the Kansas City Convention Center complex. With 388,800 square feet of column-free exhibit space on one floor, Bartle Hall offers 1,000 underground parking spaces, access to the Municipal Auditorium and the Conference Center via skywalks and underground walkways, three truck docks and 29 trailer bays.

MGM GRAND AND ARIA RESORT CASINO HOTELS

MGM Resorts is introducing more options for the meeting planner within one of the world’s premier meeting destinations: Las Vegas. On the heels of Mandalay Bay Convention Center’s expansion, MGM Resorts is introducing association/convention group enhancements at ARIA, MGM

“We’re always looking for ways to bring even greater value to our customers, and hosting our annual conference in unique locations that offer easy access, world-class conference facilities, top-notch lodging and a thriving cultural scene allows us to do just that.”

Janyce Harper
Director of Customer Events
Commvault
Tinton Falls, N.J.

Grand, Park MGM and Luxor, totaling approximately 900,000 additional square feet. When all expansions and renovations are completed by the end of 2018, MGM Resorts will have 4 million square feet of meeting and convention space.

ARIA’s major expansion project began in 2016 and was completed last February. A \$170 million project to enhance its LEED Gold-certified convention center will deliver an additional 200,000 square feet of technologically advanced, flexible meeting space across four stories, for a total of more than 500,000 square feet. It’s highlighted by indoor/open-air verandas and the 3,000-square-foot Cypress Executive Lounge with private suites, stocked pantry, conference room and study.

Within the 200,000-square-foot expansion are ballrooms with built-in stages, an exclusive loading dock with megavator for events requiring sizable displays, versatile indoor-outdoor breakout rooms with floor-to-ceiling windows and ample pre-function spaces. The top floor is a vast ballroom with two open-air verandas that can accommodate receptions for up to 2,000 attendees.

The iconic MGM Grand broke ground last year on a \$130 million expansion of its Conference Center. The MGM Grand Conference Center is adding 250,000 square feet for a total of more than 850,000 square feet. As part of the expansion, Stay Well Meetings, the industry’s first-ever wellness meetings experience, will also expand its footprint by 22,000 square feet and encompass the Conference Center’s entire second floor. “The expansion of Stay Well Meetings, along with our 340 Stay Well accommodations, allows MGM Grand to offer a completely unique destination for groups that carries through the entire resort experience — from the board room to the guest room,” says Ernest Stovall, vice president of sales for MGM Grand. “The Conference Center expansion allows us to grow with the needs of our clients and drive new and expanded business to Las Vegas.”

The new 250,000-square-foot space at MGM Grand will seamlessly connect to the existing Conference Center on all three levels and include a 5,500-square-foot outdoor courtyard available for private events, a 49,000-square-

foot ballroom, a 32,000-square-foot ballroom, three junior ballrooms and 11 breakout rooms. The project will open at the end of this year.

HYATT REGENCY SEATTLE

Hyatt Hotels is currently building a 45-floor, \$400 million Hyatt Regency Seattle, expected to open this winter in downtown Seattle’s Denny Triangle neighborhood. Hyatt Regency Seattle is set to be the largest hotel in the Pacific Northwest, with 1,260 guest rooms, more than 105,000 square feet of flexible meeting and event facilities and an expansive Regency Club lounge.

The hotel will be located two blocks from the existing Washington State Convention Center and immediately adjacent to the proposed convention center expansion, making Hyatt Regency Seattle an ideal base for convention attendees. The property will also be convenient to popular Seattle attractions like Pike Place Market, the Space Needle, Seattle Aquarium and Seattle’s Capitol Hill and Lake Union neighborhoods.

HYATT REGENCY PORTLAND AT THE OREGON CONVENTION CENTER

Slated for completion in 2019, the \$220 million, 600-room Hyatt Regency Portland project is expected to draw new events and hundreds of thousands of visitors to the region, while enhancing the Oregon Convention Center’s (OCC) role as an economic engine.

Located north of the existing OCC, the 14-story Hyatt Regency will include 32,000 square feet of meeting venues, including 23 flexible meeting rooms.

The OCC opened in 1990, and was expanded in 2003. Since its debut, many association planners have cited the need for a nearby hotel to serve convention-goers and draw more events. According to Portland’s Metro survey, 79 percent of



ARIA’s convention center expansion included a 3,000-square-foot Cypress Executive Lounge with conference room and study.

national meeting planners said they were more likely to book events at the OCC if there was an amenity-rich hotel next door. Now, almost 30 years later, the Hyatt Regency is inching closer to reality. After its opening, the property is expected to draw between five to 10 major new convention events each year, boosting annual hotel business in the Portland area by between 70,000 and 110,000 new room-nights.

GAYLORD ROCKIES RESORT, AURORA, COLORADO

Scheduled to open late 2018, the Gaylord Rockies Resort & Convention Center is the largest hotel currently under construction in the United States. Upon completion, the resort will feature more than 1,500 rooms and 485,000 square feet of convention, meeting and event space, including a 50,000-square-foot, column-free ballroom with a capacity of 4,000. There will be eight dining outlets, a full-service spa, salon and fitness center, year-round indoor/outdoor heated pools and a lazy river, all just 10 minutes from Denver International Airport.

As of this spring, the Gaylord Rockies has pre-booked more than 627,000 room nights, between February 2019 and 2028, 85 percent of which come from groups that have never booked a meeting or conference in Colorado. When completed, the \$800 million Gaylord Rockies in Aurora will have the feel of a ski village with rock work, waterways and landscaping representative of Colorado. The fireplace will have a 16-foot-long faux wood beam about four feet in diameter as a mantle. A rock grotto that holds about 50 people will be available for events. The 24,000-square-foot Mountain Pass sports bar will seat 460 people, with 25 TVs and a 75-foot-long, 14-foot-high LED screen.

“We’re thrilled to host Commvault GO 2019 at Gaylord Rockies and be among the first in our industry to bring an event of this nature to the majesty of the Rocky Mountains,” says Janyce Harper, director of customer events at Commvault, a data protection and information management organization in Tinton Falls, New Jersey. “We’re always looking for ways to bring even greater value to our customers, and hosting our annual conference in unique locations that offer easy access, world-class conference facilities, top-notch lodging and a thriving cultural scene allows us to do just that.”

GAYLORD TEXAN RESORT

Located on 4.5 acres on Lake Grapevine, near DFW Airport, the Gaylord Texan Resort & Convention Center had featured more than 400,000 square feet of flexible meeting, convention, outdoor, exhibit and pre-function space, including a 3,000-square-foot marbled foyer leading up to the hotel’s 179,520-square-foot Longhorn Exhibit Hall.

This past May, the property’s Vineyard Tower opened

“Given the number of attendees we have, we need a compact group of hotels for accommodations, as well as additional meeting space that is adjacent to the Convention Center. The Omni gave us both.”



Matthew J. Wales, CMP
Vice President Membership, Events and Special Projects
American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE)
Washington, DC

resulting in the need for additional meeting and event space. The \$120 million Vineyard Tower expansion adds 303 luxury guest rooms, an outdoor terrace offering spectacular views of Lake Grapevine, 86,000 square feet of carpeted meeting space and 26,000 square feet of pre-function space. With the new expansion, the Gaylord Texan’s total offerings have increased to 1,814 guest rooms and nearly 500,000 square feet of meeting space, making it one of the top three largest non-gaming convention resorts in the United States.

HYATT REGENCY BETHESDA

The \$38 million renovation at the 390-room Hyatt Regency Bethesda was completed at the end of 2017 and includes all-new guest rooms, remodeled meetings space including a stunning rooftop event space and a revitalized lobby in its 12-story atrium.

Located in downtown Bethesda, Maryland, the hotel features more than 20,000 square feet of modern function space, including an enclosed rooftop event space with views of the city, redesigned atrium terrace and 19 meeting rooms. Renovated meeting spaces include 2,269 square feet of pre-function space, 3,000 square feet of outdoor space and the 7,200-square-foot Regency Ballroom.

“The National Council on Radiation Protection and Measurements has held our annual meeting at the Hyatt Regency Bethesda since 2009,” says Cindy L. O’Brien, managing editor of the National Council on Radiation Protection and Measurements (NCRP). “We have been to the property before, during and after the renovations, and we currently have contracts for our 2019 and 2020 events. [We] do not plan on changing the venue in the years to come. The Hyatt was originally chosen because of its Bethesda location near our Bethesda headquarters, proximity to the Washington Metro system and the number and size of the meeting spaces.”

O’Brien says that her group consists of about 300 pre-registered individuals, and anywhere from 30 to 70 onsite registrations. The group held its previous annual meeting in the spring of this year, a few months after the renovations



Credit: Marriott Marquis Chicago

Marriott Marquis Chicago's ballroom can accommodate over 2,000 guests.

were completed, and they enjoyed many of the improvements. "We didn't choose the Hyatt again because of the renovations, but they certainly made it a more pleasant place to hold our meeting," says O'Brien. "The new fixtures and carpeting lightened up the facility and modernized the look of the common areas, sleeping rooms and meeting spaces. We especially like the added rooftop space with the spectacular views, and will like it even better when the outdoor space is soon completed."

JW MARRIOTT NASHVILLE

Slated to open this month, the property recently unveiled the design concept for its public spaces, guest rooms and state-of-the-art conference and event facilities. Music City's newest luxury hotel, the sparkling JW Marriott Nashville offers 533 guest rooms and suites, three stylish new restaurants, including award-winning Bourbon Steak by Michael Mina, 50,000 square feet of high-tech event space, a world-class Spa by JW and a collection of contemporary art that pays homage to the city's musical history. At one of Nashville's highest elevation points, the modern, 33-story glass tower offers great views of the city and surrounding area, and the 16 meeting rooms and two permanent boardrooms also feature views and natural light.

LIVE! CASINO & HOTEL MARYLAND

Live! Casino & Hotel Maryland welcomed its first overnight guests to the new 310-room luxury Live! Hotel this past May. The property is located in Arundel Mills, a 1,630,000-square-foot shopping mall just 15 miles south of Baltimore.

The 350,000-square-foot hotel features public spaces showcasing floor-to-ceiling windows, the Live! Spa and many dining and nightlife options. In June, the hotel opened its Grand Event Center, providing more than 20,000 square feet of event space, including a large ballroom with six breakout rooms and seating for up to 800. In addition, the Event Center is home to a 1,500-seat concert venue with a built-in performance stage.

