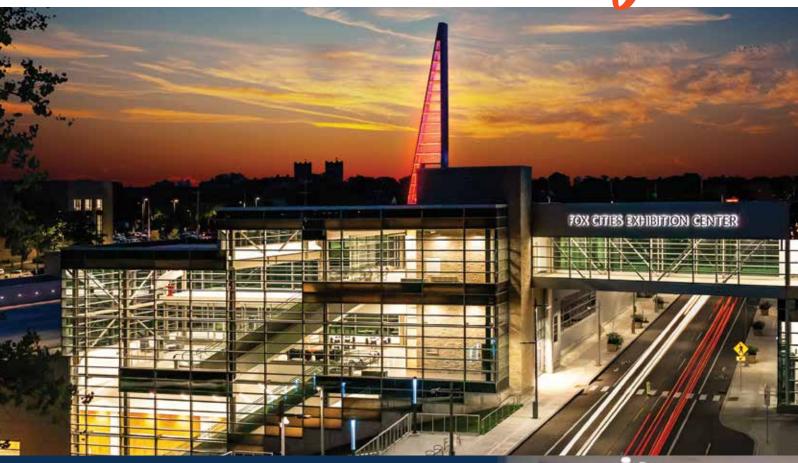


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Fall/Winter 2022

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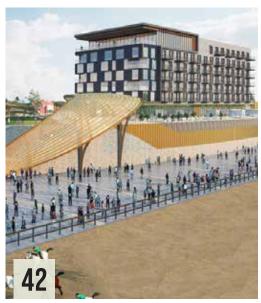
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From the Editor



I have been to several events in the past month, and at each gathering, I can't tell you how many times I've heard someone (typically many people) comment on how excited they were to be meeting in person. No matter where you go, the sentiment seems to be the same. People are meeting and they are very enthusiastic about it. As this calendar year winds down and we look ahead to 2023, being able to harness that enthusiasm

and energy, and communicate the importance and ROI of these interactions to our executive leadership with ultimate budget control is critical. If you're looking for data and resources to help support your programs, go to mpi.org, the site for Meeting Professionals International, and peruse their many resources, including "The Business Value of Meeting Face to Face." There is a wealth of valuable information and data that may just be what you need to convince your organization to start or continue investing in face-to-face events.

Proving the value of in-person events may be the first hurdle, but once you are able to bring people together, the ability to deliver the value is another challenge. Understanding what attendees are looking for in terms of their experience and what they want to take away is paramount. In this issue, we try to help you figure that out with "7 Trends to Talk About," found on page 20. Here, author Ronnie Wendt talks to a number of different suppliers and planners in the industry to find out how meetings are changing in the face of an evolving audience and what planners can do to attract them to their events.

In addition, we sat down with a number of leaders from Midwest DMOs and CVBs to talk more about the value they bring to the table for meetings and events. If you're not partnering with your site's DMO, you are missing a huge opportunity involving knowledge sharing, resource pooling and gathering the little details that are so important to smoothly running an event. Find out more on page 24.

And as always, don't miss our state spotlight starting on page 49, where we feature Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Missouri, Ohio and Wisconsin.

Have a story idea or news tip that you think our readers would enjoy? Please reach out to me at bpeck@ntmediagroup.com.

Enjoy!

Becky Peck Editor

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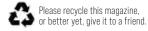
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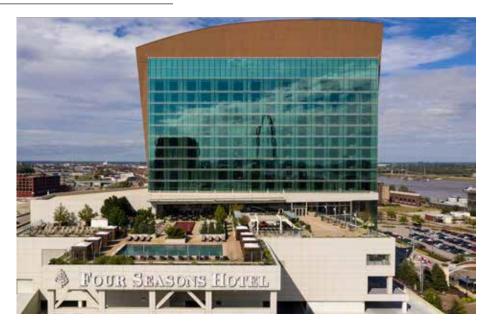
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Industry Insights



FOUR SEASONS HOTEL ST. LOUIS BOUNCE BACK OFFER

With newly renovated guest rooms and views that offer an unrivaled sense of place, Four Seasons Hotel St. Louis offers new groups that book by December 31, 2022, and complete meetings by December 31, 2023, 4% of total booking revenues toward a future booking within the next year. In addition, organizers can choose three concessions to take advantage of the hotel's award-winning amenities and amplify the savings. The list of available concessions includes:

- VIP welcome reception for 20 people in Top Golf Swing Suite (requires a minimum of 50 room nights)
- Complimentary 80-minute spa treatment for a VIP
- 2% of total revenues contracted credited to the master account
- Complimentary 45-minute reception (house beer/wine)
- Complimentary round-trip airport transfers for a VIP
- 20% off audio-visual pricing when using preferred in-house vendor PSAV
- 10% off catering menu pricing
- · Complimentary WiFi in the main meeting room
- One complimentary suite upgrade for every 40 rooms actualized
- · 40% allowable guest room attrition

For more information, including restrictions, please contact the Four Seasons Hotel directly.

M&I WORLDWIDE OFFERS NEW TECHNOLOGY SOLUTION

Intent Strategy Group (ISG), the consulting

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division of Meetings & Incentives Worldwide. has launched Simplified+ in partnership with event technology company Bizly. Simplified+ is a technology-enabled solution that streamlines the event intake process, delivers consolidated data, and creates a compelling ROI story resulting in heightened visibility, cost savings, risk mitigation, and efficiency gains for small and simple meetings. "We are thrilled to offer this solution to the marketplace," said ISG's Lisa Palmeri, vice president, principal consultant. "ISG sought to fully understand and break down the barriers associated with small meetings technology adoption, and we have invested a significant amount of time to develop and test the entire endto-end solution so that clients can confidently and quickly launch a proven small meetings solution."

ROCK & BREWS TO OPEN IN MILWAUKEE

Part of the \$100 million expansion underway at Potawatomi Hotel & Casino will be Rock & Brews, a themed restaurant from musicians Paul Stanley and Gene Simmons of KISS. The restaurant, which will be located just past the skywalk entrance on the third floor, will feature seating for more than 200 guests. It will also have a double-sided bar



with gaming machines and a stage for live music. There will also be a private dining room for parties and events. As the name suggests, "Rock & Brews" is a restaurant that "provides a superior dining experience with a Rock 'n' Roll twist." Guests can enjoy great music while they dine; and there will be screens throughout the restaurant playing rock concerts in addition to amazing art and décor from some of music's biggest names. Opening is scheduled for spring 2023.

THE TRADE HOTEL ANNOUNCES NEW RESTAURANT

NCG Hospitality is partnering with Food Fight Restaurant Group, based in Madison, Wisconsin, on the latest restaurant concept for the ninth-floor restaurant located atop The Trade Hotel in Milwaukee. The restaurant, Il Cervo, which means "the deer" in Italian, will serve classic and original interpretations of traditional Italian food and drinks. Among the fare they plan to bring to the menu, patrons will find options like dry-aged steak served Florentine style, butter-poached lobster, grilled whole fish, hand-rolled pasta, fresh-made ricotta and mozzarella and, of course, hand-stretched sourdough pizza that will be fired over a 4-inch-thick stone hearth.



MILWAUKEE LANDS 2024 RNC

Milwaukee has been chosen as host site for the 2024 Republican National Convention, beating out Nashville. Milwaukee was selected to host the Democratic National Convention in 2020, which ended up being mostly virtual due to COVID-19. "I am excited to announce Milwaukee as the host city for the 2024 Republican National Convention," said RNC Chairwoman Ronna McDaniel in a press release. "Milwaukee is a world-class city, and we are eager to see it shine in the spotlight come 2024." McDaniel added, "I look forward to working with the members of the Republican National Committee, Milwaukee Mayor Cavalier Johnson, the Milwaukee Host Committee, and Visit Milwaukee to deliver an incredible convention for our party."

SURVEY SHOWS POSITIVITY WITHIN INDUSTRY

Meeting professionals expect in-person events and budgets to increase in 2023, according to the 12th annual Global Meetings & Events Forecast, produced by American Express Meetings & Events, a division of American Express Global Business Travel. The survey included 580 meetings and events professionals across 23 countries, as well as interviews with industry leaders. Key findings from the report include:

- 77% of respondents are optimistic about the health of the industry heading into 2023 (a sixpoint increase compared to last year's survey)
- 67% said they believe the number of in-person events will return to pre-pandemic levels within 1-2 years, with internal and smaller meetings already exceeding 2019 levels in some regions
- 65% said that overall meeting and event spend is increasing for 2023

Other findings included: Internal meetings continue to be a higher priority than they were pre-pandemic, as organizations see face-to-face interactions as key to improving productivity, connecting teams, reducing turnover and attracting top talent. Survey respondents anticipate that in-person meetings and the number of event attendees will increase across the board, with 87% of meetings expected to have an inperson component. Moreover, only 32% of internal meetings are expected to be held on corporate property, with 40% being held in a different city from the office and 45% including overnight accommodation for attendees. After two years of remote and hybrid arrangements, respondents also expressed growing virtual fatigue.

MOVERS & SHAKERS

Destination Cleveland has selected **Marie E.** Scalia as its next chief marketing officer after a national search. Scalia most recently served as vice president of integrated marketing for the organization. Over the past eight months, she led the finalization of the Cleveland visitor brand refresh and marketing campaign development and launch, which showcases Clevelanders' authenticity and creativity through a variety of initiatives — including a resident storytelling campaign. "Marie's deep consumer marketing background and bold vision for the Cleveland brand combined with her significant experience and knowledge of the region as a visitor destination will help carry us into the future." said David Gilbert, president and CEO of Destination Cleveland.

Explore St. Louis has hired David Duncan as chief sales officer. In this role, Duncan will focus his more than 30 years of sales and marketing leadership on ensuring Explore St. Louis continues its upward trajectory in attracting meetings and conventions to the Gateway City. In addition, Duncan will focus efforts on positioning AC Next Gen, the expansion and enhancement of America's Center, as a top tier facility for national-level gatherings. Most recently, Duncan held the title of director of sales and marketing at the Sheraton Grand Nashville Downtown where he oversaw 40,000 square feet of function space and became a board member for the Nashville Convention and Visitors Corp.

Joan Kranovich has been named the new vice president of business growth and director, sports QC at **Visit Quad Cities**. Kranovich has been with the organization since 2009, beginning as an intern and then holding different positions in



the Business Growth department. Her new role oversees the organization's goals to drive economic development through attracting, recruiting and hosting meetings, conventions, reunions and sporting events. "Joan Kranovich

continues to demonstrate leadership and produce results for our organization and the Quad Cities," said Dave Herrell, president and CEO, Visit Quad Cities. "She has been a pivotal leader throughout her career for our team and the destination industry. We are excited about Joan directing our Business Growth & Service function for Visit Ouad Cities with the numerous meetings, groups and events we actively recruit and service. Sports tourism is also a driver that we must put more emphasis in and scale strategically for our community and I know that Joan can help lead this effort. It's imperative that we compete in this space because sports tourism is a community value creator and generates a positive return for the QC. Creating a pipeline of sporting events is one thing but we must think holistically about how this important vertical can help shape and position the regional destination for the future."

ACCOLADES

EXHIBITOR Magazine announced their fourth Centers of Excellence list, placing the **Wisconsin Center District** on that list. This list annually honors North America's best convention centers



for trade shows and corporate events. The Wisconsin Center District rose to the top 30 out of nearly 100 applications. They are graded on the criteria of facility and functionality, location and accommodations, and service and execution, along with upgrades and expansions. The Wisconsin Center is currently undergoing an expansion set to open in 2024 and is one of the venues set to host the Republication National Convention.

The Minneapolis Convention Center (MCC) has announced that its Plaza was awarded Silver certification under the Sustainable SITES Initiative rating system for achievement in landscape sustainability. The MCC Plaza is the nation's first SITES certified project to be located at a convention center and the first ever SITES certified project in the Upper Midwest. Administered by the Green Business Certification Inc. (GBCI), SITES promotes sustainable and resilient landscape development to enhance sustainability, implement green infrastructure strategies and improve resilience. MCC Plaza is located on the south side of downtown and designed by Damon Farber Landscape Architects for environmental sustainability. The 2½-acre site features an urban meadow planted with native tree, wildflower and prairie grass species to create downtown's largest pollinator refuge. In addition, irrigation at the Plaza utilizes the Convention Center's stormwater capture system.

CenterPoint Marketing, based in Woodbury,
Minnesota, was recognized at the EXHIBITORLIVE
2022 Show as the highest-rated exhibit producer
for service and reliability in North America.
CenterPoint was rated higher than any other
exhibit producer among the 40 winners of the Find
It TOP 40 awards, and nearly 500 exhibit houses
who were subjected to a rigorous process to enter
the contest. "We are so proud to have received
this award, which recognizes the dedication of our
entire team to deliver unparalleled service for our
clients," said Steve Clear, president of CenterPoint
Marketing. This marks the fourth year in a row that
CenterPoint Marketing has earned a coveted spot
in the Find It TOP 40 awards. M

Sliding into the Industry

Alyssa Frank has grown into the meeting and events industry through her work with Minnesota's Northwestern Mutual network.

BY AMANDA N. WEGNER

lyssa Frank didn't set out to work in the meetings and events space. Instead, she "slid" into the industry. Frank is the director of marketing and communications for Northwestern Mutual in Minnesota, where she is responsible for the brand management, local marketing activations and experience for six offices across the state, including Minneapolis, Edina, Woodbury, St. Cloud, Duluth and Minnetonka. Frank works in the network office in Minneapolis.

Frank initially joined Northwestern Mutual part-time at the front desk during college. When her manager learned she was in school for graphic design, Frank was tasked with design work and creating marketing materials for the office. After finishing her degree, she was offered a full-time position, which included event planning for the local network.

"I didn't know that event planning was a career — hospitality was not offered where I went to school, so I didn't know what I

didn't know," says Frank. "... But I loved all the detail of connecting with clients, connecting with the experience, the follow-through. That was all I wanted to spend my time on."

Frank's first event was a check presentation at the Masonic Children's Hospital in Minneapolis. Northwestern Mutual has been and continues to be committed to accelerating the search for a cure for pediatric cancer, and the guest of honor was Jay Scott, the father of Alexandra "Alex" Scott, who founded Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation, a pediatric cancer charity.

Through the years, Frank's work has evolved from not only planning and executing client experiences for Northwestern Mutual but also internal experiences to celebrate and recognize members of the organization. "Clients expect it," Frank says of external events, "but internally, financial advisors and team members are so thankful for the event because it connects them to each other and the organization in a more comfortable setting."

Frank's favorite internal event is an annual recognition gala, which she likens to planning a wedding. "From the invitations to the linens to the musical performance, it's so elegant. And it's an awesome event because it really gets staff involved and spouses partake as well."



Frank notes that she has learned the planning part of her role "100% on the job," which is why she joined the Minnesota Chapter of Meeting Professionals International (MPI) about three years ago. "I didn't have anyone else, any peers doing what I was doing, no one to learn from," says Frank. "When you have a community you can learn from and engage with, when you build a network of people you know and trust, event planning becomes easier."

Building relationships with other planners, suppliers and vendors also helps events run smoothly. "Through MPI, you get to know all these people. When you remove trust barriers from event planning, it's so much more seamless."