An expansion project to be completed in spring 2019 will double the size of the meeting and banquet space to 40,000 square feet, and enlarge the Event Center seating capacity to 4,000 seats for concerts, special events, convention and meeting space.

MARRIOTT MARQUIS MIAMI WORLDCENTER HOTEL & EXPO CENTER

The Miami Worldcenter urban development project will be home to the Marriott Marquis Miami Worldcenter Hotel & Expo Center and will feature approximately 1,700 hotel rooms and 600,000 square feet of meeting and exhibition space. Amenities will include an 80,000-square-foot outdoor event deck. The structure will offer one of the most technologically advanced conference space in the country, including a 65,000-square-foot Grand Ballroom (the largest in South Florida) and a 42,000-square-foot Junior Ballroom.

Tradeshows will benefit from more than 110,000 square feet of dedicated exhibit space. An array of breakout rooms, 80,000 square feet of pool/event outdoor space and a 1,500-seat theatre will all be part of the complex. Groundbreaking will be in late 2018, with estimated completion in 2022.

OMNI LOUISVILLE

The 612-room Omni Louisville opened in March, situated just one block from the Kentucky International Convention Center. The property offers 70,000 square feet of meeting and event space, 33 meeting rooms and a 20,000-square-foot urban lifestyle market and grocer. The Water Company Pool and Bar is a great reception venue, with the downtown skyline as the backdrop. Pin + Proof offers classic food and drink selections, along with four bowling alleys. Louisville International Airport is only seven miles away.

Meeting planner Matthew J. Wales, CMP, vice president, membership, events & special projects for the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) did not hesitate to bring his February 2019 annual meeting to the new Omni Louisville, which had just broken ground in 2016 when Wales signed his contract. The AACTE represents more than 800 post-secondary institutions with educator preparation programs dedicated to high-quality, evidence-based preparation that assures educators are ready to teach all learners. For Wales, preparation is the key not only for educators, but for guaranteeing successful meetings as well.

"For the size of our Annual Meeting, we need to plan and secure hotel rooms for our attendees and meeting space four to five years in advance," says Wales. "Therefore, beginning in the fall of 2014, we began working closely not only with the Omni Louisville team, but also the Louisville Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Kentucky International Convention Center and other hotel partners to begin preparing for this big meeting. With all partners at the table, we were able to secure their support in advance so that once the Omni was able to begin contracting, we would be able to do so quickly and with the majority of our needs negotiated in advance."



You're gonna need
new business cards.

Because your title is changing to
MVP.

Live!
CASINO • HOTEL
MARYLAND

Take your next event to the next level.

Introducing event space that flexes to your vision, within a brand new, world-class hotel. Plus Maryland's best casino, an inspiring array of restaurants, a luxurious spa and the largest shopping mall in the state. All in one place, in the heart of the Baltimore/D.C. corridor.

UP YOUR GAME. BOOK NOW. Talk to us about your next event. MARYLANDLIVECASINO.COM/MVP
At Arundel Mills. Must be 21. Please play responsibly, for help visit mdgamblinghelp.org or call 1-800-GAMBLER. © 2018

“The Conference Center expansion allows us to grow with the needs of our clients and drive new and expanded business to Las Vegas.”

Ernest Stovall
Vice President of Sales
MGM Grand
Las Vegas, NV

“This process was not new to us, as we have worked with hotels under construction in some of our previous annual meeting planning,” Wales says. “For example, we signed with the JW Indianapolis while that property was under construction in 2010 for our 2014 Annual Meeting. We also recently signed with Hyatt Regency Seattle while it is still under construction for our 2021 Annual Meeting.”

Wales and his AACTE group had attempted to bring their annual meeting to Louisville in the past, but circumstances never worked out. The new Omni Louisville changed the landscape, physically and logistically, for his group. “Given the number of attendees we have, we need a compact group of hotels for accommodations, as well as additional meeting space that is adjacent to the Convention Center,” says Wales. “The Omni gave us both — a large number of committable rooms for our attendees, as well as plenty of additional meeting space that accommodates the need of our program. We anticipate welcoming over 2,000 attendees to our 2019 Annual Meeting.”

OMNI ORLANDO RESORT AT CHAMPIONSGATE

From 248,111 square feet of superior meeting and banquet space, to AAA Four Diamond accommodations, a signature Mokara Spa, championship golf courses and 15 sprawling acres of pools and recreation, this new convention resort has a lot to offer planners. Every meeting room is equipped with state-of-the-art audio/visual equipment. A self-automated business center offers access to guests 24 hours a day, and complimentary Wi-Fi access in the guest rooms and lobby areas keeps attendees connected. .

Three ballrooms, ranging from 20,000 to 28,800 square feet, each with its own pre-function space, allow groups exclusivity and privacy, with enough boardroom and break-out space to meet the needs of every group size. Two event lawns, a banquet kitchen and a large loading dock for easy set-up have been incorporated into the design of the Osceola County Conference Center, which recently added 100,000 square feet of indoor and outdoor meeting/event space.

The new Grand Salon Ballroom has been specifically designed for galas and special events. Allowing for seamless event flow, the ballroom features a new porté cochere for private arrivals, an expansive new ballroom and grand event

lawn for the cocktail hour or reception. The resort has added a ninth restaurant, Market Place.

TUCSON CONVENTION CENTER HOTEL

A new convention hotel will soon be part of Tucson’s skyline, with a 125-room property to break ground this year next to the Tucson Convention Center (TCC). The development company behind the hotel, Caliber Hospitality, is expected to spend \$20 million on the property, its second hotel in Tucson. Caliber also purchased the Hilton Tucson East last year, which opened in March after an \$8 million renovation.

The new hotel will be built east of the Convention Center on a landscaped portion of the property. The hotel will be the first and only hotel in the city that will be directly connected to the TCC. No brand has been identified as of press time, but completion is expected in late 2018 or early 2019.

Built in 1971, the TCC offers 205,000 square feet of meeting and event space along with an 8,962-seat arena. It has three performance facilities appropriate for sporting events, ice shows, theatrical performances and concerts. The TCC also hosts the annual Tucson Gem, Mineral & Fossil Show that draws thousands of international visitors. The arena is home to the professional hockey team, the Tucson Roadrunners, affiliated with the National Hockey League’s Arizona Coyotes.

HILTON CONRAD WASHINGTON, DC

In late 2019, Hilton’s Conrad brand will open a 360-room luxury hotel located just an eight-minute walk from the Walter E. Washington Convention Center. The hotel will provide 30,000 square feet of ground-floor retail space and be situated within the 10-acre, \$950 million CityCenterDC, which opened in 2015. CityCenterDC is a mixed-use development consisting of two condominium buildings, two rental apartment buildings, two office buildings, the planned Conrad Washington DC Hotel, and a public park. The complex encompasses 2 million square feet over five city blocks.

WALT DISNEY WORLD SWAN AND DOLPHIN

Late last year, the Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Resort completed the largest transformation in the resort’s history: a \$150 million, three-year project which included a redesign of all guest rooms, complete transformation of the Dolphin Resort lobby and renovation of all meeting space.

The completion of the project meant that the resort returned to operating at full capacity in time for the openings of Toy Story Land (2018) and Star Wars: Galaxy’s Edge (2019) at Disney’s Hollywood Studios, which is within walking distance of the resort.

Highlights of the renovation included all 2,270 rooms transformed to reflect the resort’s water-themed architecture.

The new rooms offer guests an oasis featuring white, blue and gray accents, sleek multi-functional furniture and all-new bathrooms featuring vanities with backlit mirrors on iridescent glass tiles.

Technology upgrades include the addition of more outlets and USB ports and high-definition TVs. The new Dolphin Resort lobby features a geometric ceiling, enhanced lighting and more than double the amount of guest seating. The centerpiece of the lobby is a grand chandelier stretching 20 feet from the ceiling, with nearly 1,000 strands and about 10,000 individual crystals suspended above the Dolphin fountain.

The resort has built a completely new dining venue in the Dolphin lobby. Fuel offers quick service and grab-and-go food and drink options for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Phins, a new centrally located lobby bar, has seating for 150 guests and offers appetizers perfect for sharing. Signature offers the resort’s own craft brew Phins & Feathers, wine on tap and creative cocktails. New private poolside rental cabanas are furnished with lounge seating, refrigerators and television.

A new 2,800-square-foot meeting and event space, Lake View, offers outdoor views of the resort’s private lake. All of the resort’s 331,000 electronic reader boards throughout the meeting space and the latest in high-density Wi-Fi have uninterrupted connectivity for groups as large as 15,000. Eighty-six meeting rooms were redesigned or added.

WESTIN ANAHEIM RESORT

Last year, a developer began tearing down the Anabella Hotel next to the Anaheim Convention Center, replacing it with a \$245 million, seven-story Westin Anaheim Resort. Completion of the new property is expected in 2019.

The hotel is being designed to meet AAA’s requirements for a four-diamond rating. Anaheim currently has no luxury hotels outside of the Disneyland Resort, the Disneyland Hotel and Disney’s Grand Californian Hotel. The new property will be the 18th Westin in California, and the chain’s first new-build in Southern California in 25 years.

The property will include more than 485,000 square feet of flexible meeting, convention, outdoor, exhibit and pre-function space, which includes 175,000 square feet in the exhibit hall, 20,000 square feet of outdoor patio space, four ballrooms from 8,000 to 59,736 square feet and up to 81 breakout rooms. Other amenities include eight dining venues, a world-class spa, indoor/outdoor pools and retail shops.

THE WESTIN IRVING CONVENTION CENTER AT LAS COLINAS

The \$113 million Westin Irving Convention Center at Las Colinas will be a 350-room headquarters hotel at the Irving Convention Center at Las Colinas. With a projected



The new 360-room Hilton Conrad luxury hotel will be situated within the 10-acre CityCenterDC, just an eight-minute walk from the Walter E. Washington Convention Center.

opening date of January 2019, the 12-story hotel will offer 16,000 square feet of meeting space, including a 10,000-square-foot ballroom.

The 48,500-square-foot Irving Convention Center at Las Colinas, the first phase of a multi-use district opened in 2011, and the Toyota Music Factory opened in 2017. Altogether, the three facilities will make up a 40-acre mixed-use entertainment district in the heart of the Las Colinas Urban Center, Irving’s international business district.

JW MARRIOTT TAMPA AND TAMPA EDITION

Tampa is set to get a major new event complex anchored by a new JW Marriott and EDITION hotels. An existing Marriott hotel is also slated for renovations as part of the project. The “complex” will be a 26-story tower in the heart of the Water Street Tampa neighborhood. As part of the new Tampa EDITION and the JW Marriott Tampa hotels, the project will have a combined 150,000 square feet of meeting and event space.

The new 519-room JW Marriott Tampa hotel is being constructed adjacent to the Tampa Convention Center and Amalie Arena, and will have 100,000 square feet of meeting and event space, including the largest hotel ballroom in Tampa Bay at approximately 30,000 square feet. The property will have multiple social spaces; a full-service spa and fitness center; a pool and sun terrace; a full-service, ground-floor restaurant with indoor and outdoor seating; and other neighborhood-serving retail outlets. There will also be a rooftop lounge and terrace on the 26th floor, making it the highest rooftop bar in Tampa Bay. The JW Marriott Tampa is set to open in fall 2020, followed by the Tampa EDITION in 2021.

In addition to the two new JW Marriott & EDITION hotels, the 727-room Tampa Marriott Waterside Hotel and Marina is undergoing renovations which began in fall 2017 and will continue throughout 2018.



Blanket Security

Keeping a Meeting Safe Means Thinking of Everything

By John Buchanan

No issue is more important to association conventions and trade shows than the safety and security of staff and attendees. Yet, experts say, too many associations are woefully underprepared for catastrophic incidents such as a terrorist attack, violent protest, natural disaster or medical emergency.

Fortunately, they say, the current trend is toward greater awareness and a more serious appreciation of the risks. But there is still a lot of work to be done.

"There are countries in the world that have practiced trade show safety and security diligently and successfully over the years," says Carol Cambridge, founder and president of Glendale, Arizona-based The Stay Safe Project, which provides safety-and-security consulting services and training to associations. "But in North America, this is really a relatively new topic of discussion, except for weather-related issues. But serious discussion of the broader issues related to event safety and security has really only been going on over the last several years. And that's because in recent years, the fear of violence at events has really taken over as the significant issue in the discussion."

The event that most accelerated concerns and led to action was the Las Vegas mass shooting at Mandalay Bay last October during a country music festival. "That was a huge factor in terms of awareness and concern," Cambridge says.

In today's world, Cambridge counsels planners to "expect the unexpected when you're planning an event. Hopefully, things are going to go smoothly. But you can never count on that. You have to be prepared. And a big part of that is taking steps to reduce your risk. And today, the risks include terrorism, active shooters, political activism, protests, labor union issues and reactions from religious groups. So the potential for violence at events is much greater than in the past. And that is the first thing association meeting planners must understand."

Unfortunately, she notes, the typical association CEO or meeting planner is not aware of the extent of the risks his or her organization faces at its major events. "Association CEOs and meeting planners are typically most focused on how to provide the best possible event for their attendees," she says. "So they focus on things like the best hotel, the best food, the best speakers."

In other words, they focus on the meeting going well. They often don't focus enough attention on what will happen if something goes wrong. "So when I talk to associations," Cambridge says, "the very first thing I talk to them about is how to be proactive in terms of avoiding disruption or violence."

To her surprise, she says, she often discovers that associations "have given no consideration to this topic whatsoever. They think, 'Nothing bad could ever happen to us. We've never had a problem at our annual convention.' The other thing I see is the opposite of that. They have put so much stuff into place that you think their trade show is like Fort Knox. And in that example, there is a fear and they are responding to that fear, rather than analyzing their situation and preparing properly."

RISK ASSESSMENT

A fundamental shortcoming that Cambridge observes at many associations she talks to is their failure to understand that a professional risk assessment is the single most important factor in creating a security plan for a convention or trade show. "That is just one of the things they often do not think enough about," she says. Too often, she notes, associations either do not realize the need for such a fundamental undertaking, or they lack the resources to do it properly. "The most common problem is simply that they do not recognize the need to do it," she says. "And even if they do, they are typically in a situation where the people they have making those decisions do not have the expertise to make those decisions."

Matthew Bradley, regional security director of the Americas for security consultants International SOS in Trevose, Pennsylvania, agrees with Cambridge that the most important and fundamental consideration in event security is a threat assessment. "And that assessment is related to both the venue

"Expect the unexpected when you're planning an event. Hopefully, things are going to go smoothly. But you can never count on that. You have to be prepared."



Carol Cambridge
Founder And President
The Stay Safe Project
Glendale, AZ

where they will be and also to what type of association they are and what type of event they are going to hold," says Bradley, who worked at the CIA for 14 years before moving to the private sector.

Given the critical importance of a competent risk/threat assessment, Cambridge often begins her relationships with association clients by advising them on the basic tools and capabilities they need in order to create one. "And once they understand that," she says, "they often realize they do not have the capabilities in-house to do it and that they have to go outside to an expert to handle the safety and security functions."

Cambridge does not offer such support services. When asked by clients for a referral, she recommends Tullis Worldwide Protection.

PHYSICAL SECURITY

After a risk/threat assessment is performed, a typical event plan starts with physical security, Bradley says. "For example,

today we talk about 'rings of security' around a venue," he says. "You start with an outer ring, and then you harden security as you reach the inner rings that are closer to the actual event. And the first line of defense is physical security guards. Depending on the extent of the threat, you might also use physical barriers to separate people or to place and control them in particular positions. And then you also use technology

"The first thing you have to do as a planner is understand how well prepared your convention center is."



Bob Mellinger
President, Attainium Corporation, Apache Junction, AZ

to provide surveillance of the venue and the event itself via a capability like closed circuit television. And surveillance cameras are becoming more sophisticated and 'smarter' in terms of what they can see and hear. Then you also need the ability to do things like identify suspicious packages or guns."

Another security technique that is becoming more common today, Bradley says, is social media monitoring. "In the case of a convention center or other venue, what you're doing is looking at the extent to which your venue is being talked about in social media and what is being said," Bradley says. "And you're looking for information such as negative commentary that could indicate a threat to the venue. You also want to determine whether social media activity is increasing around your event and what is being said. That is one of the most effective ways to know if something is going on around your venue or your event that should be of concern. For example, you can see if something is being organized, such as a protest related to your venue or your event. And knowing what might be going on also helps you to build the capability for a response."

MAKING THE RIGHT INVESTMENT

For major conventions and trade shows, associations often augment the security services provided by the convention center. And in a booming marketplace with many options, Cambridge stresses that you get what you pay for. Case in point, a major national or international security consulting firm has access to resources that a smaller enterprise does not, such as high-level sources in law enforcement and the intelligence community. Those kinds of capabilities are increasingly important for major events, Cambridge says, especially when they are being held in a foreign destination.

The same value proposition caution applies to physical security guards. "If you're going to hire security guards for your event, today you can get people for \$15 an hour or you can get people for \$75 an hour," Cambridge says. "A lot of association planners say, 'What's the difference?' Well, there is a huge difference. But a lot of times, associations are making decisions just based on those relative kinds of costs. But if something goes wrong, I can guarantee you that the \$75 an hour professional is going to do a better job than the \$15 an hour alternative."

NATURAL DISASTERS AND MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

Although threats such as a violent protest or an active shooter are ever-present at events these days, a much more likely crisis scenario is one that originates with a natural disaster, such as a hurricane or earthquake, or a serious medical emergency.

"In considering the risk of those situations, the first thing you have to do as a planner is understand how well prepared your convention center is," says Bob Mellinger, president of Apache Junction, Arizona-based Attainium Corporation, which provides business continuity and disaster recovery consulting services to associations including ASAE. "And to do that, you ask a lot of questions. For example, if you're doing a convention in Florida, you ask the venue, 'What are your hurricane plans? What's your evacuation protocol? Who's in charge? Who do I call if something happens? And who gets to make the decision whether we evacuate or shelter in place?'"

Yet another key issue that should be of ongoing concern to all association planners is understanding the capabilities of the venue in a medical emergency, Cambridge says. "Do they have a trained medical staff onsite? Are staff members trained in CPR? What is the facility's protocol for contacting paramedics? Where is the closest hospital?"

Bradley agrees with Cambridge that too many convention centers are not thoroughly prepared for medical incidents such as a heart attack or stroke. "Most do not have a very robust medical facility onsite," he says. "And it is often not clear that they have a solid plan for what to do in the event of a medical emergency. So it's important that meeting planners understand that."

Mellinger stresses that, again, proper consideration of the possibilities is a matter of addressing key questions. "For example, what happens if somebody has a heart attack at your convention?" he says. "Do you get on your cellphone and call 911, or do you call the security desk? Well, most people say call 911. The problem is you don't know how to tell first responders exactly where you are and how to find you. The security desk knows how to get them in the door

closest to you and get them to you on the exhibit floor or in a meeting room way faster than you can."

Bradley routinely talks to his association clients about the importance of creating a formal medical emergency response plan for their venues. "And that plan includes the convention center and your hotel or hotels," he says. "And for a major event that attracts many thousands of attendees, we might recommend setting up an onsite medical clinic at the venue to be able to make sure their people will be taken care of."

A COMPREHENSIVE CRISIS PLAN

Perhaps the most surprising, if not shocking, aspect of the issue of event safety and security is that relatively few associations are fully prepared for any eventuality, the experts agree.

"When I speak to association meeting planners," Mellinger says, "I always ask, 'How many of you have a good, solid event communications and response plan for everything from your reasonably good-sized meetings on up?' And I still don't get as many hands as I'd like to see, but I do get more than I got two years ago. So the trend is heading in the right direction. The thing that's different now, I think, is that just about everybody in the room understands how important it is to have such a plan. What I'm not convinced of is that they're all taking the

"The most important thing when it comes to safety and security is preparation. Risk management is critical to the success of any event. ...So the more you prepare, the better off you will be."

Matthew Bradley
Regional Security Director of the Americas
International SOS
Trevose, PA

time to create one. And when I go back and talk to someone six months later, I still don't see as much planning being done as I'd like to see. And the thing that people really need to prepare for, and I don't generally see them preparing for, is what they need to do before they get onsite so they'll be fully prepared once they are onsite. That's really the area where there needs to be a lot of improvement."

Based on her experience, Cambridge agrees that a relatively large percentage of association meeting planners are not fully prepared for any kind of safety or security issue that could arise at their events. The good news, she says, is that growing concern about emergencies has prompted more planners to question their preparedness for a catastrophic occurrence.

"Until very recently, a lot of planners were not certain of who was responsible for what," Cambridge says. "Now, they've begun asking, 'What role do I play? What am I supposed to do?'"