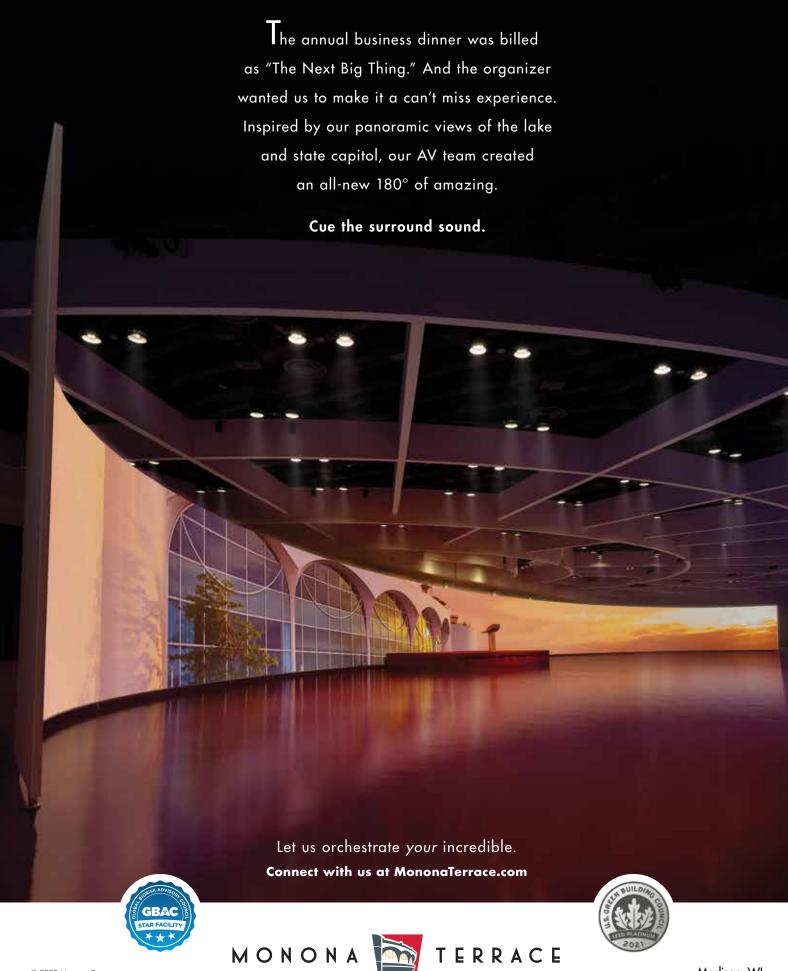
When Frank joined MPI, she "dove in headfirst" and immediately joined the membership committee. She recommends that other planners joining the organization get immediately involved. "You get back what you put in, so go for it," advises Frank. "Don't just go to monthly meetings. Once you immerse yourself in the community and go all in, you will get back so much."

Pre-pandemic, Frank's role on the membership committee aligned with her work at Northwestern Mutual, creating experiences to recruit new MPI members and celebrating current members, "because without our members, we would be nothing," she notes. The following year at the height of the pandemic, she became the director of membership care and retention. "That was a great position because it gave more connection points, and I was able to help make an impact on members at such a difficult time in the industry," says Frank. "The pandemic was challenging for the events industry, and needless to say, the support system MPI created is incredible."

Frank is now the vice president of membership for the chapter. "I work with a great team to cultivate relationships and continue to be a support system. It's good to be back to work," she says, referring to the pandemic, "but things are still changing and challenging, like inflation. Having a network of people in your back pocket to share how they handle these same challenges is incredibly important."

As Frank has grown in her career with Northwestern Mutual, so has the Minnesota network's event planning work. Once the only staff member working on events and experiences, the marketing team now has a designated events and experiences coordinator. "It's exciting to see the team grow, and I'm looking forward to our coordinator joining MPI next. That will help her and the organization's meetings and events blossom even more."

10



Events that Hit a High Note

Venues celebrating the art of music offer a unique guest experience

useums are not always the most inviting, exciting places to hold events. However, there are

BY PAULA HENDRICKSON

several in the Midwest dedicated to the art of music, that are open to groups, where you're encouraged to "get down" or "kick up your heels" in celebration of this American art form.

If you want a memorable meeting, consider booking it at a music museum or venue like the National Blues Museum (St. Louis), the American Jazz Museum (Kansas City, Missouri), River Music Experience (Davenport, Iowa) or the ultimate destination for rock and roll fans, the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame (Cleveland).

"The primary reason any corporate organization is going to choose us is because we're a non-traditional space with built-in entertainment," says Mike Detling, director of event sales and services for the **Rock & Roll Hall of Fame** in Cleveland.

There's also an intangible benefit to choosing a museum or non-profit facility: your rental fees are directed back into the organization, funding everything from education programs and community outreach to building improvements and acquisitions.

EXHIBITS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Whether it's viewing Jimi Hendrix's costumes, guitars and hand-written lyrics, learning how Delta blues musician Tommy Johnson's legacy influenced generations of performers or admiring a sequined gown once worn by Ella Fitzgerald, each venue offers something unique.

"We're not a hotel ballroom. We're not a traditional music venue that may have a stage in one room and a private event space in another part of the building. No matter where you go, you have to pass artifacts that remind you of where you are," Detling says.

Access to Rock & Roll Hall of Fame exhibits is included in rental fees for receptions and evening events, but





is an optional add-on for daytime meetings; since meetings often last all day, this lets attendees tour the museum when they have more time.

"I think hosting an event at the **National Blues Museum** — or a music museum in general — gives your guests an experience they haven't had before, with multiple entertainment features," says Tori Fenemor of the National Blues Museum.

"Most of the events we host at the National Blues Museum have a reception in the main exhibit space, with cocktails and appetizers, then move to one of the venue spaces for dinner and additional entertainment," Fenemor says. "The Legends Room, our most popular space, is where we host all of our concerts, and events held in there generally feature live music, where you get a more intimate experience than a large concert hall. The Family Gallery is one of our temporary exhibit spaces, and is great for networking functions where live music isn't necessarily the main focus."

ACTIVITIES AND AMENITIES

Because these non-traditional locations are focused on music, they have all the audio-visual equipment you'll likely need.

"We offer full audio and visual amenities, [plus] in-house sound technicians, with a small staffing fee," says Chrissy Boyer, events manager for **River Music Experience**.

The National Blues Museum — which hosts over 150 bands per year — can book live musical acts for you, with 100% of those costs going directly to the performers. "We're advocates in our community for fair pay for musicians and artists, and don't keep any funds allocated for live entertainment," Fenemor says.

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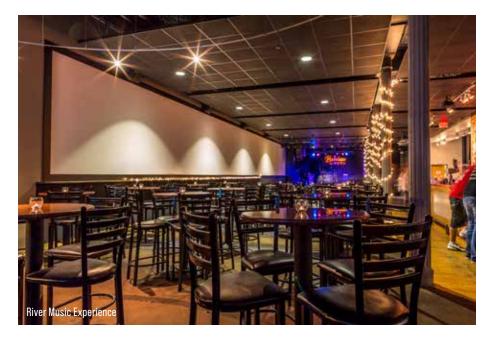


The Rock & Roll Hall of Fame offers educational programs and team building exercises, like timed scavenger hunts or forming teams into "bands" where each participant learns how each role, from manager to drummer, contributes to a band's success.

Access to artifacts not regularly on display is another perk you can't get just anywhere. "That's a real VIP option," Detling says. "Somebody from the curatorial team comes in and actually does a brief artifact presentation and answers questions."

COORDINATION AND CATERING

As part of Kansas City, Missouri's, 18th & Vine Historic Jazz District, the **American Jazz Museum** — a 72,000-square-foot facility that also encompasses the Horace M. Peterson III Visiting Center, Changing Gallery, The Blue Room jazz club and the Gem Theater — can accommodate large or small groups; combined, the facility holds up to 3,000 attendees.





The Rock & Roll Hall of Fame's largest event to date had 3,000 guests, but most of its 230 private events per year range from 20 to 2,000 people. Although the National Blues Museum holds up to 800 people, Fenemor prefers groups in the 500-600 range.

River Music Experience — which has ceased operating as a museum and is now a non-profit focused on providing music education for the community — still has music memorabilia accessible to guests, and Boyer says the second floor can accommodate up to 500 guests.

Even with on-site event planners and coordinators, these venues collaborate closely with planners. "The client typically gives us a rundown of what's needed," Detling says. "We have a logistical oddity of a building here, so we want to be the expert in this situation and let them know what we can do, and we act as the on-site event planner." Between the coordinator, Detling, and an in-house caterer, it's turnkey service.

"Since we are experts within our space, we like to stay hands-on while planning the event to make sure you have the best experience possible," Fenemor says. While the National Blues Museum doesn't have preferred vendors for flowers or décor, she says its preferred caterer, Sugarfire, is known for barbecue but can do other cuisines. "We occasionally work with other caterers, but Sugarfire is our go to."

As with any event, scheduling is key — especially with museums and music venues that need to work around their own exhibit openings, concerts and events. Most are able to accommodate corporate events planned a few weeks out, but it's usually advisable to book early, especially for larger events. M

Based in Rockford, II., Paula Hendrickson provides writing, ghostwriting and copywriting services for a wide assortment of national trade and consumer publications, and is a frequent contributor to Emmy, Variety, Pet Product News and Northwest Quarterly.

Fall Flavors

Creative ways to offer unique drink experiences for your group.

BY KRISTINE HANSEN



ummer's all about gin and vodka — light, bright and refreshing," says Kodi Satra, general manager of Tattersall Distilling & Events Center, in River Falls, Wisconsin, and Minneapolis.

Fall and winter cocktails, on the other hand, embrace heat (either warmed or with a "kick") and spicy layers.

Jorge Centeno, chief spirits officer at Deer Path Inn in Lake Forest, Illinois, uses each new season as an opportunity to reinvent the cocktail menu. "For the fall and winter months I like to use ingredients that represent that time of the year," he says. For example, "warmer, more spiced ingredients" such as brandy, cognac, mezcal, bourbon, scotch, deep red-wine reductions, mead and a juniper-forward gin. This focus extends to every ingredient in a drink. "I prefer to use late-harvest fruits and ingredients like pumpkin, apples, corn (for syrup), hawthorn fruit, rosemary, pine needles, pinecone syrups, cinnamon and baking spices," he says.

When developing a menu of seasonal drinks for your event or meeting, you'll have more success if you aren't too obvious with the flavor profile. Make this a subtle ode to the fall and winter months — not in-your-face flavors.

Brittany Hogans, bar manager at Kimpton Journeyman Hotel in Milwaukee — which offers many private event spaces for groups, including its three-season rooftop bar called The Outsider — couldn't agree more. "It's important to have fall flavors in there without being in your face," she says.

"I always think of pumpkin spice latte and Starbucks, and that whole crazy cult following," says Satra. But instead of emulating those flavors, she uses them for inspiration. Cardamom and cloves are typically in a pumpkin spice latte, and even without the pumpkin contribute to a fine drink recipe. For cocktail syrups, she'll infuse fruits and botanicals to celebrate the cooler months and offer a heavier drink than might be suitable for summer.

Another tip is to dehydrate fall and winter fruits for garnishes. Examples might be apple and orange slices. "An easy way to evoke fall is by using colors and dry ingredients such as dehydrated oranges and lemons," says Centeno. "It gives your cocktail those golden warm colors of the fall."

Rosemary and sage are two other herbs that speak to the season. For an Old Fashioned, Satra likes to incorporate a dehydrated orange wheel with a skewered cherry. "I love dehydrated citrus," says Satra. "They keep forever and never go bad." This is especially important when serving drinks to a large group within a tight time frame: slicing and dehydrating can be done in advance.

When it comes to garnishes, thinking beyond the typical for the fall and winter seasons is a sure way to wow the guest. "I also like the use of corn husk, grasses and leaves," says Centeno. These keep just as well as other garnishes and might even encourage some photos for your socialmedia sites.

If one is still stuck on what to use for garnishes, Hogans suggests building on flavors already in the drink. For example, if there is a cranberry-infused spirit, or even cranberry juice, why not literally add a frozen cranberry on a skewer? Or skewer an orange slice to pair with any citrus-infused drink? Pomegranate seeds are a winter garnish Hogans turns to often, as well as dehydrated rosemary shrubs, which add some immediate dimension and texture to a drink.

Don't forget about sugared and spiced glass rims. Adding a dash of chili powder or cinnamon sugar can also help drive the point home that this is a fall and winter cocktail.



Considering the flavor profile of a drink's dominating spirit is another place to start. "Anything that's reminiscent of warmth. Everyone thinks about bourbons and whiskies," says Hogans. "Mezcal is another winter spirit ... that smoky, rich flavor." This agave-infused spirit from Mexico is not as well-known as tequila, but that's quickly changing. Don't forget about drinks' aromas, says Hogans, as these can also cultivate a sense of warmth. A whiff of cinnamon can be just as cozy as a warm sweater, and spices can easily evoke a warmth within winter's chill.

To further speed up the serving time for a group to receive their cocktails, ready-to-drink cocktails in a can — which are all the rage for consumers right now because all you have to do is pull back the tab and drink — are an ideal solution.

"You pour it over ice and it's done," says Satra.
"You can put an herb in there to make it even fancier." Tattersall Distilling produces a line of ready-to-drink cocktails that includes Corpse Reviver #2. Manhattan and Old Fashioned.

But if preparing drinks on site is non-negotiable, there are still steps you can take to deliver drinks to guests quickly. By keeping the spirits combined, but the juices and sugars separate, "it keeps (ingredients) fresh and more consistent," says Hogans.



Centeno has three go-to drinks just for groups that may require a little bit of prep time but won't keep the guests waiting. "I will recommend mulled wine, which is easy and a great option for cold months," he says. "Another is warm and spiced apple cider, which you can keep warm in a thermos or crockpot and just add a shot of brandy or Mezcal before serving. Also, I like to recommend traditional Mexican punch. It's a hot punch that includes all kinds of fruits and sugar cane. Just keep it warm and add a shot of rum when ready to serve."

Mocktails are growing in popularity and should be included in any drinks program at a meeting

or event. Approaches are moving beyond simply stripping the alcohol from the recipe. Now mocktails are just as exciting to photograph and sip as their spiked counterparts on a drink menu. Even so, popular drinks can serve as inspiration. One of Satra's favorite mocktails to make is a riff on the mojito, turning to fresh cucumbers (blended in a blender) for both body and flavor. Flavored soda waters are another option to add flavor, in lieu of alcohol. Another mocktail recipe she often makes is "Gold Rush," with ginger, honey, lemon, rosemary and cardamom.

Just as he might for fall and winter cocktails, Centeno turns to seasonal juices for mocktails: lingonberry juice, cranberry reductions, apple cider and pumpkin purée.

It's important, due to this increased demand, to have more than one option so the guest feels like they have a choice. "I like to offer our guest at least two options on the menu of non-alcoholic cocktails," says Centeno. "It's usually a riff on one of our signature cocktails without the alcohol. Same presentation (and) always looking to create the same flavor as the real one."

Kristine Hansen is a freelance writer from the Milwaukee area who covers food and drink, travel, and art and design.

An easy way to evoke fall is by using colors and dry ingredients such as dehydrated oranges and lemons. It gives your cocktail those golden warm colors of the fall.

-Jorge Centeno, Deer Path Inn

Presenting the Platforms

Breaking down the most popular virtual meeting platforms on the market

BY GREG GERBER



ideo conferencing has been widely available since the advent of broadband technology in the early 2000s. However, the pandemic and the subsequent challenges with bringing groups together has made it an essential and acceptable way to communicate and meet for most companies these days.

Common features include talking to participants around the world in real-time as well as sharing screens and customizable backgrounds. Many products include a chat feature enabling people to send messages directly to each other or share with the group.

Many plans include the ability to record meetings and retain them in cloud-storage vaults or download files directly to a leader's computer. Often, recorded sessions include transcripts plus a video version and separate audio file for use in podcasts. New end-to-end encryption features ensure ultra-secure sessions.

Advanced features enable single-session webinars or multi-day, multi-track online events involving up to 10,000 participants monetized through paid registrations. Those meetings can involve up to 100 interactive panelists and feature live polling showing immediate results. Event software is pricey, climbing as high as \$85,000 annually on Zoom for a single license for unlimited events.

Even with all of these features, there are issues, with one of the most common being leaders don't understand how to use settings for maximum advantage, says Jake Van Ness, owner of Elevated Virtual.

For example, breakout rooms are turned off by default in Zoom and can't be activated once a meeting is underway, he explains. Users have several options for suppressing distracting noises on their end, and presenters have the ability to shut off specific microphones, or video for that matter.

"While Zoom has a lot of settings, Microsoft Teams allows a ridiculous amount of customization," he adds. "Presenters should be very familiar with how features work and the settings involved before a session starts. Otherwise, it can be embarrassing to figure out a problem in front of a live audience."

Van Ness says some conferencing platforms are specifically designed with large corporations in mind,

while others are better suited for smaller firms. However, people working remotely for big companies may be familiar with Microsoft Teams, but struggle to use Zoom.

Here are the most popular platforms on the market and how they differ.

GO TO MEETING

Launched in 2004, Go To Meeting was the first widely-accepted video conferencing tool embraced by businesses, not just government and universities, says Van Ness.

Now part of a suite of collaboration products, pricing starts at \$144 annually per organizer and allows up to 150 participants. The business version sells for \$192 annually and enables 250 participants. For another \$240 per year, companies can host webinars with six organizers sharing their screens or distributing handouts during presentations.

Go To Meeting doesn't require software to work. Participants get a link to meetings, but organizers grant permission to enter.

ZOOM

During COVID, Zoom became the industry leader due to its low cost and ease of use, says Van Ness. Although the firm had some embarrassing security failures early in the pandemic when hackers were "zoombombing" meetings, that prompted Zoom to patch settings. A popular feature allows presenters to easily transfer session controls to another participant.