Mellinger offers a simple answer to those kinds of basic questions. "What you need to know, if you're running the meeting," he says, "is who is the point person for life, safety and security issues at your venue? Then you tell your staff, 'If anything happens related to life, safety or security, call whoever the right person is at a phone number you can provide them.'"

Given the gravity of the issues of safety and security at association conventions and trade shows, ASAE has stepped up and met the challenge head-on. As of June 1, ASAE was making its new "Crisis Response and Event Emergency Plan" available to members and creating educational initiatives to support its use.

Mellinger helped develop the plan and said its rollout is very important to the convention industry.

PREPARATION IS KEY

"What I spend time doing in talking to associations with regard to these issues is just having them understand what the right words are, what the nomenclature is, so that everybody is talking about the same thing in the same language," Mellinger says. "For example, are you doing a crisis response plan, a communications plan or a business continuity plan? All of those can be contained in a single document, but you have to know exactly what it is that you're planning for."

The new ASAE master plan template, Mellinger says, will help associations do a better job of more clearly addressing often complex issues.

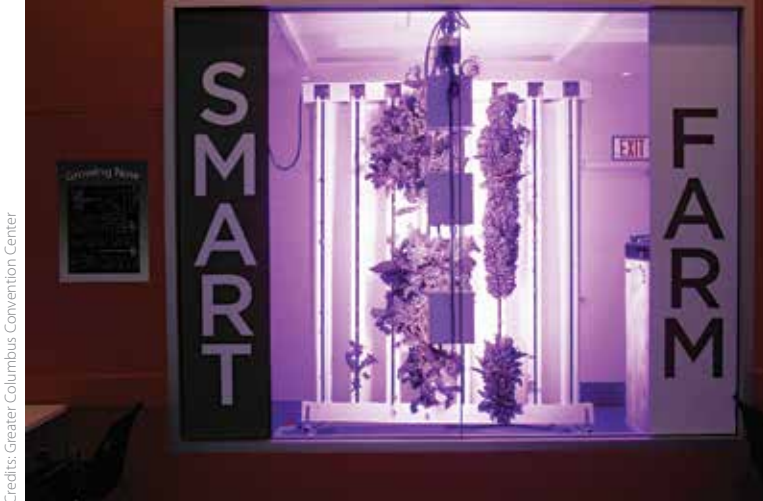
"ASAE did a good job in developing the plan," he says. "A lot of associations had meeting and event response plans, but I think the ASAE group really got together and addressed how they could make it a little easier and more comprehensive, rather than all these associations just doing it on their own."

Such an industry standard for effective planning is an imperative and timely step.

"The most important thing when it comes to safety and security is preparation," Bradley says. "Risk management is critical to the success of any event. And you have to plan for the right things. And the more you prepare for something, the less likely it is to happen. So the more you prepare, the better off you will be. And that's especially true if something actually does happen, because it will have less of an impact on you and your attendees. Because of that, preparation is something that should be taken very seriously."

Cambridge offers an even more succinct observation. "For every major event, do a proper risk assessment," she says, "because the most important advice I can provide is to expect the unexpected."

AC&F



A great catering staff will work diligently with the meeting planner to create a menu that fits the clients' budget and dietary needs.

Convention centers are reaping the rewards of attendees staying at the expo center for dining, including better exposure for exhibitors.

Convention Center Catering Trends

These Days, Everyone's a Foodie – Including Your Attendees

By Patrick Simms

In the not-so-distant past, hotel cuisine easily outshined that of convention centers. But that generalization no longer holds, as convention center catering staffs have been upping their game. That's good news for association groups who find it convenient to dine at convention centers or have certain strategic reasons for doing so. The American Healthcare Association/National Center for Assisted Living (AHCA/NCAL), for example, stages a buffet lunch in the expo hall for 2,500 to 3,000 attendees during its Annual Convention

& Expo. "It's not just about feeding people and having them be on their way," says Ramón R. Santiago, MTA, CMP, director of exhibits and conferences. "Having lunch in the expo hall is a traffic driver for exhibitors. It tangentially becomes part of their ROI calculation. They're purchasing booths that are strategically located next to where we serve lunch." In that kind of scenario, the promise of great food serves to maximize the number of diners and, consequently, the exposure for exhibitors.

But what exactly makes for a standout catering experience at a convention center? Many of the general trends in meetings F&B have found their way into convention centers, to positive effect. Healthy food, local and global flavors, special-diet meals, sustainably sourced ingredients and overall menu creativity are hallmarks of convention center catering today. From a business perspective, the first trend is arguably the most important: Healthy meals tend to be lighter and thus provide energy that busy attendees need to be attentive at sessions and navigate a trade show floor.

It begins with breakfast. "We try to keep breakfast as healthy as possible," says Matt Walbaum, executive chef at America's Center Convention Complex in St. Louis,

Missouri, a venue serviced by Levy Restaurants. "We find many people are not eating the five pieces of bacon and the big muffins anymore; they want to get something light." The aforementioned creativity of convention center chefs can make that healthy breakfast engaging. Walbaum's staff, for example, often serves up "build your own" fruit skewers. Such items cater to what many association clients want in their F&B options, according to Kari Messenger, CMP, meetings manager with the Association Management Center, based in Chicago, Illinois. "Across the board, our clients are looking to have a healthy meal, so we're definitely getting away from the heavier buffets of the past," she affirms. Many attendees are "staying away from white breading, and we have been changing out menus to focus on that. So, for instance, breakfast will lean toward having more fruit available, as well as hard-boiled eggs and some other type of protein."

But in following any menu trend, balance is always important. Some attendees will still want to treat themselves to those richer items, so why not have them available? While offering their signature granola bars with flaxseed and dried cranberries, Walbaum's team at America's Center also serves a "St. Louis Slinger," which he describes as a fried egg topped with potatoes, cheese and onions. It's a staple of Walbaum's hometown, and its presence on the menu is just one example of how local flavors are represented — another major trend.

During a busy convention, an attendee may not have the time to explore the local restaurant scene and get a sampling of the city's signature dishes. So it's convenient when a convention center can serve up some of those items. Moreover, planners ask for St. Louis flavors on the menu about 75 percent of the time, says Walbaum. "When they're here, they really want to get a flavor of St. Louis and the Midwest." The city is well-known for its barbecue, and America's Center partners with one of the best in the business, Sugarfire Smokehouse, to give delegates a taste of that fare. In addition, Walbaum describes three other

not-to-be-missed St. Louis staples on offer: toasted ravioli, invented in the city's Italian neighborhoods; Budweiser-braised pork steak; and gooey butter cake, customized based on the season. On the concessions side, indigenous coffee is available. America's Center is partnering with Thomas Coffee, a local roaster since 1905, to open Center Café by the end of July.

With the popularity of global culinary tourism, many convention centers are also incorporating a greater variety of cultural dishes beyond their local fare. Beth Faubel, senior manager, meeting services with HIMSS, has observed that trend. "I've seen less entrees that are your

"We wanted to create something different for our exhibit hall lunches — the standard buffet just wasn't doing it for our attendees. We discussed our challenges with the catering team at MCC, and they suggested we do concessions."



Patricia P. Olejnik
Senior Manager, Conferences and Meetings
Music City Center
Nashville, TN

short rib in a red wine reduction, and [instead] a lot more spices and flavors that are globally inspired. I've seen more Indian food, Middle Eastern flavors and Latin infusion." It's not only about catering to the globetrotting foodie. It's also about providing more variety for attendees that have eaten their share of convention center meals. "You can only eat so much potato and chicken," she says. "We've been able to work more with the global cuisine to really elevate [the F&B experience] and to make it more interesting throughout the week."

Given the proliferation of special dietary needs, however,



"Across the board our clients are looking to have a healthy meal, so we're definitely getting away from the heavier buffets of the past."

Kari Messenger, CMP
Meetings Manager
Association Management Center
Chicago, IL



Ramón R. Santiago, MTA, CMP
Director, Exhibits and Conferences
AHCA/NCAL
Washington, D.C.

“Having lunch in the expo hall is a traffic driver for exhibitors. It tangentially becomes part of their ROI calculation.”

care must be taken with exploratory dining that may expose attendees to undesirable or even dangerous ingredients. Attendees themselves are becoming more proactive to ensure their needs are met. “People are being much more vocal about being vegan and gluten-free,” says Faubel. As a result, she has seen such options already on the menus of many convention centers. Of course, that does not obviate the need to inventory all the dietary restrictions for a given group. For example, America’s Center recently hosted the National General Assembly of Presbyterian Church, and Walbaum’s staff met the specific dietary needs of more than 700 attendees over 10 days. “It could be anything from no shellfish to no nuts; I had one no-mango yesterday,” Walbaum says. “Obviously, when we’re serving large groups we try to steer clear of shellfish or nuts, being the ‘big two’ of the allergens, and then we kind of work around the other allergens as we see them. These requests have become a lot more prevalent in the last five years.”

Special dietary needs can’t be met without effective communication, and that involves more than simply recording the restrictions at the time of registration. “I will literally be running around as lunch is being served making sure that people are identifying themselves to the catering staff to make sure they’re getting the meals they have requested,” says Santiago. Given the seriousness of some allergic reactions, coupled with the sheer numbers involved in large conventions, the extra effort is justified. “Overcommunicating, I think, is the key when you’re dealing with the masses,” Faubel adds.

Sustainably sourced foods might be considered a special dietary request, but from an attendee perspective, it’s not as significant a trend as one might think. Convention centers routinely promote their use of locally sourced ingredients, organic ingredients, onsite produce and herb gardens. “I have noted that when I speak with the chef that there is a lot of pride in the way they are sourcing their food, trying to use more local purveyors. I would definitely say that’s a

huge trend,” Faubel says. “But I don’t think our attendees necessarily care because I don’t think they necessarily know. Especially with our global conference, we would not get the opportunity to really explain how the food is sourced. As it’s not a major concern for attendees, sustainable foods are understandably not a major concern for planners. According to Walbaum, his team receives requests for sustainably sourced foods only about 25 to 30 percent of the time. Nonetheless, “sustainability is obviously key with all of our convention centers, and I try to keep things as sustainable as possible,” he says. “I have the luxury of being here in the Midwest, so I can get virtually anything I want any time I ask for it. St. Louis is centrally located to so many farms.”

There are several ways to showcase convention center cuisine, from plated meals to buffets to food stations. The “station approach” to food service is becoming more popular. It creates a busy, engaging ambience where attendees can interact among many themed stations. And it’s a less common format, which can be a refreshing change. In May 2015, the Association of Legal Administrators met at the then-brand-new Music City Center in Nashville, Tennessee. “We wanted to create something different for our exhibit hall lunches — the standard buffet just wasn’t doing it for our attendees,” says Patricia P. Olejnik, senior manager,

“Being here as long as I have, I know the dos and don’ts of this kitchen and what we can and can’t produce in a timely fashion. I can also give them recommendations on the menus that have worked well in the past.”

Matt Walbaum
Executive Chef
America’s Center Convention Complex
St. Louis, MO

conferences and meetings. “We discussed our challenges with the catering team at MCC, and they suggested we do concessions. They had several stations set up — salad, paninis, pizza, Mexican, deli, BBQ — and our attendees showed their badge, went to the concession of their choice, and received an entrée, side (like a bag of chips or piece of fruit) and a beverage. Service was quick, the attendees appreciated the options, and we saved money, as this option is budget-friendly at MCC. Win-win-win for all!”

HIMSS attendees have also had a good experience with the food stations approach. This past March at the Sands Expo and Convention Center, HIMSS had its opening

reception for about 8,000 delegates in the exhibit hall. “We needed it to be easy grab-and-go, playful but elevated. And we don’t like a lot of lines,” Faubel explains. “We went back and forth with the chef numerous times to come up with a protein-forward menu that also had some vegetarian and vegan options.” The result was a menu that “had a little global inspiration, including basil chicken sliders in little paper bags and a couple of salad options,” delivered via stations throughout the hall. “It was a really easy experience, we never had lines and the food was really plentiful. An attendee told me at the show that the food was amazing at the opening reception, and that it was the best service they ever had.”

America’s Center has capitalized on the popularity of food stands, which dovetails with the trendiness of food trucks. Greater variety of concessions is achieved with the “Stand Takeover” program, where local restaurants take over a stand for a day. This exposes delegates to even more local cuisine. “We do a great job of promoting it, using signage and props so people actually see it,” says Walbaum, who relies on his many local restaurant contacts to run the program.

Whatever a planner’s vision for the menu, service format and schedule, that vision should be communicated to the chef and staff sooner rather than later. “The more information that we have ahead of time, the better we can plan,” says Walbaum. “When we meet with the meeting planners, I like to get that information from them first and foremost. I was in a roundtable a couple of months ago, and I had a planner ask me when do I like to be involved [in the planning process]. If I’m not the first person they [meet] with, then the second or the third. Being here as long as I have, I know the dos and don’ts of this kitchen and what we can and can’t produce in a timely fashion. I can also give them recommendations on the menus that have worked well in the past. We have a library going back 15 years of menus that we have done for groups.”

Faubel confirms that it’s advantageous for planners to work with chefs early in the planning process. “The earlier you can work with a chef to say, ‘This is what I’m going to want,’ the longer they have to source the different ingredients and potentially get better pricing on it and extend that to you,” she explains. Stretching those F&B dollars is generally a goal of association planners, and most convention center chefs know ways of accomplishing that. “You can ask them, ‘OK, I need to feed 4,000 people. Give me a couple items that are going to be higher end and have some nice proteins in them, and then find me a couple of items that are going to stretch your dollars more that still allow me to have an elevated feel.’ For example, you can

have a pricier cut of meat served thinly sliced on a bed of [e.g., risotto] so they can control the portions.”

Added pre-con time with the planner allows the chef to brainstorm and devise these options. “I have found that for the most part, the chefs are really responsive to it and kind of enjoy being able to think outside the box,” says Faubel. That creativity is especially important to HIMSS, whose convention alternates between Las Vegas and Orlando. “We

“Overcommunicating I think is the key when you’re dealing with the masses,”

Beth Faubel
Senior Manager, Meeting Services
HIMSS
Chicago, IL



need to work closely with the chef and catering staff so people don’t get the fatigue of ‘Oh, we had all this last year.’”

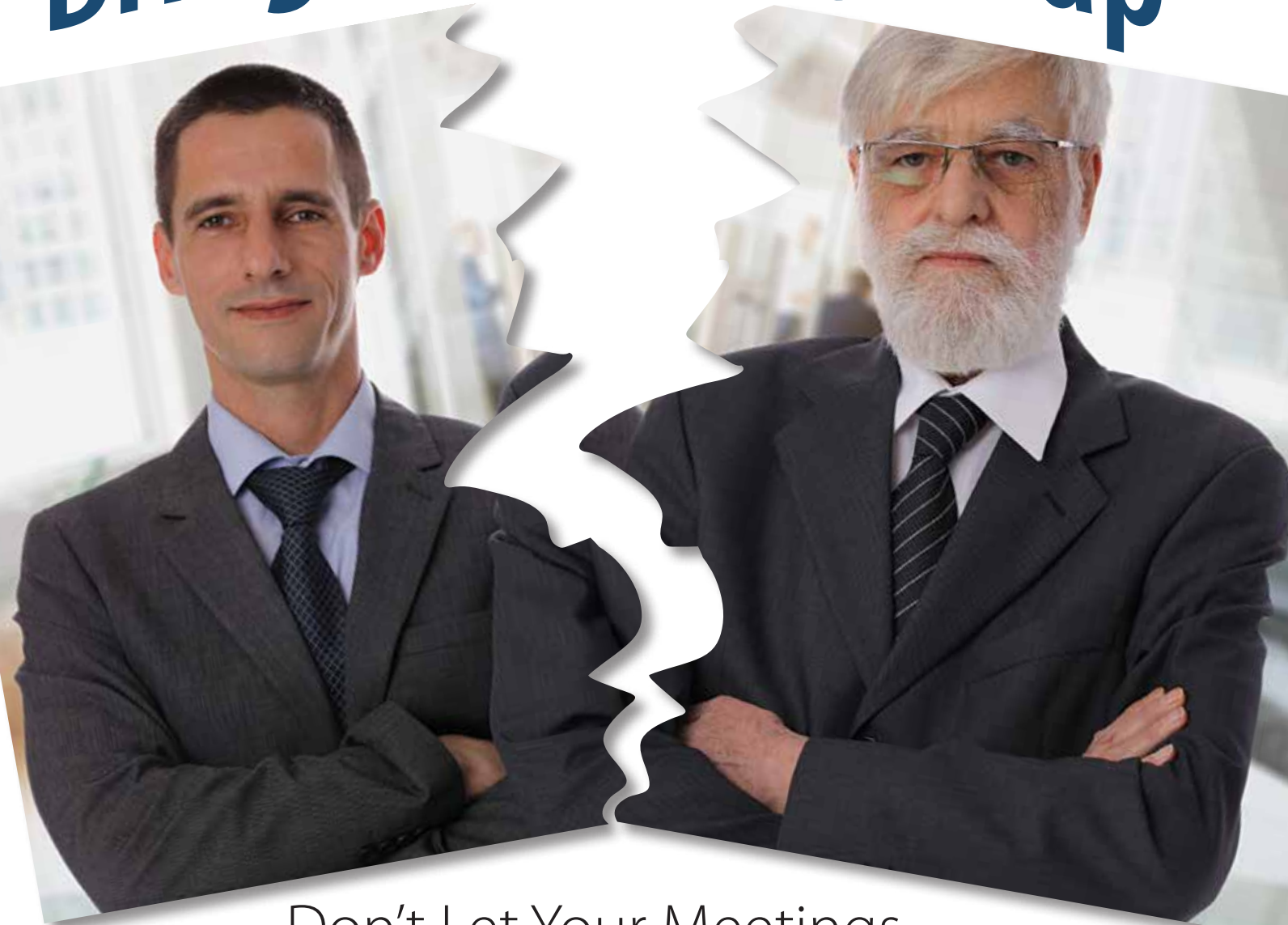
Pre-planning with the chef ultimately allows a convention center to show off its culinary best, in terms of creative, customized and budget-conscious fare. It also enables the planner and catering staff to determine the best service format for meal functions given the attendee numbers involved and the time constraints. Quality food makes a strong impression and helps to set the tone for the convention, but so does effective service that does not keep diners waiting long.

Nevertheless, occasionally a catering staff must adapt to unanticipated service needs. “Last year at Mandalay Bay Convention Center, the AHCA/NCAL had a session end almost an hour early, and the majority of those folks in that session were transitioning to a catered event,” Santiago explains. “We were still about 45 minutes or so from being ready, and then all of a sudden I get word over the radio, ‘Hey, we’re ready and heading over right now.’ It’s like a five-minute walk [to the dining area]. I have to say, the banquet captain had nerves of steel: ‘Don’t worry, we’ll take care of it.’ And they sped things up as best they could. You just have to understand as a planner that when you have a time line crunch like that you have to be full of grace. It’s not going to get done exactly as you planned.”

As convention center food evolves, one aspect to food service should not need much improvement: staff proficiency. No matter what kind of food is being served to however many delegates, a great catering staff will find a way to deliver those meals exactly as planned — or very close to it.

AC&F

Bridging the Age Gap



Don't Let Your Meetings Get Trapped in the Generational Divide

By Sophia Bennett

As members of the millennial and Gen Z generations become a larger part of the workforce, many associations are scrambling to design events and conferences that appeal to this new audience. By doing so, some event organizers worry that they'll alienate members from the baby

boomer and Generation Xers who have supported their organizations for decades.

If striking a balance between the needs of these two audiences seems challenging, Tahira Endean, CMP, DES, CED, an event producer in Vancouver, BC, and author of the book "Intentional Event Design," has some good news. She argues

that associations should be focused less on designing conferences for people of different ages, and more on creating events that meet the needs of current consumers.

"I've been intrigued by Google's Gen C concept," she says. "This generation isn't age-specific. It's people who are Cs — people looking to build a community, and build and share their own content. We have this digital world with hundreds of millions of people who are sharing around interest rather than age." For that reason, events should be built around shared interests and values instead of preconceived notions about the needs of people born at varying times.

Ellie Hurley, director of event services for the association management company SmithBucklin, says studies have shown that there are some differences in how people from various generations learn and interact. "One thing we see in general is the younger generations are able to get what they want when they want it; whereas 20 years ago, we didn't have everything at our fingertips. Our events have to meet that need and also provide personalization."

Older association members will often attend conferences out of loyalty to the organization or to catch up with friends and colleagues. "For the younger generation, you haven't proven how it will benefit them and their networking," Hurley says. "You have to clearly show younger folks how your event will meet their specific educational and networking needs." Among other things, that means marketing tactics may need to be different depending on people's level of experience with the event.