Zoom is free to use, provided sessions are less than 40 minutes and involve fewer than 100 people. However, at the 40-minute mark, meetings abruptly end. Packages starting at \$149.90 per year remove the time restriction and for \$199.90 per year, participants increase to 300.

Other packages specific to business needs include high-definition Zoom Rooms. Meeting organizers must download software to access meetings, though attendees can join via their web browser.

MICROSOFT TEAMS

Microsoft Teams is a popular platform generally used by businesses already using Microsoft 365 products. It offers many customizable settings and advanced security features, says Van Ness.

"Teams is a great platform for internal training because it creates a walled-off garden for use

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solely by your company's employees," he explains. "Consequently, it is more difficult for people outside the firm to participate in a Teams meeting. It's also harder for a leader to pass the baton to someone not on the Teams account."

A free version allows one-on-one sessions up to 30 hours long, while group meetings for 100 participants are limited to an hour. With an annual subscription of \$48 per user, firms enjoy unlimited group meetings up to 30 hours in length and up to 300 participants.

For \$72 annually per user, they get access to all Microsoft 365 apps and services. Teams also allows unlimited chatting with up to 300 employees or customers.

WEBEX

For a more robust platform, this software connects hybrid teams of in-office and remote participants via an app or a suite of products. Users customize meeting room layouts with virtual backgrounds and separate breakout rooms. Artificial intelligence removes distracting noises, takes notes or transcribes sessions.

Its Meetings on the Go feature lets participants move seamlessly from cell phone to car to office computers. Webex provides real-time translations for 100 languages. People can also record video to share later, allowing participation unhindered by time zones.

Webex sells equipment from headsets and cameras to desktop monitors — all designed to help people collaborate. A Call Me add-on feature automatically phones participants directly.

ADOBE CONNECT

Adobe Connect is a popular teaching platform because presenters can have multiple objects on a screen simultaneously, says Van Ness. For example, presenters can show video of themselves plus several information slides, a question window and chat box to respond.

While features are plentiful, Connect requires a higher learning curve to use the platform, according to Van Ness. But, its features enable strong audience engagement and session metrics. Once a presenter sets up a meeting screen, it can be saved as a template for future use.

A free version allows up to three participants, while an upgrade enables four hosts and 25 participants for \$50 per month, per host. The webinar version starts at \$130 a month and allows up to 1,500 participants.

OTHER PLATFORMS

There are more than two dozen other platforms on the market to consider as well. However, the biggest challenge to using other platforms is that participants may be unfamiliar with how the software works. Because the platforms aren't as popular, it can be difficult to find experts to help set up meetings or resolve problems, Van Ness explains.

It's hard to replace in-person meetings, especially for the networking they enable. But, with more companies allowing employees to work remotely and travel being challenging, technology makes it easier to connect anytime, from anywhere.

Greg Gerber is an author, speaker and owner of Faithfire Media, reporting on faith-based topics. He splits his time between Wisconsin and Arizona. He is also the former owner of RV Daily Report.

Conference producers ensure smoother meetings

- When meetings exceed 25 participants, some companies hire conference producers to handle all technical-related aspects of virtual events, says Jake Van Ness, owner of Elevated Virtual.
- While the presenter is speaking, a producer can set up breakout rooms to ensure seamless transitions. More importantly, producers serve as "insurance" against in-session problems.
- Nothing takes the energy out of a session faster than when someone can't share a video or screen, the audio develops problems or the breakout rooms aren't working," says Van Ness. "The minute something goes wrong, a producer can step in to fix the problem and keep the meeting moving without delay."
- Producers can also work with participants offline to resolve connectivity problems preventing their participation in a virtual session, he adds. Rather than participants taking up time during a meeting with questions for presenters about a microphone or video camera, a producer can call participants directly to guide them through faulty settings or to troubleshoot an equipment concern.
- The biggest problem for many firms is the "heroic leader," says Van Ness. Those are presenters who also set up and troubleshoot technology, take notes, create break-out groups and facilitate discussions.
- "Trainers and presenters should be fully present for online meetings without having to worry about the technical aspects of a creating a good session," he adds. "Assign someone to take notes and another person to manage breakout rooms so presenters can focus entirely on their content."
- When the meeting ends, a producer can save the files, arrange for a transcript and ensure the event is shared with participants or posted online for others to access at their convenience.



Spaces that Inspire

Four meeting room trends for your conference redesign

BY TONYA DYBDAHL



eeting room design sets the tone for every gathering that happens in that space. When embarking on a conference room redesign, there are some factors you'll always want to consider, like egress requirements, spacing, sightlines, natural lighting and ergonomics.

If you want to create a space that's on-trend in 2022, we have to start with the way work has transformed over the past couple of years. Companies are looking for ways to compete with the creature comforts of the work-from-home lifestyle. Professionals want spaces that will make them feel inspired and connected. Everyone is craving more flexibility. These changes have driven four major trends in meeting room design.

1. CREATING FLEXIBLE SPACES

Instead of a single-purpose conference room with a large table surrounded by task chairs, we're seeing a rise in meeting rooms that offer more flexibility. That means planners are including comfortable, inviting furniture with sophisticated lines. These spaces evoke touches of hospitality environments rather than the dry corporate environments we've come to expect.

A conference room isn't just a conference room anymore. It's a space for colleagues to brainstorm, relax, stretch their legs, take a break from their desks or connect in real life. You'll want to find ways to incorporate flexible furniture and design elements, so your meeting space can adapt to support all these functions.

How you can play with this trend

- Use smaller modular tables that offer the flexibility of being grouped together to form a large table or separated to create smaller workspaces.
- Look for adjustable height conference tables and media tables that allow teams to incorporate movement into meetings and make that daily stand-up a literal stand-up event.

- Consider creating open or partially enclosed meeting spaces instead of the traditional fourwalls-and-a-ceiling conference room.
- Use plants to divide spaces with open bookshelves, plant walls or felt dividers.

2. BRINGING ELEMENTS OF A COZY, WORK-FROM-HOME ATMOSPHERE INTO THE WORKPLACE

The pandemic prompted a massive shift in the way we work. With millions of Americans making the instant switch to working from home, professionals grew to love touches of comfort throughout the workday.

We're seeing an influx of Millennial- and Gen-Zapproved furniture throughout the office, especially in collaboration spaces. Think enticing, playful textures and warm colors that hint at a Wabi-Sabi aesthetic. Commercial fabrics, like performance velvet and bouclé, that mimic residential fabric have also become more popular.

Plants are being used more often in office design. Including plants in your space planning gives your office a homey feeling and may have

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health benefits. Studies have shown that indoor interactions with plants can reduce stress and contribute to improved moods — something we could probably all use more of.

How you can play with this trend

- Try warm colors like dusty pinks, greens, creams and earth tones.
- Find upholstered furnishings with soft, inviting fabrics that boast residential-level comfort.
- Play with modular sofas and more casual chairs to create a relaxed atmosphere.

3. SEAMLESSLY INCORPORATING TECH

Technology should be unobtrusive yet accessible in modern meeting spaces. Office design has adapted to meet in-person tech needs (like charging stations) and help hybrid teams feel more connected. Furniture brands have found new ways to disguise power connections through hidden power centers or wireless charging.

As hybrid teams have become more prevalent, companies have started investigating ways to make hybrid meetings more personal and engaging. Organizations have begun to adapt by using multiple cameras to capture in-person

attendees better and adjusting the seating setup so that the video screen is more central to the gathering. If you're designing for hybrid teams, you definitely want to consider how your design can support connection through technology.

How you can play with this trend

- Choose furnishings equipped with power stations.
- Experiment with multiple cameras in the meeting space to better capture in-person attendees.
- Find ways to center your video screen so the interaction feels more personal, especially when working with space supporting hybrid teams.

4. EMBRACING SUSTAINABLE ELEMENTS

Now there are so many more sustainable options than there were even a few years ago. As environmental stewardship becomes more central to business planning, consider incorporating sustainability into your conference room design. Look for furnishings that are certified by BIFMA, an independent organization that measures sustainability. Some retailers have even started selling used office furniture. In addition to reducing waste, this can be a more affordable

solution for smaller companies who don't need large furniture quantities and can't afford the list price.

How you can play with this trend

- Find furnishings made from sustainable materials.
- · Choose BIFMA-certified products.
- · Consider second-hand office furniture.
- · Donate or recycle old furniture.

KEEP MEETING ATTENDEES AND USERS IN MIND

Ultimately, you want to ensure you're designing meeting spaces that best serve the people who will be using it. Let these trends guide you to find ways to support your teams and attendees, but you always want the end-user to guide the design — even if that means deviating from the latest trends.

Tonya Dybdahl is space planning and design department manager for National Business Furniture. She oversees a team of creative designers and project managers, designing meeting spaces for corporate clients of all sizes in a variety of industries including healthcare, education, hospitality and government.





Personalization, novel experiences, supply chain challenges and locally sourced foods are top of mind for planners these days.

BY RONNIE WENDT

eeting industry professionals must stay on top of industry changes and develop new strategies to emerge as winners in an ever-evolving meetings and events game. Here's what Midwest meeting professionals say about emerging trends for planners to focus on.

1. NEW PLANNERS AND NEW ATTENDEES.

The meeting industry was not untouched by the Great Resignation, an ongoing economic trend where employees voluntarily resigned from their jobs en masse beginning in early 2021.

Leslie Johnson, director of sales at VISIT Milwaukee, says she sees a lot of younger planners and attendees on tradeshow floors today. "We saw a lot of seasoned planners retire during the pandemic, and a lot of younger planners step in to fill their place," she says.

Younger attendees present opportunities for planners to reinvent meetings and events. For instance, Millennials, who now comprise 35% of the U.S. workforce, place a high value on faceto-face meetings if those meetings offer novel experiences they can share on

social media. They will not attend meetings that offer experiences they also can get digitally.

Less experienced planners have some big shoes to fill as they meet these expectations, adds Johnson. "We lost a lot of seasoned planners and hoteliers during the pandemic but that brings opportunities for those of us in that mid-range as we transition to a younger demographic," she says. "It is a wonderful opportunity for people of my generation to bridge the education gap between what a seasoned planner instinctively knows, and a new planner hasn't yet experienced. We need to let them know we are here to help educate, connect them with individuals who can help, and give them ideas that can help them execute their vision and experience."

Nathan Hermiston, senior vice president of convention sales and services for Visit KC, also sees younger planners stepping up. He says younger planners bring different energy to the planning space. "Younger planners challenge suppliers to think outside of the rates/dates/space box that we often (but not always) were put into before," he says.

On the venue side, he says new planners' out-of-the-box thinking keeps things fresh and demands venues think differently about their space. Venue operators now must consider: What is unique about our space? How can we use our space differently than in the past? What local subject matter experts or unique offsite venues do we have that can complement what our clients are asking for today?

2. LONGER LEAD TIMES

VISIT Milwaukee's Johnson says lead times remain shorter than ever, a trend she expects to continue as people get accustomed to meeting again. But, she says, it's a trend that won't last.

"We are seeing some leads that haven't found a home for a meeting or event in 2023," she says. "There is a lot of short-term activity to be aware of."

However, she cautions planners not to work on tighter timeframes, thinking this is the new normal. Longer lead times are coming back and as they do, it will become harder to secure space within shortened lead times.

"Planners now look to book out as far out as 2027, which is great," she says. "There was a time when everything was extremely short term, and we weren't seeing any volume at all."

3. MAKE IT MEMORABLE

Meeting hesitancy has driven up requirements to make meetings more memorable than ever before, adds Kourtnee Carroll, sales manager at Kalahari Resorts & Conventions.

"It's more about the experience than the meeting," she says. "People are looking for different entertainment and a fun, full experience."

Attendees now expect events to deliver

unique experiences they cannot get anywhere else. A behind-the-scenes tour of a unique attraction, a VIP dinner or reception at an exclusive venue, or a personal meeting with a local subject matter expert are all things attendees feel fulfilled by, according to Carroll.

Planners now look to book out as far out as 2027, which is great.
There was a time when everything was extremely short term, and we weren't seeing any volume at all.

Leslie Johnson,
 VISIT Milwaukee

The experiential trend includes building in time for attendees to get out and explore, adds Johnson. "Milwaukee has an amazing lakefront, and too often, attendees never take the time to explore it," she says. "We encourage attendees to explore the city, so they get more than just what the convention offers."

"The meeting is important, but people want time to explore," she adds. "They want to go out and experience the city. That is more front of mind for planners than before," she says. "We recently had a group host a reception and tour at the Black Holocaust Museum. We put together a shopping and food map of the neighborhood for the group to use after the reception."

Making it memorable also includes

an investment in quality products and furnishings, adds Hermiston. "We have all seen venues with tired banquet equipment or the same old white linen/rounds/banquet chairs," he says. "Investing in unique offerings creates a totally different dynamic in a room. The investment a venue makes into itself will pay off."

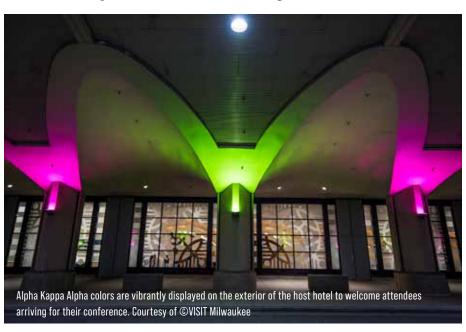
4. CITY SUPPORT

More planners want to speak with city officials before bringing their event to a city, according to Johnson.

She explains COVID-19 taught them not every city was receptive to meetings and conventions. "Some cities were shut down for a very long time and planners put in a lot of work rebooking their events," she says. "Planners noticed some cities are incredibly supportive of events while others are not. Planners now want to meet with city officials to gauge their support of tourism and events."

Increases in violent crimes and social unrest in urban areas also have led to this trend, she adds, noting planners want to know how the city plans to keep attendees safe.

"They want to know that they have the support of the police and fire departments, and to learn how they will keep them safe," she says. "The unrest of the last couple of years impacts attendees, and planners have to take that into consideration."



5. MAKE IT PERSONAL

Personalization is also a trend for planners to focus on, Hermiston adds.

"Planners seek to be recognized for what a group brings to the community and the impact it makes," he says. "One area destinations and venues miss out on a lot is utilizing their digital outlets to communicate with and recognize conference attendees. Activating these digital assets is a soft expense that comes with a big reward. Branding is expensive, and venues charge a lot for it."

While there is overhead and logistics involved with personalizing through digital assets, Hermiston feels venues could offer soft concessions that beef up digital recognition and make groups feel welcome.

Personalization, he says, makes conference attendees feel they are part of something important and Hermiston says, "that the event is worth their time. The decision to attend meetings and conventions is as narrow as it's ever

been, but creating that unique space and unique experience reinforces the value."

Johnson suggests getting creative and personalizing the experience from the time attendees arrive. This means

when they step off the plane, they are greeted with welcome banners. As they taxi to their hotel, they see billboards welcoming them. When they flip on their hotel TV, there is a welcome ad.

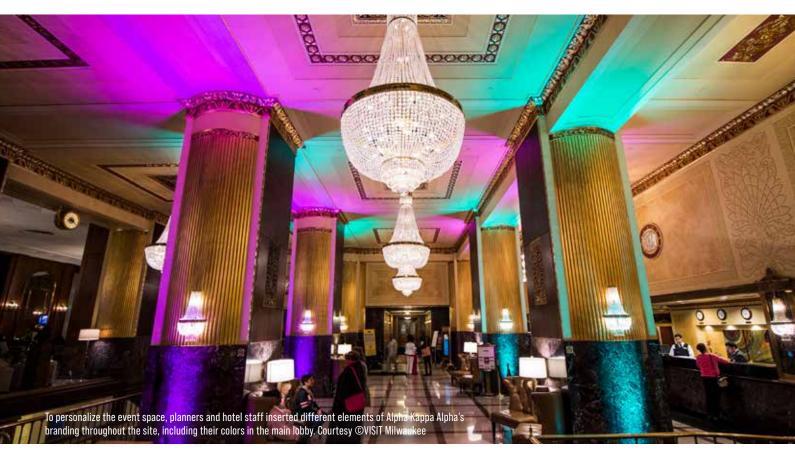
"Even doing simple things like printed menus with their names on them or a cocktail menu that ties in fun facts about their organization make attendees feel recognized and welcome," she says. "Put window clings on city windows or the organization's colors in retail windows. We had an Alpha Kappa Alpha event here. The planner said if you put anything pink or green in

It's more about the experience than the meeting. People are looking for different entertainment and a fun, full experience. 99

— Kourtnee Carroll, Kalahari Resorts & Conventions

the window, attendees will buy it. But beyond that, it's a way to show we are welcoming them into our city."