But one thing is clear: "Every generation and every member of any audience wants to learn," says Holly Amatangelo, education director at SmithBucklin. "The focus is less about age when you're thinking about content. It's thinking about what's applicable to their job and what's going to help them in their careers. That's independent of your generation, and that's why the content is always going to be the most important thing."

So while there are a few things to keep in mind when planning meetings that appeal to people born in different decades, remembering that content and experience-building remain king will make a terrific event for attendees of all ages. "We've gotten stuck on how to make meetings better for millennials, but it's really making them better for human beings with evolving needs," says Endean.

"We have this digital world with hundreds of millions of people who are sharing around interest rather than age."



Tahira Endean, CMP, DES, CED
Event Producer/Author of
"Intentional Event Design"
Vancouver, BC

CREATING FOR MODERN AUDIENCES

Events are no longer just gatherings; they're experiences, and event planners must cater to that no matter how young or old their participants are. "When you're talking about designing experiences that cut across multiple generations and types of people, it's about knowing your audience and their values and designing around that," says Kelly Peacy, CAE, CMP, founder and CEO of Insight Event Strategy, LLC in Austin, Texas. "If your group is about academics and study and rigor, the experience should reflect that. If your audience is about family, experiences should be developed around that. It's about what people value at their core and what their expectation is."

If there's one thing that's true about people of all ages, it's that they crave social currency. "Where that comes from in today's world is having photos and being able to show that information widely, and having people like and comment on the work we're doing or the experience we're having," says Endean. "That's something we fundamentally need to do." Because of that, planners must make the features at events eminently shareable.

"For every element of the event, we need to think about what it will look like in a photo and how people will interact with it," she says. "Look for opportunities where people can make connections, take pictures and create conversations around them. Whether it's a big sign that shows up in every picture or an interesting way of showing the food, events and experiences have to have great entertainment."

This shift isn't limited to millennials, Endean notes. "If I look at a stream of photos from across events, it's literally people 18 to 65 taking selfies and withies."

People of all ages have embraced technology in the workplace (even if younger folks often embrace it more readily), and more attendees are expecting to utilize high-tech features to enhance their event experience. "We need to understand that and embed technology into events," says Endean. "Everybody arrives with a device in hand, so we need to get



Ellie Hurley
Director, Event Services
SmithBucklin
Chicago, IL

“The younger generations are able to get what they want when they want it; whereas 20 years ago, we didn’t have everything at our fingertips. Our events have to meet that need and also provide personalization.”

over this, ‘Here’s a printed program, here’s a map you need to carry around.’ We need to make the platform we’re sharing information on very simple for people so they can navigate the conference and personalize their experience.”

Even if older attendees are nervous about utilizing event technology at first, they often come to appreciate it once they try it, Hurley says. She gives the example of sessions that encourage participants to take an online poll. It’s uncomfortable to try something new at first, but once people do it, they see the value in it.

Hurley offers two options for introducing event apps and other technology at events. “One way is to offer the app and printed materials for a year or two so everybody has their comfort level. And frankly, the other is just ripping the Band-Aid off. That’s pretty customary now, but for events where we’ve done that, we’ve had a staff member at the desk who was very familiar with the app who could answer questions. You have to be sure the customer service is there for helping people use it.” If participants are uncomfortable with the idea of adding another app to their phone, they may be able to use the conference or app URL instead.

PROVIDING THE BEST LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

In the past, educational sessions have been set up as moderated panels, keynote speeches and lectures. “Now it’s all about engaging interactive session formats,” says Amatangelo. “That trend is driven by the younger generation, but all generations are benefiting from it. There are things like TED talks or PechaKucha sessions or mock trials that go beyond the normal sessions. People want to be engaging in content rather than being talked at.”

Endean agrees. “Sitting in a classroom and hearing people talk at us really isn’t effective,” she says. “Today, people are much more interested in peer learning and one-on-one conversations and have small discussions at their table.” These discussions allow them to make their learning more actionable because they can share what they’re learning

with others, discuss their specific problems and contextualize the lessons they’re receiving.

“One of our groups is doing an experience zone that’s hands-on,” says Hurley. “You can talk to someone directly while you experiment with the different technology they offer.”

Another group is doing what they call campfire chats, where 12 people sit around what looks like a campfire and discuss a topic of mutual interest. “It’s more casually structured but there’s still the learning there,” says Hurley. “What’s fun about doing these different things is that you end up having some ‘a-ha’ moments for both generations.”

Conferences are still highly focused on building relationships as well as educating. “We’ve seen a lot of success connecting mentors and mentees at events,” says Amatangelo. “This is a way to bring the generations together rather than separating them.”

Mentors and mentees can be matched ahead of the event and meet for the first time at a special reception onsite. The mentors’ first task can be helping newer association members get the most out of the conference. Ideally those relationships will last long after the event ends.

ELEMENTS THAT YOUNGER FOLKS APPRECIATE

Networking events used to involve a large room filled with people, some food and drinks and maybe a little music. Millennials want ways to ease the awkwardness that sometimes comes with these mix-and-mingle events.

When organizing events with lots of younger folks, “you need to have different options for people to connect within receptions,” says Hurley. “It could be something as simple as a Lego or game station, so if you don’t know anyone, you can go in and start playing the game and meet people while doing that.”

Event promotions targeted at millennials should be focused on clear event takeaways. “What’s critical for every generation, but especially for younger generations, is applicability,” says Amatangelo. “They want to know what’s

“There are things like TED talks or PechaKucha sessions or mock trials that go beyond the normal sessions. People want to be engaging in content rather than being talked at.”



Holly Amatangelo
Education Director
SmithBucklin
Chicago, IL

immediately available to help me get that promotion or complete that task more quickly.

“I think they also really crave access to subject matter experts,” she adds. “With Google and the internet, you can gain information in many different places, but that real-time access to experts that they can ask questions of and maybe make some connection with is important.”

Young people are also more likely to take advantage of learning that’s offered in multiple formats. They’re often the strongest audience for formats such as webinars and podcasts. Amatangelo also recommends looking for opportunities for micro-learning, such as producing on-demand videos that offer bite-sized lessons on certain topics. All of these can be shared pre- or post-event to help showcase the association’s value, draw people to the conference or continue to build relationships afterward.

DON’T LEAVE OLDER GENERATIONS OUT

As associations reconfigure their events to meet the needs of up-and-coming consumers, it’s important not to jettison elements that longtime event attendees appreciate. “Some of the basic expectations will always remain, such as networking opportunities and opportunities for people

to come together during breaks or meal times,” says Amatangelo. “Those are not necessarily defined by generation but by things that were historically in place that more senior members may always expect and all attendees will benefit from.

“And I don’t think that panels or lectures have to go away completely,” she continues. “There’s a time and a place for them. It’s important to recognize that we don’t necessarily have to get rid of something that worked in the past to make ways for new trends.”

While it’s helpful to add some beginning-level workshops that cater to early-career professionals, Amatangelo urges associations to make sure they’re also offering sessions that will appeal to people who are more experienced. Things like having an advanced track within the break-out sessions or organizing C-suite roundtables can help senior leaders elevate themselves in their jobs and their industries.

MARKETING TO THE GENERATIONS

There are some differences in the ways associations should market conferences and events to people from different generations — although there may be fewer than you think. “It used to be that every conference had a printed postcard and



DISCOVER 
**L.A.’S COASTAL POINT OF VIEW
FOR YOUR NEXT MEETING**

Contemporary Hotels. Yacht Receptions.
Poolside Networking. Waterfront Views.
Six hotels, 100,000 square feet of meeting space and an abundance of waterfront dining - all just minutes from LAX and world-famous Venice Beach.

Marina del Rey is home to six hotels
Marriott | The Ritz-Carlton | Marina del Rey Hotel
Hilton Garden Inn | Jamaica Bay Inn | Foghorn Inn

Contact the Marina del Rey CVB to learn more about special rates and incentives for meeting planners.

MARINA DEL REY
convention and visitors bureau

marinameetings.com · 866.650.4567 · groups@visitmarinadelrey.com



a printed advance program, and that was your way of learning about the event," says Hurley. "For the older generation, you don't have to have everything printed, but they look for that trigger of, 'I got this postcard in the mail, it's time to register.' With the younger folks you have to get people electronically. It has to be quick and get their attention because there's so much out there."

Social media can be a great way to market gatherings to people from all generations. However, it may be necessary to use different platforms or different messages when reaching out to people of varying ages. "In your message, make sure you're saying how the event matches each generation's need," says Hurley.

One tactic that's increasingly important when reaching any audience (but young people in particular) is influencer marketing. Influencers are people in your industry who are respected

and willing to talk up your event, either because you pay them or because they're looking to broaden their own following.

"You want to develop a cadre of people who are evangelists for your message who talk about your event in a very authentic way," says Peacy. "Younger people especially can sniff out the inauthenticity in messages." (With that in mind, it's important to be upfront about how or if people promoting the event are being compensated in some way.) Influencer marketing resonates with them because they want to relate to people who face the same challenges but have found workable solutions.

Video is key to making influencer marketing work — and it's something that appeals to people of all ages. "What I'm finding interesting is that many organizations are reaching out to their peer-to-peer speakers and asking them to record 30-second videos about their session to get people excited and engaged," says Peacy. "It's a piece of content that can be used on a website and social media. It gives the speaker a face and a personality so you can start to tell the vibe and energy level you'll get at the event. It's relatively inexpensive because these are very homegrown videos that are recorded on phones. It's authentic and people can relate to that."

No matter the age of the people you're trying to draw to your event, there's something to be said for sticking with the basics. "It's important to think about your event from a programmatic educational standpoint and infuse that into the marketing," says Amatangelo. "What's in it for me' is always going to drive people to attend events." That's true even if your members aren't part of the "me" generation. AC&F



Kelly Peacy, CAE, CMP
Founder and CEO
Insight Event Strategy, LLC
Austin, TX

"You want to develop a cadre of people who are evangelists for your message who talk about your event in a very authentic way."

GO

GRAND PRESENTATION SPACES.

GRAND

GRAND HYATT BAHAMAR

Grand Hyatt Baha Mar isn't simply another meeting and events location — it's an experience that reflects the very heart and soul of The Bahamas. With over 200,000 square feet of event space, exquisite cuisine and breathtaking tropical views, your event, big or small, will be nothing short of spectacular.