Whatever is done, Hermiston encourages planners to make it authentic and purposeful. For instance, consider the welcome comments speakers make. "We all have generic welcome comments that get glossed over by attendees," he says. "But think about how different it would be if you host a reception at a local brewery, for example, and the master brewer or head distiller talks to the group about why it's important to him they are there. Those



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messages resonate, and when a message is authentic and well delivered, it can have enormous impact."

6. FANTASTIC FOOD

Chef-carved alligator, themed food trucks or hometown barbecue are all in season with food and beverage, notes Carroll.

"We get a lot of requests for creative and different food," she says. "We recently did chef-carved alligator. People visit the Kalahari for a unique experience. They don't just want banquet food. And our chefs are ready to do some really creative and fun stuff."

Meeting unique dietary requests is now an expectation rather than a request, Carroll adds. "We are not getting as many requests for gluten-free food as we used to, but we still get them as well as requests for vegan, Keto or other dietary restrictions. We are happy to accommodate these requests."

Johnson stresses more people want to dine on locally sourced foods. "Planners want that local flair," she says. "They want local ingredients and food produced by local vendors."

More than ever before, planners are budget conscious about F&B, adds Johnson.

With rising costs and food shortages, it's essential that planners monitor what's happening with the food economy and know how it impacts their hotel partners, she says.

"They need to be honest and say, 'This is my budget. What can you do for me?'" she says. "Then restaurants can look for options that fit best within that budget."

Inflation and supply chain issues have hit the catering world, Hermiston stresses. "We are paying more than ever before for F&B, and venues are having difficult times procuring products they need in a timely manner. Planners must take this into account as they craft custom menus."

Hermiston also suggests that sustainability tops planners' priority lists. While F&B can be a high-waste field, he says he's seen more requests from planners and genuine investment from venues in quality, compostable products, cutlery, dishes, etc.

7. RIGHT-SIZED TECHNOLOGY

"We are seeing entities truly revisit their tech investments for their events. It's the classic 'Maserati vs. a Coupe Sedan' conundrum," Hermiston says. "If your attendees/stakeholders need the best, then invest in it. If they need the basics, invest in that. Technology is expensive. You need to identify the size and scope of your needs and invest accordingly."

Some virtual meetings may only require a Zoom link versus a huge online platform or a simple A/V setup versus one that also offers live video streaming and other functionality.

A tremendous change with technology, adds Johnson, is a pivot away from virtual and hybrid events. "We just asked our advisory council about hybrid meetings, and planners are saying they want to move away from them," she says. "I don't think people always understand the costs of a hybrid event. We are seeing more people record events and share the recordings afterward with those who couldn't attend in person."

The rules of the game for meetings and events are constantly changing. But a focus on these seven trends can help planners knock their next meeting out of the park. *M*

Ronnie Wendt is a freelance writer who now calls the Northwoods of Wisconsin home.

With rising costs and food shortages, it's essential that planners monitor what's happening with the food economy and know how it impacts their hotel partners.

– Leslie Johnson, VISIT Milwaukee

Helping Hands

CVBs offer much more than suggestions on local restaurants and attractions

BY BECKY PECK

With renewed optimism, the meeting and events industry is barreling forward. Recent surveys show how eager groups are to get back in person; how fatigued people are of virtual meetings; and how planners are working hard to bring groups back together. Now add to this, the stress of a tight labor market that is impacting hoteliers and suppliers, and that pesky "I" word ... yup, inflation. All of these factors mean planners have to be forward thinking, strategic with each dollar spent and agile, to be able to pivot when necessary.



t's times like these when you need support; someone who has your back. And that's where DMOs and CVBs come into play. These organizations exist to drive meetings and convention business, which means they are willing and able to support planners who do this.

If you're not on a first-name basis with the team at your site DMO, then most likely you are not taking full advantage of everything they have to offer you. It's much more than staffing the info booth at your events. CVBs should be considered your strategic partner, one completely vested in your success.

To better understand how they can support planners, we invited leaders from across the Midwest to weigh in on some of the critical issues currently impacting the industry and to offer suggestions on how to make best use of their resources.

Our panel included the following:



JULIE PINGSTON
PRESIDENT AND CEO
GREATER LANSING (MICHIGAN) CONVENTION &
VISITORS BUREAU



CHRISTINE REBOUT
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
JANESVILLE AREA (WISCONSIN) CONVENTION &
VISITORS BUREAU



NICHOLE CAMPBELL Director of Sales Visit Fort Wayne (Indiana)



PAM SEIDL
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
FOX CITIES CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU



CHRISTINE PLEVA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR VISIT GREATER LIMA (OHIO)



SARAH FOCKE Tourism & Convention Sales Manager Kearney (Nebraska) Visitors Bureau



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Q: WHAT CAN A CVB OFFER TO YOU AND YOUR EVENT?

CHRISTINE PLEVA. VISIT GREATER LIMA:

A CVB is a valuable resource for meeting planners, and planners should take advantage of all the complimentary services a CVB offers. A CVB provides service opportunities that can assist a planner in all stages of event planning. Our CVB is not here just to promote our destination, but to make a planner's job as easy as possible by providing value to the planning and implementation of their event. We have the resources and connections to assist planners throughout the processes of meeting planning, execution and follow up. Our assistance is very strategic to meet the planner's needs in all stages of the event.

In addition, CVBs can offer insight into their destination, suggesting and aiding with site inspections and bid proposals, securing venues and hotels, reviewing team-building opportunities, dining options, transportation, after-hours activities and so much more. This process will enable both the planner and the event participants to experience the destination to its fullest. We can show why our location is unique and implement that uniqueness into the event. Using a CVB is not only a way a CVB is able to showcase its community, but it is a no-cost time-saver for the meeting planner.

In addition, our CVB offers full meeting and convention consultation, resource packets for pre-event mailings, assistance with local guest speakers and entertainers, official welcome letters and proclamations, welcome bags that include brochures and other items, event registration assistance, customized itineraries and tours, and media assistance.

Q: WHEN'S A GOOD TIME TO REACH OUT TO A CVB?

JULIE PINGSTON, GREATER LANSING CVB:

A planner can reach out to us from the moment they are considering Lansing as a meeting destination or even at the last minute when they want some dining maps to pass out onsite to the meeting attendees.

CHRISTINE REBOUT. JANESVILLE AREA CVB:

Anytime is a good time to reach out to a CVB, but as with most things, the earlier the better. We may have community information that could impact your dates or the size of group you are planning to bring in. We also may be able to connect you with additional speakers or sponsors.

Q: HAS THE CVB/MEETING PLANNER RELATIONSHIP CHANGED SINCE THE PANDEMIC?

NICHOLE CAMPELL, VISIT FORT WAYNE:

We have seen an increase in planners utilizing our organization since the start of the pandemic as there have been many changes within the hospitality industry — contacts prior to the pandemic may not be the same. We are more aware of health guidelines within our local community and planners rely on us to be able to speak to how situations may be handled moving forward. The relationship between a CVB and meeting planners has also become more flexible through the pandemic. There is an understanding that sourcing, planning, booking and executing an event is different from how business was done prior to the pandemic. Both parties have gained more patience and understanding with one another to ultimately make an event successful in the selected destination.

CHRISTINE PLEVA, VISIT GREATER LIMA:

We have seen planners looking forward to resuming in-person meetings and events after two years of uncertainty, virtual events, and lack of interpersonal interaction. The need for a human connection and social interaction is strong as we continue to return to some sense of normalcy. These personal interactions and conversations can be the key to a positive planning experience.

Technology has allowed us to Zoom, Go-To Meeting, Skype and utilize webinars that have helped us all during the pandemic. We were able to reimagine our communities and how we can interact with others in our industry. We have used emails and texts to communicate while working remotely. Technology has played an unprecedented role during the pandemic, yet there are immeasurable benefits to in-person communication and interaction. The desire for the 'personal touch' and that in-person relationship building helps with building both trust and longstanding relationships between the CVB and planner.

It is time to reconnect, with safety, confidence, and productive engage-



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ment so we can all benefit as we help the meeting and tourism industries recover

Q: ARE YOU SEEING ANY CHANGES IN THE INDUSTRY SINCE THE PANDEMIC. ANY TRENDS... ANYTHING NOW THAT WAS NOT PERTINENT PRIOR TO 2020?

PAM SEIDL. FOX CITIES CVB:

The contract window is much smaller and event attendees are registering much closer to the event date. Both of these can cause stress for the planner. The need to be flexible with plans, on both sides, is essential. For instance, an attendee may not register until really near the event date because they want to ensure they will be able to travel. The prospect of losing registration fees if they contract Covid and can't go is going to be a real concern even as we evolve through the pandemic.

SARAH FOCKE. KEARNEY VB:

I've heard planners are looking to more second and third tier locations in an

effort to keep costs down; are conducting more regional events rather than one large convention.

JULIE PINGSTON, GREATER LANSING CVB:

We are seeing a shorter window for booking and coordinating meetings as a result of the pandemic. However, the biggest challenge has been the shift in the hospitality workforce. In Lansing, we have worked with our partners to continue to elevate the opportunities for hospitality as a career path, however, those measures are not yet able to fully address the current challenges the industry is facing nationwide.

Q: FOR THE SUCCESSFUL RELATIONSHIPS YOUR CVB HAS WITH PLANNERS, WHAT IS THE KEY?

CHRISTINE REBOUT, JANESVILLE AREA CVB:

I think the key to a seamless CVB/ Meeting Planner relationship is communication that is both early and often. There are so many things your CVB can help with and take off a meeting planner's plate, like transportation to and from the airports or local printing service, that it really allows a planner to grow their attendee experience and help drive attendance at the meetings.





NICHOLE CAMPBELL, VISIT FORT WAYNE:

Free flowing communication. Keep us in the loop with your goals and needs so that we can work together to put timely action plans in place to keep the planning process running smoothly. We're here to help, so never hesitate to reach out to your CVB with big or small questions.

PAM SEIDL, FOX CITIES CVB:

It is important to be transparent with your planners. They would rather you tell them that the dates they want for their event are in high demand, rather than just book them for the sake of booking. Additionally, if a venue they are interested in will not be large enough for their event, be honest about that and offer alternatives. Lastly, if you are able to help planners save in an area of their budget, they will look like stars and remember you for assisting them.

CHRISTINE PLEVA, VISIT GREATER LIMA:

The key for our CVB is to provide authentic interactions with planners and deliver on our shared goal of making their time working with us productive and helpful. Our goal is to help make their event memorable and successful.

Entrance Hall (

By putting their trust in us, our knowledge and expertise of the community and the process of hosting an event, the stage is set for a long-term collaborative partnership with benefits for everyone.

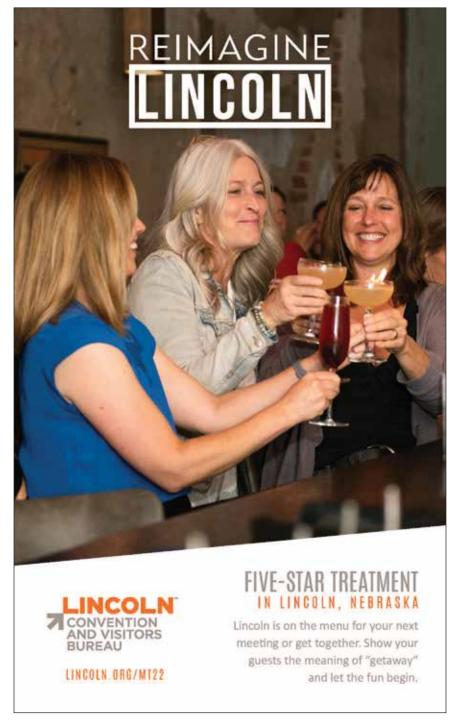
Q: DO YOU HAVE ANY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PLANNERS?

JULIE PINGSTON, GREATER LANSING CVB:

We would recommend working with a CVB to create a relationship built on partnership and collaboration. We are experts in meetings and events and are invested in the success of all events held in our Greater Lansing region.

SARAH FOCKE. KEARNEY VISITORS BUREAU:

Meeting planners need to know CVB's are their destination experts. Planners should contact a CVB early in the process. They'd be amazed at what we can help them with throughout their planning and execution of the event.







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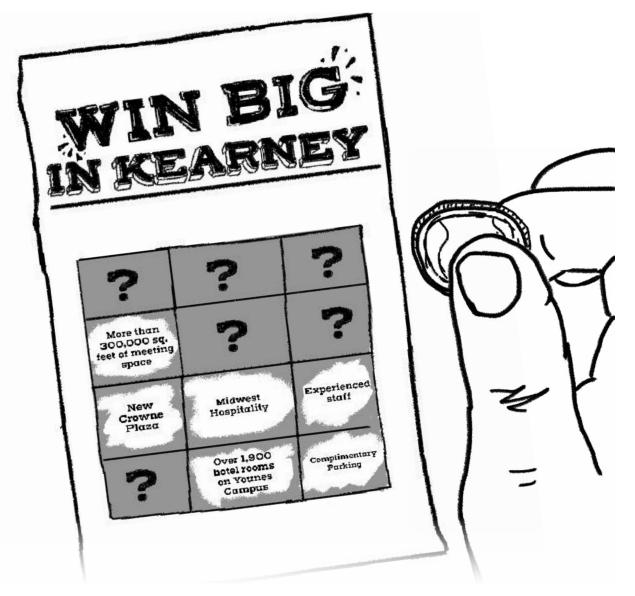




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VISIT



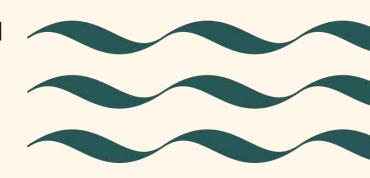








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After the meetings end, try your luck in our beautiful casino floor or check out a live weekend show. If you enjoy betting, our sportsbooks and lounges are a great place to relax after a day of meetings.

While each Elite Casino Resort has the first-class service we're known for, each location has unique experiences. Riverside and Grand Falls both feature championship golf courses and poker rooms while Rhythm City features the Rhythm Room and dining on the top floor with a great view of the Quad Cities. Grand Falls offers an RV park with all the camping amenities you would expect.

Two new destinations are coming soon. Grand Island Casino Resort temporary casino opens late 2022 with full resort construction beginning in 2023. Located in Grand Island, Nebraska at Fonner Park...Nebraska's Springtime Tradition.

Walker's Bluff Casino Resort opens in 2023 and will be located in beautiful southern Illinois. With gorgeous scenery like Garden of the Gods and the Southern Illinois Beer & Wine Trails, meetings here will be truly unique.

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BALLY'S CHICAGO

For more than 30 years, the city of Chicago has been working hard to bring a casino to the heart of the city. That vision is about to become a reality. In May 2022, the City of Chicago approved Bally's casino proposal, which includes a \$1.7 billion casino and hotel to be located on a portion of the 30-acre Chicago Tribune Publishing Center in downtown Chicago's River West neighborhood. The site for the new casino will be within walking distance to a wealth of entertainment, cultural, hotel and dining experiences.

Bally's Corporation plans to construct a casino that will include a 3,000-seat theater; an Immerse Agency exhibition experience; an extension of the Riverwalk; a 500-room hotel tower; an outdoor park; an outdoor music venue for up to 1,000 attendees; an amenity terrace featuring a large pool, spa, fitness center and sun deck; and several restaurants, cafes and a food hall. In addition, the property will boast a 20,000-square-foot exhibition and museum venue. The casino will offer space for 3,400 slots and 173 table games.

While Bally's Chicago is under construction, an initial, temporary casino will be located at Medinah Temple in River North and will offer food and beverage venues as well as 800 gaming positions.

GOLDEN NUGGET DANVILLE

March 2023 is the projected date for the Golden Nugget Danville casino, in Danville, Illinois, to officially open to visitors. Teeming with 41,500 square feet of gaming space, as well as two restaurants, Golden Nugget Danville is expected to be a favorite destination for gamers and event attendees alike. The site for the new casino is a former manufacturing facility boasting 60,000 square feet of space, resulting in ample room for gatherings.

Over 30 years in the making, Golden Nugget Danville is the vision of Fertitta Entertainment and Wilmorite, which owns many recognizable brands in the meetings, event and entertainment space, including Golden Nugget, Harrah's, Saltgrass Steakhouse, Landry's, Bubba Gump, Morton's, Rainforest Café, Joe's Crab Shack and many more.

WIND CREEK CHICAGO SOUTHLAND

Also opening in 2023 is the Wind Creek Chicago Southland, which has proven to be a new favorite meetings and events locale thanks to its unique, eclectic options. Conveniently located in the southern Chicago suburbs, Wind Creek Chicago Southland will offer a wealth of gaming opportunities, as well

as a AAA Four Diamond luxury hotel, which will include an expansive 35,000-square-foot banquet facility and 252 rooms and 53 suites. The state-of-the-art entertainment center will include over 15,800 square feet of space, and will offer unique entertainment opportunities for meeting attendees to enjoy. Advanced technology and digital enhancements will be a huge appeal for meeting planners and attendees who will enjoy the venue's meeting space that accommodates both social and corporate groups.

For those attendees who may not enjoy gaming, Wind Creek Chicago Southland will also provide access to the Ravisloe Country Club, where attendees can enjoy another favorite pastime (golf) when meetings or events are not in session.

WAUKEGAN AMERICAN PLACE

Impeccable service combined with thoughtfully designed facilities is the cornerstone of upcoming American Place Waukegan, a \$375 million casino and hotel built in the Fountain Square area of Waukegan, Illinois, about 35 miles north of downtown Chicago. Being the new shiny penny in town, American Place will have a natural appeal for the region's meetings and event planners. Construction of American Place is expected to be completed in 2025.

The vision for American Place is to be a preeminent gaming, resort and entertainment destination, boasting a level of grandeur that will truly "wow" visitors. In addition to upscale gaming options aplenty – including table games, slots, high limit room and sports betting, a multi-tiered entertainment venue and casual to upscale cuisine will add a memorable flair to any meeting or event orchestrated at the American Place and its boutique hotel. The 1,500-seat entertainment venue is being designed to be transformed into a customizable locale for conferences and private events.



GRAND ISLAND CASINO RESORT

The plains of Nebraska will usher in the newest casino in the area, the Grand Island Casino Resort. And while a temporary Grand Island Casino will be housed within the Fonner Park entertainment complex, the permanent casino will boast an awe-inspiring hotel and casino complex. Serving meetings and events of all styles and sizes, the Grand Island Casino Resort will feature a 37,000-square-foot casino gaming floor



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Must be 18 years of age or older to gamble. Owned by the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation. Getting help is your best bet. Call the confidential toll-free Problem Gambling Helpline at 1-800_522-4700. with 20 table games and 650 slot machines. The 116-room hotel will also provide ample space for gatherings, as well as a welcoming spa, and indoor and outdoor pool with an expansive deck.

Meeting attendees will not only enjoy all that the casino has to offer but also the adjacent horse track and other entertainment components found in Fonner Park.



WALKER'S BLUFF CASINO RESORT

Carterville, Illinois, will be home to one of the region's new casino resorts, Walker's Bluff Casino Resort, which will offer a spacious gaming floor with 650 of the hottest slot machines and 14 live table games. There will be a sports book, Draft Day Sports Lounge and a show lounge on the casino floor.

According to Walker's Bluff Casino Resort General Manager, Craig LeVesque, the resort's event center can be reconfigured for various group sizes. With the state-of-the-art technology, the resort can collaboratively accommodate meetings of all sizes. From meetings to weddings, the venue's sales team can also help make event planning seamless. In addition to an array of meeting and event spaces, the event center will also offer a variety of national headliner entertainment.

In terms of accommodations, Walker's Bluff Casino Resort will feature a 116-room hotel, offering luxurious rooms that will be appointed with upscale finishes and amenities to make meeting and event attendees feel right at home.

In addition to restful accommodations, the food and beverage offerings at Walker's Bluff will satiate the most discriminating of palates, from the high-end Ruthie's Steak & Seafood to the more casual Draft Day Sports Lounge to the family-focused 22 & Vine.

The Spa at Walker's Bluff Casino Resort will be the place attendees can take a break from meetings and gatherings to pamper themselves with saunas, hot tubs, ice rooms and relaxation rooms. Packages will include massages, facials, manicures and pedicures.

EXCITING EXPANSIONS

While the wealth of new casino entertainment and resort properties in the Midwest are something to celebrate, other long-standing gaming gems are undergoing renovations that will excite and delight attendees. These incredible venues gracing the Midwest region consistently work to renew and rejuvenate themselves to meet the evolving needs of today's meeting and events.

Des Plaines, Illinois, is the home to Rivers Casino, a favorite locale among gaming aficionados. Rivers Casino embarked on a 78,000-square-foot, \$87 million expansion that will offer guests additional dining options, as well as expanded entertainment and gaming options, and the much-anticipated ballroom for private events.



The expansion completion is being accomplished in two phases. The ground level expansion, which included a new Asian-themed restaurant, opened in January 2022. The second floor expansion will include a 10,000-square-foot ballroom, 22-table poker room and an expanded slot machine gaming area.

Further north in Milwaukee, the Potawatomi Hotel & Casino recently announced a \$100 million renovation that will revitalize and expand this ever-favorite Wisconsin casino. In addition to new food venues, gaming options and entertainment offerings, the expansion will also include a new 119-room hotel tower, all of which are ideal amenities for meetings or events of all sizes. From conferences to corporate meetings, from galas to tradeshows, the Potawatomi can accommodate groups ranging from 10 to 3,000. *M*

Maura Keller is a freelance writer based in the Twin Cities.

STATE SPOTLIGHT



With its picturesque cityscapes to its awe-inspiring landscapes, from the expansive plains of Nebraska to the valleys and rivers of Minnesota, the Midwest offers ample locales for unique meeting options. Teeming with historic sites, quaint towns and mighty metropolis experiences, the Midwest appeals to many planners because of its unique venues, distinct Midwest charm and natural beauty. And thanks to the cultural offerings throughout cities such as Springfield, Grand Rapids, Terre Haute and Milwaukee, the Midwest truly has something for everyone.

Illinois	51
Indiana	56
Michigan	66
Missouri	73
Ohio	76
Wisconsin	











Courtesy of Illinois Tourism

MidwestMeetings.com

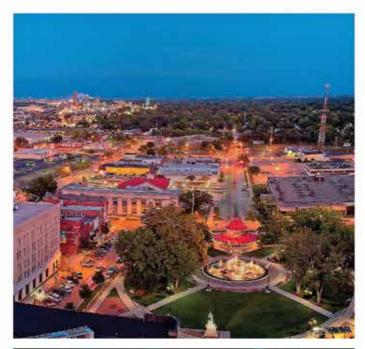
The Land of Lincoln lacks little for the meetings market. Illinois has the charm of historic Mississippi River towns, and the grit and glitz of Chicago, gentle, rural landscapes and soaring urban skyscrapers introduced to the world in the Windy City.

Chicago Architecture Center offers a range of walking, bus and boat tours, as well as the CAC Galleries, featuring both miniature and large models of the city's skyscrapers for a fascinating setting for private functions. Many of those impressive buildings welcome meetings and events, including the recently transformed Old Post Office, which opened in 1921 and was at one time the largest postal facility in the U.S.

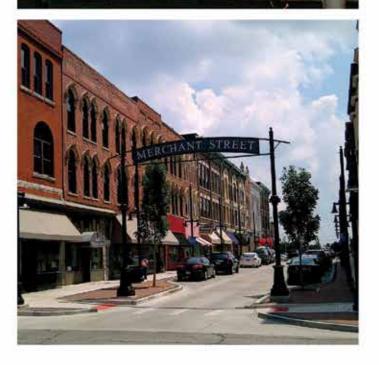
Historic Navy Pier's most impressive venue is the 18,000-square-foot 1916 Aon Grand Ballroom on the Lake Michigan waterfront. Dinner in Shedd's Main Aquarium, a reception at the Museum of Science and Industry and breathtaking views from high above the city at 360 Chicago and Willis Tower are just a sampling of the possibilities for memorable events in Chicago.

The state's rich agricultural heritage is evidenced by Agri Tours Illinois, designed for professional and technical agricultural groups. The John Deere museum and related visitor sites are a draw in Moline, as are Mississippi River cruises aboard the four-decker paddlewheel boat Celebration Belle. In Peoria, a meeting at the Caterpillar Visitors Center & Museum can kick off with a virtual ride in the bed of a 2%-story Cat 797F mining truck.

Springfield, the state capital, was home to Abraham Lincoln for 17 years, until he left for Washington, D.C. A visit to his home, a National Historic Site, complements a meeting or function at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum. Events may include a special theater program or presidential living history performance. *M*







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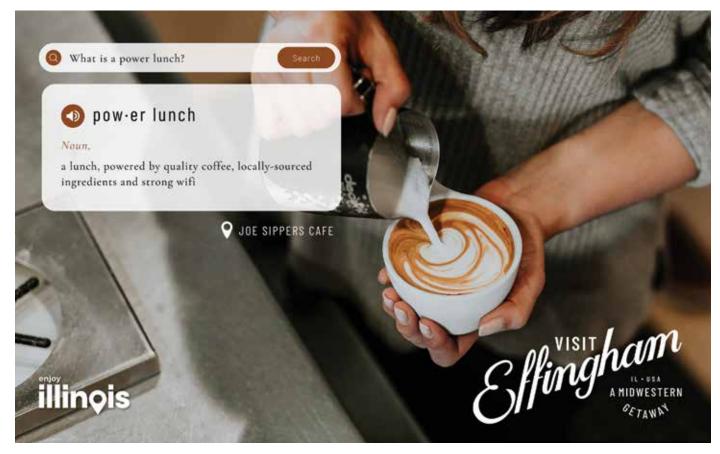
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If your appetite for collaboration is as strong as it is for haute cuisine, we encourage you to plan a post-meeting evening out at our farm to table restaurant, Firefly Grill, where happy hour abounds, and the menu is as fresh as the atmosphere is inspiring.

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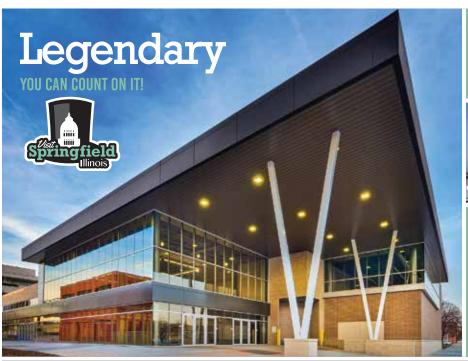
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Indiana's capital city revs up meetings with a variety of venues that add the wow factor for attendees, and send planners on a victory lap. At Indianapolis Motor Speedway, the program can include a "kiss the bricks" track tour or thrilling ride with Indy Racing Experience. Functions at the museum, located inside the 2.5-mile oval, are held among vintage race cars and memorabilia.

Most of Indy's meeting, convention and exhibition spaces, hotels and attractions are conveniently located in the walkable downtown. Also located downtown, White River State Park's multiple event sites include the Indiana State Museum and Eiteljorg Museum, the only Midwest museum dedicated to Native American and the American West art, culture and history. Groups can dine with the dolphins at the Indianapolis Zoo, or meet in the NCAA Hall of Champions and museum. At the world's largest children's museum, events may involve dinosaurs, carousel rides or a fun-and-fitness workout at the outdoor sports complex.

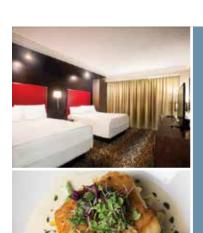
Beyond Indy, Conner Prairie outdoor living history museum in Fishers offers indoor event space and picnic options, including the 1859 Balloon Voyage tethered balloon lift. Minnetrista, once the Muncie home of the mason jar Ball family, is a 40-acre campus with museum, historic home and gardens. The Bob Ross Experience features the recreated studio where the artist's public television show, "The Joy of Painting," was filmed.

56 Midwest Meetings | Fall/Winter 2022

In Fort Wayne, where three rivers converge, Promenade Park's outdoor and sheltered facilities are available for functions. Indiana's second city has a thriving arts scene, and venues at its museum of art and arts campus. Classic vehicles are the backdrop for events at the Studebaker National Museum in South Bend and Art Deco Auburn Cord Duesenberg Automobile Museum in Auburn.

The French Lick Springs and West Baden Springs hotels, both more than a century old, offer opulent settings for groups who enjoy the resort's "miracle waters," golf, spa and casino.







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GOING BEYOND CONVENTION, BEYOND EXPECTATION

Here's why you'll love meeting in downtown Fort Wayne, Indiana

Downtown Fort Wayne, Indiana, is frequently an unexpectedly happy surprise for most visitors. With its burgeoning creative arts scene, expanding business base, and emerging culinary and wellness vibe, this welcoming city is earning broad recognition as one of the most desirable destinations in the U.S. There's an energy here that blends work and play, old and new, fun and function into a singular good-memory experience. And here's what event planners need to know:

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Grand Wayne Convention Center (GWCC) is an award-winning event venue with all the features and solutions to simplify an event planner's job without sacrificing quality or consistency. By design, GWCC provides "built-in" physical essentials:

- 225,000 sq. ft. of sleek, versatile, creative spaces with intuitive floor plans
- Fully carpeted and technologically equipped conference and event rooms
- Two easy-access loading docks with 8 bays and no drayage fees
- · Advanced in-house AV technology
- Free high-performance WiFi for 5,000 users
- In-house catering for up to 3,100 guests
- Three adjacent hotels with garage parking and skywalk connectivity

But beyond the amazing architectural design is the acclaimed GWCC service that most planners notice:

- Complimentary in-house sales and event managers
- In-house professional AV technicians
- In-house, fully staffed F&B service
- Free on-site security, ushers, and guest experiences

More dining and more doing

Perhaps the most pleasant surprise is what guests discover within downtown Fort Wayne's walkable blocks. More than 60 restaurants, pubs, and coffee houses; delightful boutique shopping and entertainment options; lighted pedestrian walkways and parks; and an amazing outdoor gallery of public art beckoning visitors to explore. Live music, pop-ups, and festivals fill the calendar; and foodies are welcome at every table; and just beyond guests are invited to relax along the lazy riverfront or enjoy any of many on-the-water experiences at Promenade or Headwaters parks.

Fort Wayne, for sure

The very essence of "Hoosier Hospitality" lives in the heart of Fort Wayne; and for comparison, event planners often save up to 15% over comparable cities and venues. All of this could explain why GWCC boasts an 80% rebooking rate, and why Fort Wayne, Indiana, is listed among the top cities to visit in 2022 (better.net). For a virtual introduction to this amazing experience, visit grandwayne.com.



HOST YOUR SMALL TO MID-SIZE MEETING COMFORTABLY IN HAMILTON COUNTY

Whether you're hosting a conference or a meeting, whether you're organizing a trade show or putting on any other type of special event, we can comfortably accommodate all of your meeting needs. We have a diverse array of event spaces, from barns to boardrooms to ballrooms—not to mention more than 5,000 hotel rooms and 30,000 sq. ft. of contiguous event space for your larger events.

Bring your next meeting to Hamilton County!
RestEasyHamCo.com



closer than you think



REST EASY IN HAMILTON COUNTY, INDIANA JUST NORTH OF INDIANAPOLIS

You can rest easy when you host your meetings and events in Hamilton County, Indiana – just north of Indy. The Hamilton County sales team assists meeting planners every step of the way – from responding to RFP's, guiding you through property selection, providing amazing visitor experience support and leaving guests with a memorable experience.

1) It's easy to plan your small meeting.

The Hamilton County sales team is ready to welcome you with our Hoosier Hospitality and ensure your event is a success. Our team will arrange site visits, book hotel room blocks, connect you with local vendors and host off-site events and meals, and more.

2) It's easy to create the perfect meeting experience on your budget.

Choose from countless meeting facilities that are affordable yet rich in amenities. Plus, the Hamilton County lodging tax is 5%, and all hotels offer ample FREE parking for your attendees.

3) It's easy to get here.

Hamilton County is just 30 minutes from the

award-winning Indianapolis International Airport and centrally located in Indiana, with easy access to major highways like I-465, I-65 and I-69.

4) It's easy to get around.

Whether you're in Carmel, Fishers, Noblesville or Westfield, it's easy to get around the county without the headache of major metro traffic. Hamilton County is known for its hundreds of roundabout that keep traffic flowing. Plus, our sales team can provide transportation assistance to off-site venues, events and dinners.

5) It's easy to enjoy your experience.

Make your meeting memorable and add fun to your itinerary. Our team can help you choose from sophisticated restaurants, distinctive attractions, volunteer give, back opportunities and fun team-building programs.

The Hamilton County sales team makes booking venues, securing hotel blocks, and event planning a snap. When you book an event in Hamilton County, you'll find yourself wondering why you ever booked anyplace else.