For more information, contact a sales manager at 242.788.7344. Or visit bahamar.grand.hyatt.com

GRAND | HYATT



Orlando Stays on Top

The lobby of MYTH Bar at the Hilton Orlando Bonnet Creek features fantastic murals of the three Bonnet sisters on the ceiling.

An Abundance of Local Activities and Meeting Space Keeps Planners in Orlando

By Mark Rowh

When you consider destinations for business travel, Orlando would have to be among the most appealing. Certainly the city is no stranger to kudos from a variety of sources. It's been named AAA's top domestic summer destination, as well as one of Travelocity's "coolest places to go in 2018 for family travel." But regardless of the time of year and even when association travel doesn't include family, Orlando remains a top destination.

Last year, the city became the first U.S. destination to surpass 70 million annual visitors, according to info compiled by Visit Orlando. Some 72 million people (nearly 66 million of them domestic) traveled to Orlando in 2017, an increase of more than 5 percent over the previous year. That meant Orlando was once again America's most-visited destination.

Figures for conventions and professional meetings are equally impressive. A total of 1.53 million people attended events at the Orange County Convention Center during the same time period. And Orlando International Airport handled 44.6 million passengers, a 6.4 percent increase.

Of course, Orlando is best known for its theme parks. But it also boasts 450 hotels with choices appropriate for any size group. The city also offers a variety of sports, water parks and entertainment venues, along with robust food and nightlife choices. The central Florida weather is another positive factor. Temperatures in the winter months average in the 50s and 60s, providing a welcome respite from colder conditions in much of the country.

For conferences scheduled in the area, the access to so many outstanding theme parks may provide a boost to attendance levels, as prospective attendees factor in the chance to combine a professional meeting with some family fun. Walt Disney World may enjoy the most visibility, but it's far from the only one. In fact, Disney World alone includes four separate parks, including Epcot, Magic Kingdom, Disney's Hollywood Studios and Animal Kingdom. Add to that LEGOLAND, Universal Orlando and SeaWorld, and visitors have an impressive range of choices for enjoyable outings before and after meetings.

A strong point with the various parks is that they're



The Wyndham Grand Orlando Bonnet Creek hosts more than 300,000 square feet of meeting space.

"The convention center and hotels take pride in keeping the buildings in great shape to hold meetings. The variety of rates, locations and diverse properties makes Orlando a standout from other cities."



Barbara Rapp
AVP, Housing & Leadership Events
National Association of Home Builders
Washington, DC

continually introducing new rides and other attractions. Just some of the latest developments are a Fast & Furious: Supercharged ride at Universal Studios Florida, the new Toy Story Land at Disney's Hollywood Studios, the introduction of The Incredibles at Magic Kingdom and LEGOLAND's The Great LEGO Race. At SeaWorld Orlando, the new Infinity Falls offers a white-water raft ride through a lost jungle.

With its location in the central part of the state, Orlando is also within easy driving distance of a variety of attractions. Several popular Atlantic beaches can be reached in less than an hour-and-a-half, and an additional hour puts the Gulf Coast in reach. For science lovers, Kennedy Space Center is located about 45 miles from Orlando. And another day trip destination is Port Canaveral, which offers waterfront restaurants, boat rides, beaches and fishing.

Depending on the time of year, attendees can choose from several professional sports opportunities. Most prominent: the National Basketball Association's Orlando Magic. There are also minor league soccer and hockey teams, and the city plays host to the Atlanta Braves for baseball spring training.

Entertainment of a different type is offered by cultural attractions, such as the Orlando Museum of Art and the Orlando Science Center. Downtown's CityArts Factory provides free access to four distinct art galleries featuring both visual and performing arts, and the Zora Neale Hurston National Museum of Fine Arts is a 15-minute drive from downtown. Not much farther away is Winter Park, home of the Cornell Fine Arts Museum at Rollins College, as well as the Alford Collection of Contemporary Art at the Alford Inn.

"Orlando is a convention city, and the venues offer all the amenities for meeting planners," says Masuda Ranjber, director of conferences and meetings for the Mortgage Bankers Association. "There is a huge selection of properties, and it's easy for our attendees to get to."

For its 2016 National Mortgage Servicing Conference



“Orlando offered our attendees a fantastic location with amazing weather, and the opportunity to take time to relax and refresh between educational sessions and conference events.”

JoAnn Spitale
Director of Conferences & Events
Disability Management Employer
Coalition

networking and registration. More than 1,600 guest rooms are available.

For the Disability Management Employer Coalition, which held a conference in April with 475 attendees, the hotel of choice was the Omni Orlando Resort at ChampionsGate. The group was pleased with the venue as well as the city itself, according to JoAnne Spitale, the organization’s director of conferences and events.

“The resort is beautiful and provides a ‘wow’ moment immediately upon stepping through the front lobby doors,” she says. “It’s evident through the entire planning process that employees of the resort take pride in the resort and in providing their clients with a top-notch meeting experience.”

Spitale is equally positive about the overall location.

“Orlando offered our attendees a fantastic location with amazing weather, and the opportunity to take time to relax and refresh between educational sessions and conference events,” she says.

The International Association of Eating Disorders Professionals has also found Orlando just right for meetings. The organization held its 2018 Symposium at the Omni Orlando Resort at ChampionsGate in March. Nearly 900 dietitians, therapists, doctors and nurses attended.

“It was a fantastic location,” says Marie Grover, the organization’s continuing education and events manager. “Our attendees loved the facility and the food. The staff was amazing to work with.”

Grover, like others, cites the wealth of activities the area has to offer.

“It’s suitable for business meetings, but also staying for a couple of extra days to play,” she says. “Many of our attendees



The Omni Orlando Resort at ChampionsGate recently finished a \$40 million renovation, including 73 new meeting rooms.

& Expo, the group chose the Hyatt Regency Orlando. With 2,200 attendees, the conference went smoothly, according to Ranjber. She speaks highly of the hotel choice.

“The Hyatt hotels in general, and the Hyatt Regency specifically, know how to run meetings and conventions,” she says. “The hotel is in great shape, and they are geared toward handling large meetings. The convention services team is amazing, the food is exceptional and the billing is easy and fast.” She adds that her organization is planning to use the same location in 2019 and 2020.

The National Association of Home Builders holds the International Builders’ Show in Orlando in rotation with Las Vegas. Over the past few years, attendance has varied from 58,000 to 72,000.

“The Orlando community of hotels, convention center, government, police and city administrators has really stepped up throughout the years to partner with NAHB to make the show a successful event,” says Barbara Rapp, AVP, housing and leadership events.

Since NAHB’s meeting takes place in January, Florida’s mild weather is always a plus, according to Rapp, who points to Orlando’s nice variety of hotels to accommodate all tastes and budgets.

“The small attractions and restaurants are another draw in addition to, of course, the major attractions like Disney and Universal,” she says. “The hotel (the Hyatt Regency) has also been a plus.

“Orlando is really a pleasant city to host a meeting,” Rapp adds. “The convention center and hotels take pride in keeping the buildings in great shape to hold meetings. The variety of rates, locations and diverse properties makes Orlando a standout from other cities.”

Located in the heart of International Drive, Hyatt Regency Orlando features 315,000 square feet of meeting space with direct connections to the Orange County Convention Center. Meeting space includes 105 breakout rooms, five pillar-free ballrooms and a 56,000-square-foot grand rotunda for

will bring family along to enjoy the area.” She says attendees seem to love the resort feel of the location.

She also points out that Orlando is easy to get to, especially in terms of flying in and out.

As for the Omni Orlando at ChampionsGate, the resort has a new look thanks to a \$40 million renovation completed last year. The addition of 93 new guest rooms brings the total room count to 813 guest rooms and suites, complemented by 49 two- and three-bedroom luxury villas. An additional 23,000-square-foot of pool deck and recreational space includes 16 new, pool-side cabanas and an expansion of the kids’ pool area and water slides, along with installation of a wave pool.

An expanded ballroom features 100,000 square feet of indoor and outdoor meeting and event space, with six flexible breakout rooms and a market-style restaurant for the Osceola County Conference Center, as well as an outdoor terrace, promenade, patio space, event garden and grand lawn for large outdoor functions and special events. All told, the facility has 73 meeting rooms totaling more than 248,000 square feet of space.

The good news is that these are just two of the outstanding properties to be found in the area. Visit Orlando notes that the city offers more lodging options than nearly any other destination in the world, from large resorts to creatively themed hotels.

Attractive to small or mid-sized groups is the Wyndham Grand Orlando Bonnet Creek, a lakefront hotel with 320,000 square feet of indoor and outdoor meeting and event space. The most recent additions, brought online in 2016, include a 3,500-square-foot ballroom and a 2,115-square-foot meeting room that offers natural light and access to an outdoor terrace, with space for up to 100 people in a classroom format. These facilities complement an existing 8,000-square-foot ballroom that can be used for conferences and exhibitions as well as social events, a 3,200-square-foot grand foyer and a pool deck.

Looking for an abundance of space? The Orlando World Center Marriott boasts more than 450,000 total square feet of meeting and event space, most of it on one level. As the largest Marriott property in the world, it features the country’s roomiest pillar-free ballroom, along with 2,009 guest rooms and suites, nine restaurants and lounges, and a 1 million-gallon tropical pool complex.

Recently, the hotel has added new function space surrounding a cutting-edge, vertical hydroponic garden (Cube) with the Harvest Terrace, suitable for up to 250 attendees and as many as 750 guests in conjunction with the facility’s newest restaurant.

The Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Hotel handles groups of all sizes. It features an impressive 331,000 square



The Caribe Royale All Suites Hotel and Convention Center is home to many useful spaces, including a 40,000-square-foot grand ballroom.

feet of meeting space, including four ballrooms, one covering 55,000 square feet. Also available is 110,500 square feet of contiguous convention-exhibit space and 86 total meeting rooms, including two executive boardrooms. A small meeting room is also available by the hour for up to four people for private conversations. Outdoor events can be planned to take advantage of 128,190 square feet of landscaped outdoor function space.

Among the nine Rosen hotels and resorts in the Orlando area are three properties serving as convention hotels. The Rosen Centre has more than 150,000 square feet of meeting space, including three ballrooms ranging from 14,000 to 35,000 square feet. Thirty-five separate meeting rooms are also available, along with spacious areas for pre-

“[Orlando is] suitable for business meetings, but also staying for a couple of extra days to play.”