Hamilton County Tourism, Inc.

Laura Kelner Director of Sales 317.848.3181

Ikelner@hamiltoncountytourism.com



Centrally located in the Midwest, the brand-new Terre Haute Convention Center can accommodate conferences, trade shows, meetings, weddings, and more. Our professional event managers are ready to assist you every step of the way, making Terre Haute the perfect destination.

AMENITIES

- · Attached parking garage
- Full service on-site catering
- In-house audio-visual equipment & services Natural lighting
- Bar services
- Complimentary Wi-Fi
- Dance floor
- Flexible grand ballroom
- Large pre-function area
- Loading dock
- Expandable stage

- Meeting rooms
- Modern wireless phone charging stations
- Over 200 walkable hotel rooms and 2.000 hotel rooms in the Terre Haute area
- Professional event planners
- Refillable filtered water stations
- Walkable quaint downtown entertainment, museums, and dining

LARRY BIRD MUSEUM COMING IN 2023













Terre Haute Convention Center

800 Wabash Ave Terre Haute, IN 47807 812.244.1550 TerreHauteCC.com

DESIRED LOCATION

The Terre Haute Convention Center is a premier full-service event venue located in the heart of downtown Terre Haute, Indiana. Centrally located in the Midwest, Terre Haute is 68 miles west of the Indianapolis Airport and within a reasonable driving distance of seven major cities in Indiana and surrounding areas. Enhance your experience by utilizing the attached parking garage, connected hotel, and numerous walkable restaurants, shops and museums during your stay in Terre Haute. In 2023, guests enjoy the Larry Bird Museum.

MEETS BIG CITY DREAMS

MEETING AND EVENT SPACES

Newly completed in April 2022, our facility is a flexible state-of-the-art venue that can accommodate your occasion, whether it is large or small our team is ready to assist you every step of the way. The modern and sleek design offers 22,000 square feet of event space with a beautiful Grand Ballroom located on the first floor. The Grand Ballroom features 12,500 square feet of flexible ballroom space with the ability to seat up to 1,000 attendees for large general seating or 700 attendees in a banquet-

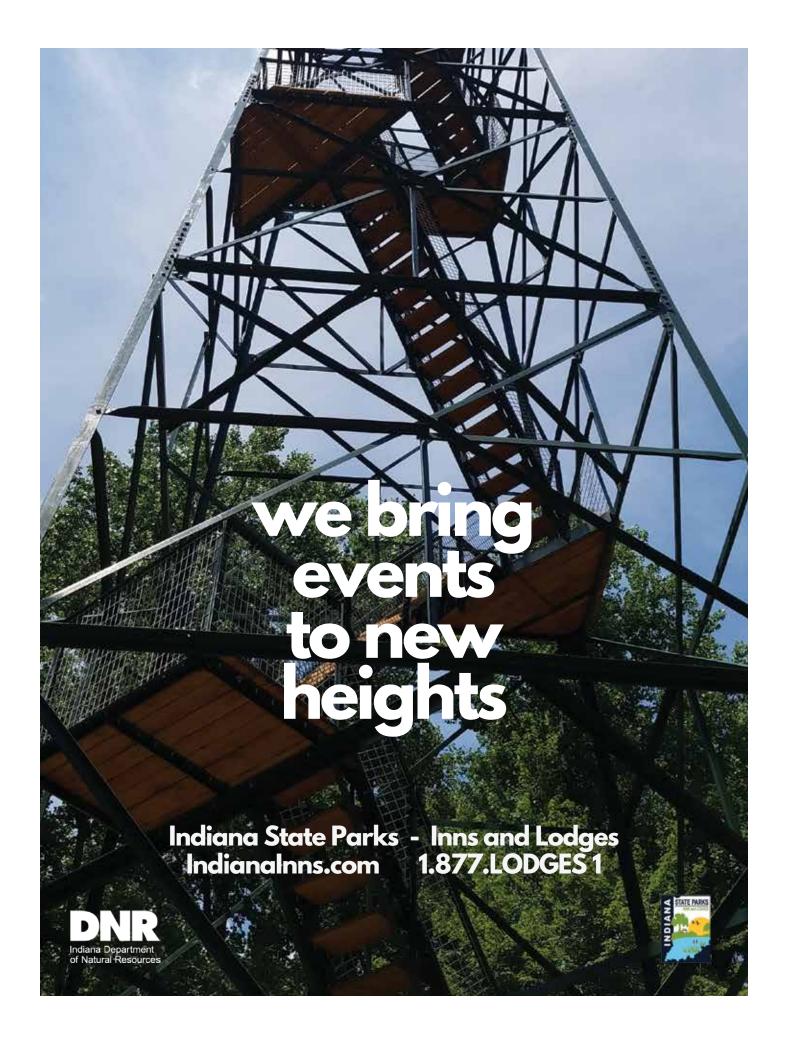
style set. The second story welcomes you with additional meeting space with natural lighting and a large conference room that overlooks our downtown.

WE GO BEYOND THE MENU

The Terre Haute Convention Center can service any meal. We specialize in full-service banquets that consist of plated or buffet meal functions. We can provide breakfast, lunch, dinner, break services and customized meals. Our professional in-house culinary team has the background and experience to manage events of any size or complexity.

HOOSIER HOSPITALITY

Terre Haute Convention Center offers an experienced team of event professionals that will guide you each step of the way. In-house services include on-site catering that can be customized to fit your theme and budget, audio-visual services in all the event spaces, professional on-site event staff who will work with you from start to finish, and exceptional customer service that wants every event to be a success.





VisitFortWayne^{*}

Visit Fort Wayne

927 S. Harrison St. Fort Wayne, IN 46802 260.424.3700 VisitFortWayne.com

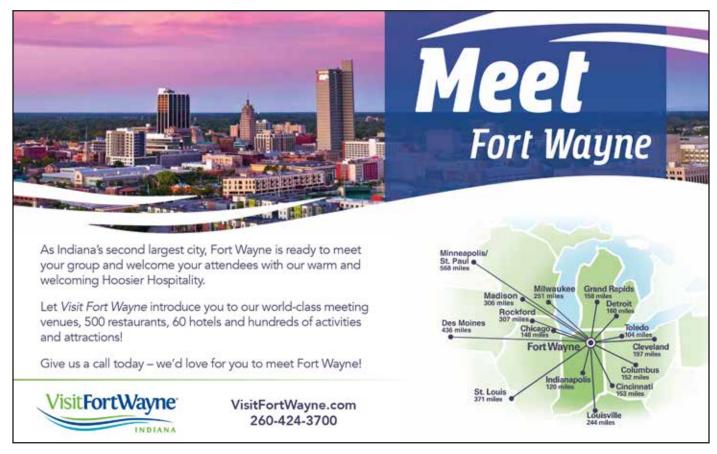
VISIT FORT WAYNE

Meet Fort Wayne

As Indiana's second largest city, Fort Wayne offers customizable convention packages for every group's needs. The downtown convention package is connected, convenient and affordable. Enjoy three full-service Hilton and Marriott properties attached to the Grand Wayne Convention Center with covered parking. Just three walkable blocks away, you'll find Fort Wayne's signature boutique hotel, The Bradley — a partnership between Provenance Hotels and the co-founder of Vera Bradley Designs.

- Grand Wayne Convention Center with more than 225,000 square feet of versatile space and three attached hotels in Downtown Fort Wayne.
- Allen County War Memorial Coliseum one of the region's most popular venues for sports events, concerts or gatherings with more than one million square feet of space under one roof.

Attendee entertainment abounds with TinCaps baseball at downtown's Parkview Field, Botanical Conservatory, Embassy Theatre (all three attached to the Grand Wayne Convention Center), Promenade Park at Riverfront Fort Wayne, Fort Wayne Museum of Art, the second largest Genealogy Center in the country at the Allen County Public Library, Fort Wayne Children's Zoo (one of the top 10 in the nation!), and dozens of high-end, affordable dining options located within steps of the Grand Wayne Convention Center.







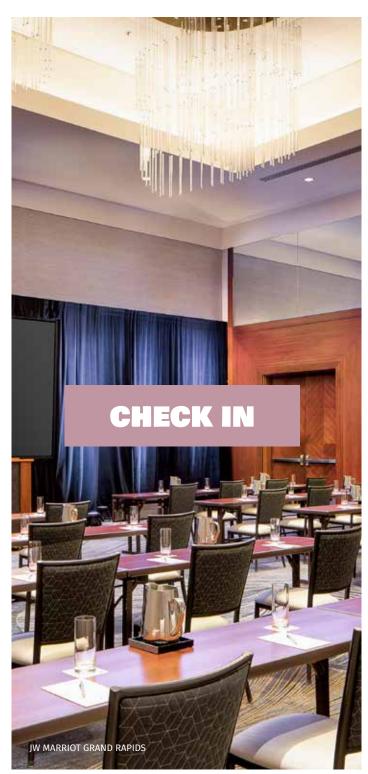


In recent back-to-back announcements, Time magazine declared Detroit one of 50 "World's Greatest Places," and Mackinac Island was named the "Best Island in the Continental U.S." by Travel & Leisure. From the Motor City to car-free Mackinac Island, Michigan's two peninsulas offer one-of-a-kind settings to suit, whether it's bucolic wine country, a scenic resort town or a bustling urban beat.

In downtown Detroit, three-plus-mile RiverWalk is dotted with gardens, plazas and parks, and is a departure point for public and charter boat Detroit River cruises, and bike rentals for guided tours on two wheels. Grand Rapids has earned the title "Beer City USA" for its more than 40 craft breweries in the area; several have event spaces and offer tours. With more than 140 wineries across the state it's easy to arrange a sampling at private tasting parties.

Uniquely Michigan picks for functions and outings include a welkom to Holland by Dutch-costumed greeters and Klompen Dancers; the incomparable Henry Ford Museum of American Innovation and Greenfield Village in Dearborn; Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park in Grand Rapids; Lansing's R.E. Olds Transportation Museum; The Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library in Ann Arbor and the Presidential Museum in Grand Rapids; MotorCities heritage tours; and on Mackinac Island, the world's longest porch at Grand Hotel and the soundstage at Mission Point Resort, where the movie Somewhere in Time was filmed.

Need a team-building exercise? Head to Marquette and the Lake Superior shore for a mountain biking or hiking challenge, have a hands-on doughy pretzel rolling experience in Frankenmuth, host a golf outing at a course designed by the biggest names in the game, or charter boats for a fishing competition on one of the four inland seas that shape the Great Lakes State. M





MEETING DESTINATION — CHECK.

Check in to one of our uniquely spirited hotels — with each one offering a different vibe, style, flavor, focus, and capability to fit your meeting needs, wants, and gotta-have-its. Check out the surrounding area and you'll be amazed by the sheer number of opportunities to get your groove on, whatever it is; museums, music, art, theater, the symphony, a proper cocktail, fine-dining, or fun dining. Your meeting destination mystery, solved. Scan the QR code, Let's plan!







Flint City Murals







EXPLORE FLINT & GENESEE





Explore Flint & Genesee

519 S. Saginaw St., Suite 200 Flint, MI 48502 810.600.1404 exploreflintandgenesee.org

EXPLORE FLINT & GENESEE

For More Than a Meeting

With historic attractions, world-class art and cultural venues, and more than 130,000 square feet of gathering space, the hardest part about choosing a location for your meeting in Flint & Genesee is making a selection! We're home to many unique locations and spaces, many with direct or close access to our vibrant community offerings.

Among them:

- Sloan Museum of Discovery and Flint Public Library recently opened after multimillion renovations; each offer beautiful event and meeting options for planners
- Flint Institute of Arts, Michigan's secondlargest art museum and one of the largest museum-connected community art schools in the United States
- Crossroads Village and Huckleberry Railroad with historic buildings and shops, including Michigan's oldest operating gristmill
- The Capitol Theatre, a fully restored historic venue listed on the National Register of Historic Places
- Flint Farmers' Market with meeting spaces, rooftop terrace and atrium for corporate and private events
- Dort Financial Center, home of the Flint Firebirds (hockey) and Flint United (basketball)

Flint and Genesee County are serviced by Flint Bishop International Airport, Michigan's third-largest airport with direct flights to destinations across the country. Flint is also approximately one hour from Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport. Centered at the crossroads of I-75 and I-69 with US-23 and I-475 nearby, the region is the ideal Michigan location to meet in the middle of it all.

Explore Flint & Genesee staff work with planners from every market: sports, associations, corporate, military, fraternal, educational, faith-based, medical, government and more. Our team provides support and expertise to save you time and money.

Genesee County offers competitively priced hotels, conference and banquet facilities, various sports facilities, and professional service providers to fully execute any event—plus more than 300 Certified Tourism Ambassadors ready to make a positive impression on your guests.

Make your next event more than a meeting when you contact the experienced team at Explore Flint & Genesee.





VIBRANT. HISTORICAL. BEAUTIFUL.





Holland Area CVB

78 E. 8th Street Holland, MI 49423 616.394.0000 holland.org Located in southwest Michigan, just three hours from Chicago and Detroit, Holland is a favorite meeting and event destination. Known for its award-winning downtown, Lake Michigan shoreline, and distinctive Dutch attractions, Holland offers a stunning backdrop for events large and small.

Many travelers come early, stay late, and choose to bring their families along when the event site is in Holland. This is good news for attendance – more people come to meetings, sporting competitions, and conventions when Holland is the destination. Our skilled staff knows the Holland area inside and out. Let us help you craft an extraordinary meeting experience, and to market the small-town characteristics that make Holland an enchanting setting in any season.

The Holland Visitors Bureau is dedicated to assisting you in the planning and implementation of all phases of your meeting or special event. Our skilled staff knows the Holland area inside and out. We are happy to assist you with the following services:

- Securing competitive lodging proposals
- Meeting promotion

- Pre-convention and post-convention activities
- Spouse programs, including tours with Dutch-costumed step-on guides
- Procurement of services and facilities
- Registration assistance, including complimentary Dutch-costumed Greeters
- Holland and Western Michigan promotional literature

We invite you to picture your next meeting in historic downtown Holland, Michigan. Named one of "America's Prettiest Towns" by Forbes Magazine, Holland offers three luxury hotels and a variety of meeting spaces within a short four block walking radius.

The team at the Holland Area Convention & Visitors Bureau is ready to work with your team to tailor a seamless and enjoyable event. Whether a small intimate venue or an expansive space meets your needs, Holland is happy to welcome your group to one of Fodor's "Cutest Main Streets" for an amazing experience.

Above all, we want you to feel welcome and enjoy our "Dutch Hospitality!"



G R E A I E R LANGE BUREAU

Greater Lansing CVB

500 E. Michigan Ave., Suite 180 Lansing, MI 48912 800.648.6630 lansing.org

THE HEART OF MICHIGAN

From the amenities you need to all the extras attendees demand, there is no better choice than Greater Lansing, Michigan.

We know it's challenging being a professional meeting planner. Expectations are high. You need to find the best choice of venues, dates, engaging and relevant speakers, a convenient location and all the other items on your long and comprehensive checklist - all while keeping things within your budget. The Greater Lansing Convention & Visitors Bureau can help to ensure that you put on a successful and memorable meeting or conference.

Greater Lansing has an **array of venues** to choose from whether you're looking for large arenas and convention halls or small intimate settings. Find **affordable accommodations** with over 5,100 hotel rooms and venues that are conveniently located to nearby attractions and restaurants which can act as a separate **unique meeting space** or for entertainment purposes. Our **walkable downtowns** make it easy for attendees to find lunch or dinner, snacks or a coffee shop. Both Lansing and East Lansing are safe and easy to navigate - and not overwhelming like larger cities. And access to **expert presenters and panelists** is easy with Michigan State University scholars nearby.

Last and certainly not the least, our **expert team of Certified Meeting Professionals** will support you with complimentary services and ensure you have everything you need for a memorable event.

The choice is easy. We'll help you shine, make your job easier and host your best event yet. **Choose Greater Lansing.**









t's the birthplace of Mark Twain, Harry S.
Truman, toasted ravioli and Route 66. From St.
Louis and the Mighty Mississippi on the eastern state line to Kansas City and the Missouri River on the west — with lakes, rivers, caverns, mountains and a whole lot of barbecue in between — the Show-Me State offers plenty.

In St. Louis, an evening at the Museum at the Gateway Arch with a private Tram Ride to the top of the iconic structure is unforgettable. The home of Anheuser-Busch offers Clydesdale meetups, brewery tours and biergartens. Opt for the opulent 1894 Union Station, historic Forest Park's Saint Louis Zoo or the Trolley Room, an 1892 streetcar facility. Only in St. Louis, gather amid surreal art installations at the City Museum, music memorabilia at the National Blues Museum or planes, trains and automobiles at the National Museum of Transportation.

Kansas City's Union Station features the elegant Grand Plaza and the former men's lounge of the 1914 railway hub. One-of-a-kind settings include the College Basketball Experience, the American Jazz Museum's Blue Room music club and the Arabia Steamboat Museum, with its 28-foot paddlewheel. Team building happens in shuffleboard competitions at Boulevard Brewing Company's Rec Deck and mini-golf at Art Course, where each of the nine holes represents a work in the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art.



Groups retreat to Lake of the Ozarks and experience the massive reservoir aboard a chartered Celebration Cruise or Calypso pirate ship. Springfield is the home of Bass Pro Shops and its event-friendly Wonders of Wildlife National Museum & Aquarium. The company's Big Cedar Lodge near Branson offers a myriad of meeting sites and outdoor activities.

Branson's variety of venues is endless, indoors and out. Book Dolly Parton's Stampede dinner show or meet while cruising Table Rock Lake on Showboat Branson Belle. At the Titanic museum, gatherings are shipshape.

Book tee times for your group at courses throughout the state, including one of Big Cedar Lodge's six courses designed by such pros as Tiger Woods, Tom Watson, Jack Nicklaus, Gary Player and Ben Crenshaw.

And definitely leave time to enjoy the fabulous barbecue cuisine. Whether it's brisket, a slab of ribs — Kansas City style or St. Louis style, you'll have to decide for yourself — chicken or pulled pork, the slow cooked delicacy is a must for your group. Finish it off with the state's official dessert — the ice cream cone! \mathcal{M}

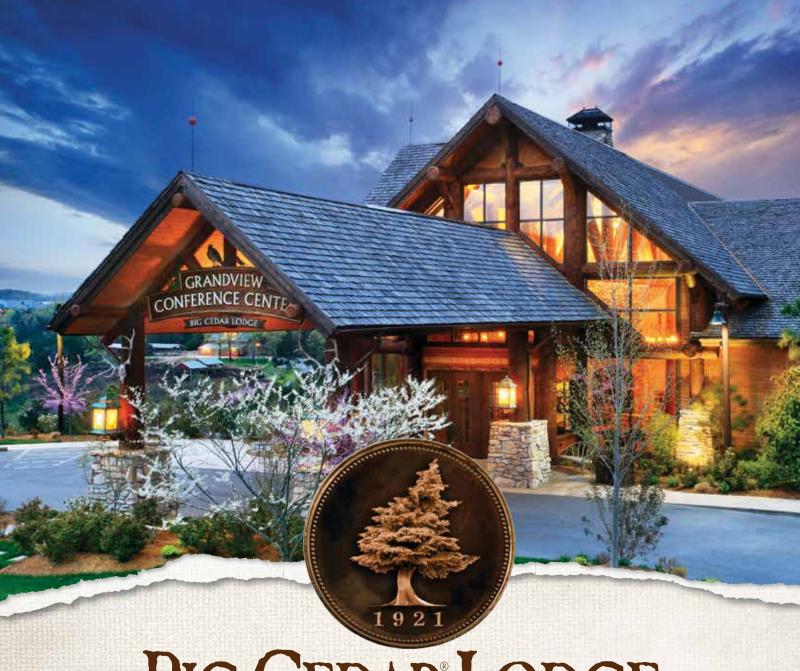




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BIG CEDAR LODGE

+ AMERICA'S PREMIER WILDERNESS RESORT +



Escape to the Ozark Mountains of Missouri for a group gathering your team will never forget. Enjoy spectacular meeting spaces overlooking Table Rock Lake, one-of-a-kind team building activities like golf, skeet shooting, kayaking and fishing, and of course, our inviting accommodations surrounded by stunning scenery. Call today to book your next group getaway.

855.749.8736 | BIGCEDAR.COM







The Buckeye State's major cities — Cleveland, Cincinnati and Columbus — put the "OH!" in an Ohio meeting or event with a surprising array of unique venues that can be rented in whole or in part to suit groups of all sizes.

In Cleveland, standouts are the mecca for music fans, the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, and the Great Lakes Science Center, with its NASA Glenn Visitor Center. You can charter a cruise for dinner along the Cuyahoga River and Lake Erie shoreline, or lock in a special event at VAULT, a 1906 bank vault beneath the Cleveland Trust Rotunda.

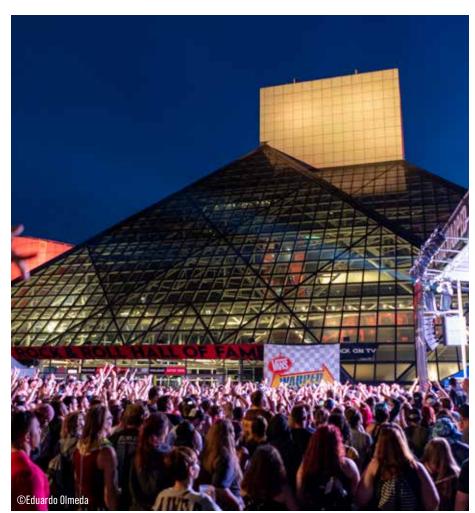
Cincinnati's National Underground Railroad Freedom Center is a moving and memorable venue, while the American Sign Museum's century of commercial signage makes a fun setting. Moerlein Lager House, a brewery and restaurant on the Ohio River, taps into the Queen City's beer heritage.

Mixing science with socializing, interactive exhibits are available during functions at COSI, the Center of Science and Industry in Columbus. The capital city is also home to the National Veterans Memorial and Museum, the only institution that honors all vets throughout U.S. military history. At Shadowbox Live, performances by resident artists enliven a meeting and meal.

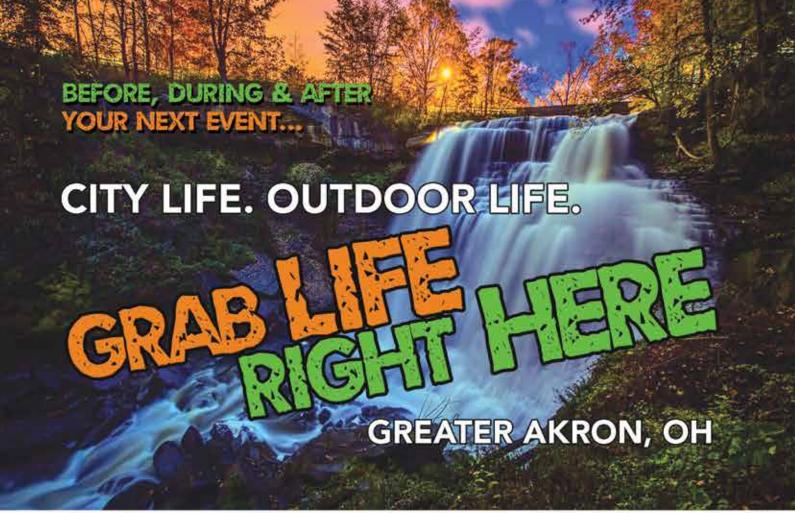
More only-in-Ohio locales include the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force and the Armstrong Air & Space Museum in Dayton, and Canton's Pro Football Hall of Fame.

Unusual team-building in Cleveland means Play: CLE, an indoor adventure park with climbing wall, ropes course and mazes. Small groups can become pinball wizards on new and vintage pinball machines at the Superelectric Pinball Parlor. In Cincinnati, teams face off in competition with bows and foam-tipped arrows at Archery Arena, while in the Columbus area, groups go on a photo safari throughout the world-renowned zoo, or a zipline safari at The Wilds, a 10,000-acre wild animal sanctuary.

Venture outside of the city centers and you'll find a beautiful landscape of welcoming, smaller communities that offer unique and friendly accommodations for groups. Places like Akron, Lima and Wooster offer a quieter pace, where guests will find easily accessible venues, and areas to spread out and enjoy the beautiful scenery. One of the most impressive trails to explore is the Ohio to Erie Trail covering 326 miles of the state, connecting the Ohio River in the southwest corner of the state with Lake Erie in the northwest corridor. Or take your group up to 100 feet underground with a tour at the Ohio Caverns, where guests will see a colorful display of stalactites and other natural wonders first discovered in the late 19th century.









GRABLIFERIGHTHERE.COM

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CONNECT WITH US!









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WE'RE READY WHEN YOU'RE READY

LET'S START PLANNING {AGAIN}! JOHN S. KNIGHT CENTER | AKRON, OH



Staff Is 92% Friendlier Than The Other Guys



8 Out Of 10 Visitors Rate Food "Excellent" (the other 2 mink it's "Really Good")



35 Minutes Away From CLE



ENSURING THE
HIGHEST STANDARDS:
Building Sanitation
Food Preparation/Handling
Air Filtration Systems









Whether it's a one-night event or week-long conference, our professional staff is here to ensure a top-notch experience both inside and out.

Call 800.245.4254 or visit johnsknightcenter.org for 360° tours!





SERIOUS MEETINGS WITH SERIOUS FUN

At Kalahari Resorts & Conventions, we give you everything you need to make your event a success. You and your attendees will enjoy ample event space, custom group and world-class dining experiences, a full-service spa and second to none service. Your attendance-increasing event at Kalahari is one your members will look forward to.

- > 200,000 square feet of flexible event space
- > Nearly 1,000 guest rooms & suites at all locations
- > Complimentary Wi-Fi and parking
- > Diverse team-building options available on-site
- > Premium food & beverage options
- > The best amenities available, all under one roof

KalahariMeetings.com | Call 855-411-4605 to learn more | Follow Us: 😗 🚹





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Kalahari Resorts

OHGroups@KalahariResorts.com WIGroups@KalahariResorts.com PAGroups@KalahariResorts.com TXGroups@KalahariResorts.com 855.411.4605 kalaharimeetings.com

YOUR KALAHARI ADVENTURE AWAITS

The Kalahari Difference

Kalahari Resorts & Conventions, located in Sandusky, OH, offers a unique all-under-one-roof experience. With 215,000 sq. ft. of top-notch and customizable meeting spaces and a dedicated team providing first-class service, Kalahari makes planning your event simple. The resort features three ballrooms and 39 meeting rooms along with exceptional prefunction space and dedicated loading docks.

Your guests will enjoy easy access to entertainment options, world-class dining and a full-service spa. Kalahari has everything you need, and the amenities your guests want, to ensure a successful event.

Accommodations

Home to America's Largest Indoor Waterpark, Kalahari Resorts & Conventions makes your meeting or event a destination the whole family can enjoy. Waterpark passes are included for all registered guests and with one, two, and three bedroom entertainment suites, Kalahari has accommodations to fit any size group.

Entertainment, Dining and Spa

With our entertainment and dining, you won't miss out at Kalahari. The 173,000-sq.-ft. indoor waterpark features thrilling waterslides (you'll want to ride them all!), a lazy river, swim-up

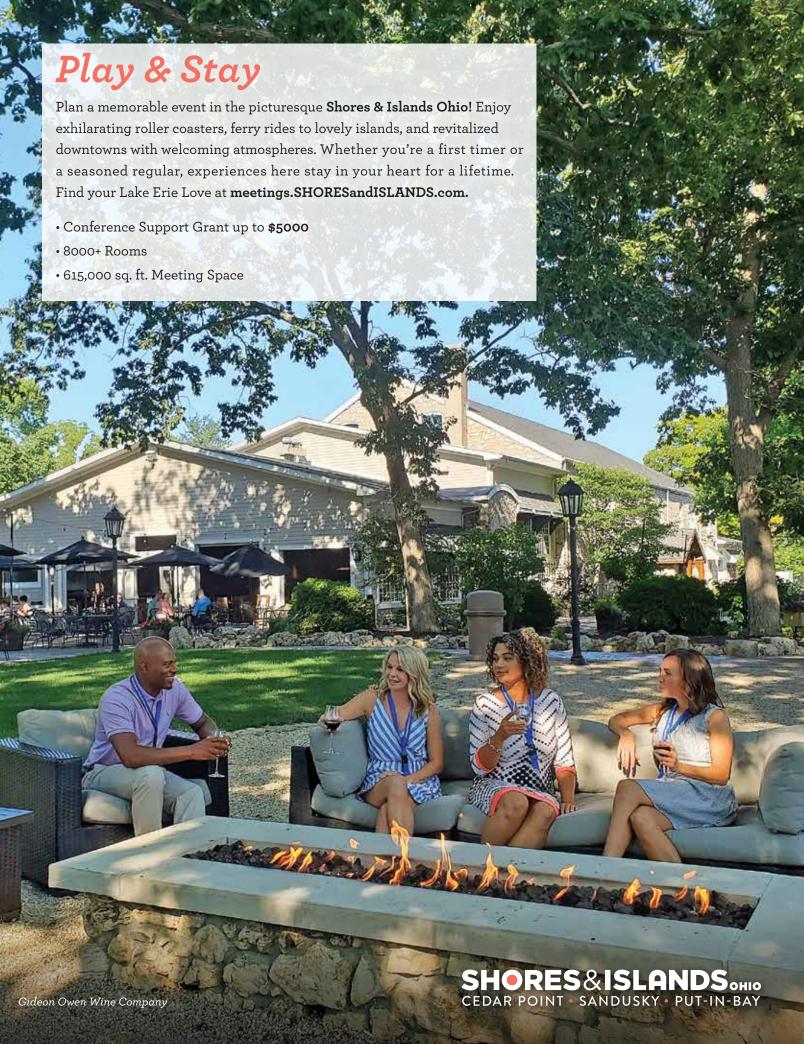
bars, indoor/outdoor spas, a kid's area, private cabanas and more. Pair it with our Big Game Room – escape rooms, blacklight mini-golf, laser tag and hundreds of arcade games – you'll find entertainment options for the whole family.

When it comes to dining, our talented culinary team is ready to create a tailored group dining experience to delight your guests. Plus, you'll have access to our world-class dining options, including on-site restaurants, casual and formal, and buffet options; you'll find something for every taste.

If relaxation and pampering are your aim, you'll find it at Spa Kalahari. Treat yourself to a luxurious massage, nail and hair care service, body treatments or book some time in the Halotherapy salt room, where Himalayan salts detoxify the body from inside out.

Airport & Transportation

Located under two hours from major cities in the greater Lake Erie region, Kalahari Resorts & Conventions in Sandusky, OH, is the perfect destination for your next event. Easily accessible for your guests, but far enough away to completely immerse themselves in a unique and unforgettable convention experience.







nce known for its beer, cheese and the Packers, Wisconsin is still all that — and more. The craft brew and culinary scenes are booming and there are plenty of alternatives to football, although the tours of Lambeau Field, and meetings and social events at the legendary Green Bay stadium remain in demand.

In Milwaukee, gather in the historic caves where Frederick J. Miller stored his brew more than 150 years ago, or plan a local food-centric event at the Milwaukee Public Market. Explore the diverse exhibits during your event at the Milwaukee Public Museum, or meet at the Harley-Davidson Museum, which explores the history and culture of the iconic bikes. The Lake Michigan waterfront and dramatic architecture of the Milwaukee Art Museum and Discovery World Science & Technology Center make stunning settings for business or social events. For an elegant and sophisticated venue, choose The George and Madcap Lounge in the recently renovated National Block Building.

Meet at the Rooftop Sculpture Garden of the Madison Museum of Contemporary Art, or plan a safari at the Henry Vilas Zoo. Sample the German- and American-style brews at the Capital Brewery Bier Garten. Book a tasting event at the National Mustard Museum or plan a group paddle on one of Madison's surrounding lakes.

surrounding lakes.

For a truly Wisconsin experience, get a taste of "America's Dairyland" at a barn dance and hayride at Homestead Meadows Farm, or learn about Houdini at the History Museum at the Castle in Appleton, hometown of the famous illusionist. Add some fun to your function at Circus World Museum in Baraboo, winter home of Ringling Brothers Circus, or head to Wisconsin Dells, "The Waterpark Capital of the World." At Destination Kohler, teams can compete or just enjoy indoor and outdoor activities, including luxurious spa services and top-notch golf.



Host Your Next Event in Brookfield







Fast Facts:

- 40,000+ total sq ft of flexible meeting and event space
- 18,000 sq ft. Connect Ballroom
- 6,000 sq ft Collaborate Ballroom
- 8,000 sq ft Celebration Atrium
- 9,000 sq ft Celebration Plaza
- On-site catering & beverage service
- Complimentary surface parking
- Over 1,800 hotel rooms in the City of Brookfield
- Ideal location- convenient access from I-94

From small meetings to galas, the Brookfield Conference Center provides the perfect backdrop for any corporate or social function. Featuring modular ballrooms, elegant pre and post function space, and an experienced staff to make sure every event is a success.