Marie Grover
Continuing Education & Events Manager
International Association of Eating Disorders Professionals
Peki, IL

function needs.

Rosen Shingle Creek offers three large ballrooms with 31-foot ceilings and column-free views. The largest covers 95,000 square feet, with the others offering 40,000 and 60,000 square feet of space, respectively. An additional 55,000 square feet of space is available as breakout rooms. All told, there is 410,000 square feet of indoor space, complemented by 114,000 square feet of outdoor space.

Included in the 60,000 square feet of meeting space offered by the Rosen Plaza Hotel are a 26,000 square foot grand ballroom, a 12,500-square-foot ballroom foyer and 22 meeting rooms ranging from 325 to 4,500 square feet. The various venues accommodate groups of 10 to 2,800 people.

Hilton Orlando Bonnet Creek, which has more than 1,000



Credit: Gaylord Palms Resort Convention Center

The Gaylord Palms Resort & Convention Center boasts 400,000 square feet of usable space.

guest rooms, offers 132,000 square feet of meeting and function space. Two ballrooms (one 35,925 square feet and one 27,300 square feet) are each divisible into 12 sections. Two boardrooms and 26 breakout rooms also serve groups of various sizes. It's located two miles from Epcot, less than three miles from Disney Springs and six miles from Magic Kingdom Park.

Found within walking distance of the shops and restaurants of the Disney Springs resort area, the Hilton Orlando Buena Vista Palace features 108,000 square feet of event space. Suitable for groups ranging from 10 to 2,000, the

Located in Kissimmee, the Gaylord Palms Resort & Convention Center has 400,000 square feet of convention, meeting, exhibition and pre-function space. Facilities include three ballrooms and a 178,500-square-foot exhibit hall. Along with 72 meeting rooms, the resort offers 12,000 square feet of outdoor space including three fire pit alcoves. The hotel also features a boutique style "hotel within a hotel" designed for incentive, board and executive meetings. It has a ballroom, two executive boardrooms and 15 breakout rooms.

Loews Royal Pacific Resort, which features a tropical island motif, has recently expanded function space to a total of 132,000 square feet, all on one floor. Along with a 41,500-square-foot ballroom and a second one with nearly 36,000 square feet of space, a pavilion and patio support outdoor events.

Offering a Caribbean theme, Loews Sapphire Falls Resort at Universal Orlando expands meeting choices through its connection with the Loews Royal Pacific Resort. The combination creates a meeting complex with a total of 2,000 rooms and more than 247,000 square feet of meeting space between the two properties.

A major plus for the region is the spacious Orange County Convention Center. Its 7 million square feet make it the second-largest convention center in the United States.

Divided into two buildings (designated the West Building and the North/South Building), it has a total of 74 meeting rooms and 232 breakout rooms, not to mention exhaustive exhibition space and more than 6,000 parking spaces.

In what bodes well for the years ahead, the center has launched a five-year capital improvement plan that includes roof replacements, safety upgrades, digital signage upgrades and repurposing of underutilized meeting spaces.

In fact, the future looks bright for the entire region. For planners looking ahead to locate upcoming events, Orlando might well be on any association's short list.

AC&F

"The Hyatt hotels in general, and the Hyatt Regency specifically, know how to run meetings and conventions."

Masuda Ranjber

Director of Conferences and Meetings
Mortgage Bankers Association
Washington, DC

space includes an 18,360-square-foot meeting room. More than 1,000 guest rooms are available.

Still another great choice is the DoubleTree by Hilton Orlando at SeaWorld. Situated on 28 acres near the Orange County Convention Center and close to other attractions, it offers about 100,000 square feet of meeting and event space. Rooms range from 600 square feet to an 18,669-square-foot ballroom. The hotel has more than 1,000 guest rooms.

Headlining the facilities of the Caribe Royale Orlando are a 40,000-square-foot grand ballroom and another 26,000-square-foot ballroom, along with 29 breakout rooms and two executive boardrooms. The main reception building has a 6,400-square-foot ballroom, four smaller breakout rooms and an executive boardroom. Suites that can support smaller meetings of up to 14 participants are also available.



NEW MEETING SPACE THAT DEFIES CONVENTION.

With a \$40 million expansion, Omni Orlando Resort at ChampionsGate now features new indoor and outdoor meeting space, event space, studio suites, a market-style restaurant and expanded pool areas—including Orlando's only resort wave pool.



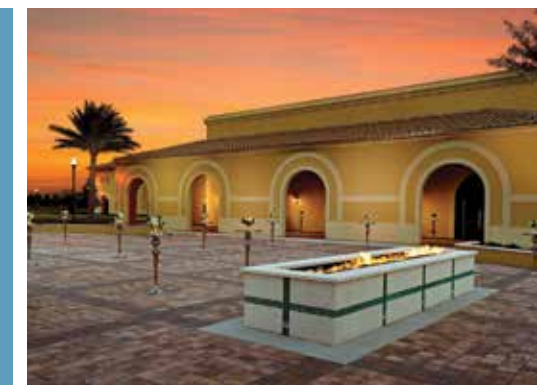
MEETING SPACE

The Osceola Conference Center now features six new flexible breakout rooms with a fresh, sleek design, and a 6,500-square foot Grand Salon, designed for special events and weddings, highlighted by a Terrace and Patio that offers groups the option of an event lawn, fire pit and promenade, ideal for hosting outdoor evening events.

GUEST ROOMS: 862
SUITES: 71
TOTAL MEETING SPACE: 248,111
LARGEST MEETING SPACE: 28,800
MEETING ROOMS: 48
THEATER CAP: 3,200
BANQUET CAP: 2,400
CLASSROOM CAP: 2,000

ACCOMMODATIONS

With 862 total guest rooms, groups have a range of choices from the deluxe and premier accommodations, luxury two and three bedroom villas, and the all new Sunset Lodge and Suites, a new three-story building comprised of 93 spacious, upscale studio suites and connecting guest rooms.



RECREATION AND AMENITIES

ChampionsGate is home to 36 holes of Greg Norman designed Golf and the David Leadbetter Golf Academy World Headquarters. In addition to superb golf, guests enjoy 15 sprawling acres of pools and recreation highlighted by Orlando's only resort wave pool. Ten on-site restaurants and a signature Mokara Spa round out the resort's amenities.

OMNI RESORTS
championsgate | orlando

OMNIHOTELS.COM/MEETINGS • GROUP SALES: 407-238-6526



McFadden

Credit: Nashville Convention & Visitors Corp



McNeil

Credit: Nashville Convention & Visitors Corp



Siemers

Credit: Nashville Convention & Visitors Corp



Reardon



Berry



Crunstedt



Robertson



Levy

The Nashville Convention & Visitors Corp appointed **Andrea McFadden** to director, Mid-Atlantic Regional Office and appointed **Artrice McNeil** to director of National Accounts. McFadden has more than 20 years of sales and leadership experience in the Washington, D.C., market, including seven years as sales director for Visit Denver and five years as national convention sales manager for Greater Phoenix Convention and Visitors Bureau. McNeil has more than 10 years of experience in the hospitality industry and is a member of the Professional Convention Management Association and American Society of Association Executives.

The Nashville Convention & Visitors Corp has promoted **Adrienne Siemers** to senior vice president of Sales. Siemers has been with the Nashville Convention & Visitors Corp since 2005 and has led several high-profile projects.

Sean P. Reardon was named director of sales and marketing for the new Omni Boston Hotel at the Seaport, which will open in 2021. Most recently, Reardon headed his own hospitality sales and marketing consulting business, Sean P. Reardon Consulting LLC.

Julie Berry was named director of sales and marketing for the Chicago Marriott Lincolnshire Resort, based in Lincolnshire, Illinois. A 35-year veteran of the hospitality industry, Berry formerly was director of sales and marketing at Eaglewood Resort and Spa in Itasca, Illinois.

Teneo Hospitality Group has named **Ashley Crunstedt, CMP**, as director of events. She was senior event manager for Ewald Consulting, based in Minneapolis.

Visit Winston-Salem has named **Karen Robertson** as national sales manager responsible for faith-based, multicultural and association meetings and conventions. She was most recently group sales manager for the DoubleTree Charleston Airport.

Rachel Levy, CMP, has joined The Diplomat Beach Resort as director of national accounts, responsible for large corporate accounts in the Northeast market. She most recently served as complex senior sales manager at the Waldorf Astoria Chicago and Conrad Chicago.

Ben Chambers and **Chris De Vincentis** were named group sales managers at Sea Pines Resort. Chambers is joining the team as senior sales manager. He was previously associate director of sales at the Hilton Head Marriott Resort & Spa. De Vincentis was previously sales manager at The Westin Hilton Head.



Chambers



De Vincentis

AC&F



SO MANY WAYS TO MEET, ALL IN ONE MAGNIFICENT PLACE.



Only The Broadmoor offers so many distinct venues and experiences of all sizes and types. From impressive trade shows to executive dinners. From grand reception halls to eclectic lakeside cocktails at sunset. From state-of-the-art meeting rooms to secluded brainstorming sessions at Cloud Camp 3,000 feet above the main campus. You'll find all of it and more within our 185,000 square feet of meeting space, connected by a thread of quality, service and meticulous attention to detail. And in 2018, The Broadmoor celebrates its Centennial year, an impressive milestone for this iconic destination. Visit broadmoor.com and contact us today to explore the wonderful possibilities.

THE BROADMOOR



Hilton

MEET WITH PURPOSE

ARRANGE Joy



Meet with Purpose Repeat Roses® activity, Philadelphia, PA

Your meeting has a purpose, your breaks should too.

Bring more purpose to your agenda with the Hilton Meet with Purpose Repeat Roses activity where attendees transform event flowers into smaller bouquets that are hand delivered to those who need a little joy in their day. Repeat Roses then returns to collect the flowers for eco-responsible composting to help you meet your CSR goals. It's a picture-perfect occasion for planners, attendees and recipients alike.

For more philanthropic and photo-worthy moments at your next meeting, pick Meet with Purpose to add more meaning and WOW to everyone's day.

Learn more by watching our Repeat Roses video at meetwithpurpose.com

Hilton

Repeat Roses®



CONRAD
HOTELS & RESORTS

canopy
BY HILTON



CURIO
A COLLECTION BY HILTON



TAPESTRY
COLLECTION
BY HILTON



Hilton
Garden
Inn



HOMWOOD
SUITES
BY HILTON

HOME2
BY HILTON

Hilton
Grand Vacations

Hilton
HONORS