Signature Food and Beverage





Flexible Function Space









BROOKFIELD



Visit Brookfield

325 S. Moorland Rd., Ste. 100 Brookfield, WI 53005 262.789.0220 visitbrookfield.com

BROOKFIELD CONFERENCE CENTER

A Plan Comes Together

The City of Brookfield and Visit Brookfield partnered to open the Brookfield Conference Center in the summer of 2020. North Central Group, a highly respected hotel property management company is our proud collaborator, building and operating The Hilton Garden Inn as well as managing and operating the new conference center.

Form Meets Function

The Brookfield Conference Center was designed with flexibility in mind. Over 40,000 square feet of meeting/function space allows for a multitude of configurations for the business or social event planner. Our facility offers 4 distinct gathering spaces:

- The Connect Ballroom with 18,000 square feet of space and 11 different layout options is the centerpiece of the Brookfield Conference Center.
- The Collaborate Ballroom offers 6,000 square feet and 3 space configurations.
 Banks of custom-designed channel-glass enhance natural light.
- The glass-encased Celebration Atrium is a 9,000-square-foot space for pre- or postfunction gatherings, breaks and more.

 The Celebration Plaza offers 9,000 square feet of outdoor meeting space.
 Beautiful landscaping, Edison lighting and comfortable seating make this an inviting outdoor location for smaller gatherings.

No Details Overlooked

The Brookfield Conference Center has an in-house Executive Chef, and full-service food and beverage catering. An attached 168-room Hilton Garden Inn provides convenient accommodations for Conference Center guests. Ample, free, surface parking rounds out the amenities at our facility.

We invite you to schedule a tour of the Brookfield Conference Center before booking your next event. Conveniently located at I-94 and Moorland Road, just minutes from downtown Milwaukee. Contact us at 262-789-0220.









Begin Your Journey Here

The Hilton Appleton Paper Valley is a newly remodeled hotel located in the heart of vibrant downtown Appleton with 40+ restaurants, Performing Arts Center and Lawrence University at your doorstep. The hotel offers 388 guest rooms and is connected to the Fox Cities Exhibition Center.

Meeting Spaces

Hilton Appleton Paper Valley has 38,000 square feet of newly remodeled event space, perfect for conferences, meeting, and social events. Choose from 27 unique and flexible options that can accommodate 5-1,000 people.

Fox Cities Exhibition Center

Event space that is designed to host conventions, trade shows, banquets, meetings, and entertainment. Includes 38,000+ square feet of flexible indoor space and a 17,000 square foot outdoor plaza with a skywalk that directly connects to Hilton Appleton Paper Valley.

333 W College Ave Appleton, WI 54911

(920) 733-8000

appletonpapervalley.hilton.com

Hilton

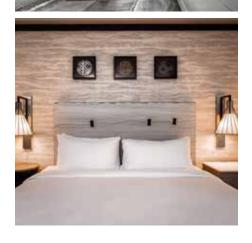
Scan to take a virtual trip







LET'S MAKE MEMORIES TOGETHER



Newly remodeled pet-friendly hotel located in the heart of vibrant downtown Appleton with 40+ nearby restaurants, the Performing Arts Center and Lawrence University at your doorstep. The hotel offers 388 guest rooms and is connected to the Fox Cities Exhibition Center.

The Fox Cities Exhibition Center is designed to host conventions, trade shows, banquets, meetings and entertainment. It includes 38,000+ square feet of flexible indoor space and a 17,000-square-foot outdoor plaza with a skywalk that directly connects to Hilton Appleton Paper Valley.

The Hilton Appleton Paper Valley has 38,000 square feet of newly remodeled event space, perfect for conferences, meetings and social events. Choose from 27 unique and flexible options that can accommodate 5 to 1,000 people.

The hotel includes five on-site restaurants that welcome in-house and local customers. Harvest Kitchen and Pantry offers a variety of upscale American-style dishes and a unique soup and salad bar. Clubhouse Kitchen and Bar offers a fun and sports-like atmosphere, includes a new golf simulator and a distinctive menu that will blow you away. Vince Lombardi's Steakhouse is an award-winning steakhouse that offers an unforgettable experience with over 400 of Vince Lombardi's memorabilia, extraordinary menu items, and an extensive wine list. Blaze Bourbon and Whiskey Bar is a rustic firemen-themed bar, famous for their smoked cocktails with an outdoor patio leading to the courtyard. Starbucks is a new addition to the hotel in fall 2022.

We ensure you will experience hospitality like no other at the Hilton Appleton Paper Valley, from our amazing and friendly staff to a variety of restaurant options for you to choose from, and a catering menu that individually fits your every need. With our purpose-driven culture we are recognized for making your memories ones worth the tell. Let us be a part of your journey!



Hilton Appleton Paper Valley

333 West College Ave
Appleton, WI 54915
920.733.8000
Appletonpapervalley.hilton.com



Book your next meeting in Janesville

- Fraction of the cost of larger cities
- Variety of unique locations
- Total combined meeting space: 39,337 sq ft
- 987 hotel rooms
- Easily accessible right off I-39/90
- Free JACVB assistance every step of the way





janesvillecvb.com · (800) 487-2757 · ⊕⊕€









Janesville Area Convention & Visitors Bureau

20 S. Main St., Ste. 11 Janesville, WI 53545 800.487.2757 janesvillecvb.com

UNIQUE & MEMORABLE MEETINGS IN JANESVILLE, WISCONSIN

Lots of Options

Janesville is home to a wide selection of versatile meeting venues including both natural and historical locations that will make your meeting distinctive and unforgettable. From locations filled with rich history such as the Janesville Woman's Club or the Rock County Historical Society, to the scenic beauty found at the award-winning Rotary Botanical Gardens, to the Janesville Conference Center in the Holiday Inn Express with state-ofthe-art technology, Janesville offers a variety of meeting spaces. Many of Janesville's meeting spaces offer a unique one-of-a-kind atmosphere that will provide a memorable experience for attendees. If you're looking for a fun and unique venue you may also want to consider one of our breweries, wineries, performing arts center, or even a local farm.

Meeting Space

The area's selection of spaces can accommodate meetings ranging in size from 10 to 1,300 attendees.

- Number of hotel rooms: 987
- Largest meeting facility: 15,000 sq. ft.
- Largest exhibit facility: 12,000 sq. ft.
- Total combined meeting space: 64,740 sq. ft.

Convenient Location

Janesville's convenient location provides lots of transportation options to make planning even easier. Janesville is located directly off I-39/90, less than one hour from major travel hubs Milwaukee, Madison and Rockford, IL, and less than 2 hours from Chicago.

Activities

Engaging with colleagues outside of the meeting space in a more relaxed setting can provide inspiration to attendees. Janesville has plenty of ways to get out and enjoy the community while you're here for your event.

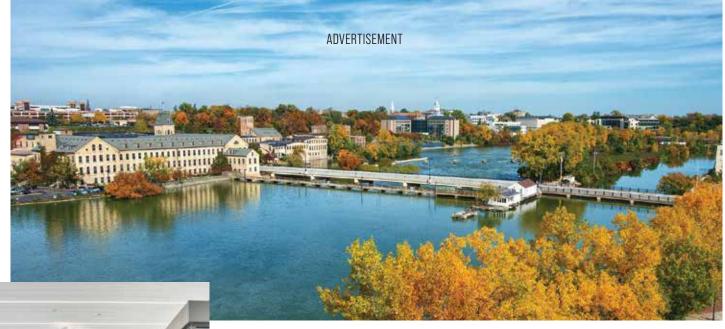
- Group and solo activities
- · Attractions and recreation
- Walking tours
- Spouse tours
- Nightlife
- Shopping & dining options

Outstanding Customer Service

The staff at the Janesville Area Convention & Visitors Bureau is here to help you every step of the way, from customized welcome packets and nametags, to assisting with public relations and locating the perfect venue, pavilion, or overnight accommodations.

Rest assured that your group will be treated to Janesville's friendly Midwestern hospitality and professionalism while enjoying comfortable, clean accommodations, low costs and no fees for parking.

Janesville's selection of hotels, restaurants, attractions and unique opportunities found only in Wisconsin's Great Outside will provide you with creative flexibility in planning your event.







Fox Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau

213 S. Nicolet Rd. Appleton, WI 54914 920.734.3358 foxcities.org

LIMITED TIME INCENTIVES FOR FOX CITIES BOOKINGS

New proposals could be eligible for \$500 and up.

It's no secret that in-person professional meetings and events have been sluggish in their return post-pandemic. In spite of all the change, one thing that's remained the same is the critical importance of in-person meetings and events to the individuals and organizations that participate in them. As the Fox Cities CVB has been busy helping groups return to the in-person events we all remember and enjoy, here are four reasons to consider the Fox Cities as your next event destination:

Special Rates for Bookings: Kickstart your planning now for a kickback down the road. Any new proposals originated through the Fox Cities CVB or in partnership with a Fox Cities hotel could be eligible for an incentive starting at \$500. In addition to an incentive, working with the Fox Cities CVB to plan your event means you'll be getting the insight and guidance of our experienced group sales managers knowledgeable on best practices and local health guidelines. Visit https://www.foxcities.org/meeting-event-planners/get-meetings-going/ for more details.

Unique Spaces and Places: Urban style and amenities mixed with one-of-a-kind natural wonders create memorable and awe-inspiring venues to impress your attendees. The Lodge at Bubolz Nature Preserve sits on 700 acres of unique outdoor habitats while Stone Arch at Riverview Gardens is set atop a bluff overlooking

the Fox River. A large array of spaces and places ensures we have the venue to fit any meeting or event.

Convenience: Located in East Central Wisconsin, Midwesterners will enjoy the easy drivability to the Fox Cities; the greater Appleton area lies about three hours north of Chicago or just over four hours east of the Twin Cities. Prefer to fly instead? Appleton is home to the third largest airport in Wisconsin. The Appleton International Airport (ATW) serves northeast Wisconsin via four major airlines with nonstop services to 11 locations including Chicago, Detroit and Minneapolis/St. Paul.

Business to Leisure: The spirit of authenticity and creativity run deep in the Fox Cities, creating one of Wisconsin's finest regions for food, drink, art and recreation. For those looking to learn something new, the History Museum at the Castle or a walk along the Fox Trot Trail offer opportunities to take in the remarkable history of the region. From Broadway shows at the Fox Cities Performing Arts Center to shopping in our thriving downtowns, there is no shortage of activities for attendees to enjoy.

Contact the Fox Cities Convention and Visitors Bureau (FCCVB) convention and sales team to learn more about the Fox Cities at ahutchinson@foxcities.org or 920-734-3358.

90 Midwest Meetings | Fall/Winter 2022



NISIT MIDDY ZOL

Visit Middleton

1811 Parmenter St. Middleton, WI 53562 800.688.5694 meetinmiddleton.com

MEET IN MIDDLETON

Plan the perfect meeting

Middleton, Wisconsin, with a mix of historic charm and new development, is the perfect meeting place for everything from board meetings to conventions.

Home to the county's largest convention center hotel, as well as eight more well-established hotel properties, Middleton can host most any group. The city also boasts more than 70 restaurants and cafes, two shopping districts, a beautiful golf course, on-the-lake boat rentals, gorgeous trails and conservancy land, and easy access to downtown Madison.

Enjoy what you can only find in Middleton — the National Mustard Museum for quirky and delicious gifts; Capital Brewery & Bier Garten for award-winning beer and casual fun; stunning views and easy trails at Pheasant Branch Conservancy; and so much more.

Let us help you plan your next meeting right here and find out why it's the middle things that make us special.



aybe it's meeting in one of our conference spaces, or enjoying our 70 restaurants and cafes. Network with friends over beer and cheese tastings at our award-winning brewery, or venture over to Middleton's newly rejuvenated downtown shopping district.

It's the middle things.

66,000 sq. ft. of Conference Space
1,153 Hotel Rooms
Indoor & Outdoor Activities



Meetings meet Convenience







Let our experienced destination staff assist with all your planning needs!

We help make your meetings a success with our convenient location, directly off I-94 between Milwaukee and Madison in the heart of "Lake Country," complimentary personalized services, and these benefits:

- More than 100,000 square feet of affordable, flexible meeting space
- 1,300+ guestrooms with complimentary parking
- Plenty of after-hours dining and entertainment options for your attendees

Learn more at visitwaukesha.org/meetmore







Waukesha Pewaukee Convention & Visitors Bureau

N14 W23755 Stone Ridge Dr., Ste. 225 Waukesha, WI 53188 262.542.0330 visitwaukesha.org/meetmore

MEET CONVENIENCE & MORE IN WAUKESHA PEWAUKEE

Waukesha Pewaukee is a convenient, welcoming community with many activities to keep your meeting attendees entertained. Located between Milwaukee and Madison (off I-94), within southeast Wisconsin's Lake Country, meeting planners will find more than 100,000 square feet of flexible meeting space, complimentary parking and 1,300+ guest rooms.

Featured full service properties include:

- The Ingleside Hotel offers a refreshing change of pace from conventional meeting and conference destinations. Business events are special with trails for hiking and wide-open spaces for team building outside. The hotel offers 192 guest rooms and over 40,000 square feet of flexible banquet and meeting space as well as many amenities.
- The 281-room Milwaukee Marriott West offers generous amenities and public space.

The 10,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art event space is ideal for receptions, special events, business meetings, conferences and tradeshows. Don't miss BLVD Kitchen & Bar an American Bistro experience.

Planners can choose from more than 25 activities for team building with their group. Find hands-on workshops for crafts, home décor and cooking. Groups can also enjoy indoor adventure parks with go-karting, ropes courses, bumper cars, trampolines, skyriders, bowling or climbing walls. Rounding out activities are axe throwing, laser tag, escape rooms, indoor bocce, plus brewery and wine tasting experiences. Plus, many more outdoor activities depending on the time of year.

Learn more about the meeting facilities, promotions, group activities and complimentary meeting services that the Waukesha Pewaukee Convention & Visitor Bureau offers groups. visitwaukesha.org/meetmore



DHOLTE@FDL.COM

partner-in-crime to pull off an event everyone will rave about you've found her in me, Darcie Holte.

WHEN'S THE LAST TIME A METING MOVED YOU?



Business meetings are built different here. Spa, dining, music, and gaming. 400 perfectly appointed rooms. 67,500 square feet of fully renovated meeting and event space. Innovative, entertaining, and exciting. Loud, proud, and luxurious. Don't just meet. Be moved by the high-powered hospitality of MotorCity Casino Hotel. **MotorCityCasino.com**





Stella

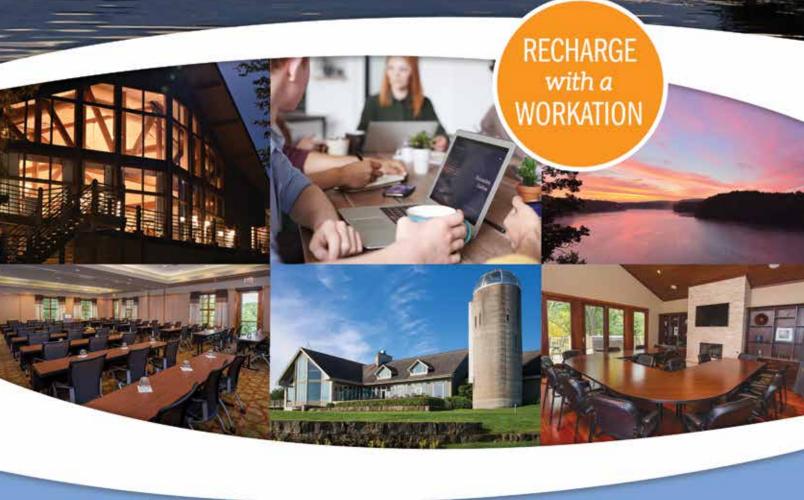
Matat City



If you bet more than you can afford to lose, you've got a problem. Call 1-800-270-7117 for free, confidential help.

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MEETINGS HAPPEN IN CREATIVE SPACES



Nestled among 6,800 acres of rolling hills west of Chicago in The Galena Territory, Eagle Ridge Resort & Spa combines the great outdoors with unrivaled amenities to deliver a perfect meeting venue.

FEATURING:

- · 15,000 square feet of newly renovated flexible event space
- · State of the art technology and complete catering services
- · Conference homes with private facilities and meeting rooms for corporate retreats
- Team building activities, rental homes, and multiple dining venues



