

An aerial night photograph of a city street, likely in Fox Cities, Wisconsin. The street is filled with cars, their headlights and taillights glowing. Buildings line the street, with some having illuminated windows and others with blue awnings. The sky is dark with some light clouds.

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WINTER 2019

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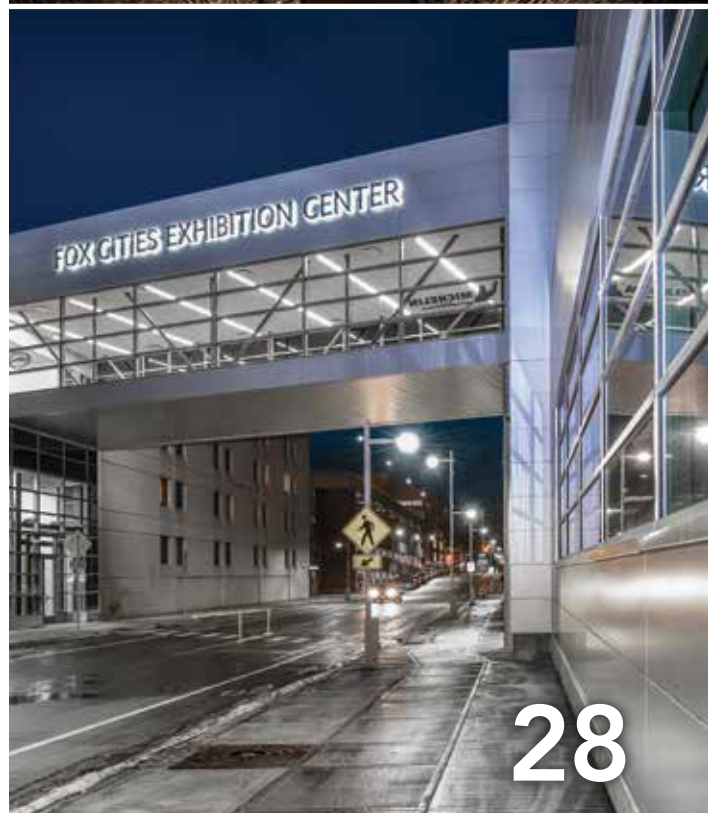
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How to give everyone the meeting they have in mind.



“We can accommodate groups of three people to 3,000. But for us, the concept of ‘fit’ includes being able to meet everyone’s expectations at every turn.”

So it’s your turn to plan the meeting. Whether it’s a big conference or a small gathering, there’s one question that should rise to the top of your list. Surprisingly, it’s not “Where?” It’s “Who?”

WHO’S COMING TO YOUR MEETING?

When you pick up the phone and start calling venues, being able to ballpark your attendance is certainly important. You need to know your group will fit in the space. But there’s more to it, says Laura MacIsaac, CMP, Director of Sales for Monona Terrace. “As a facility, we can accommodate groups of three people to 3,000. But for us, the concept of ‘fit’ includes being able to meet everyone’s expectations at every turn. Meetings are meant to foster energy and connection. And that requires flawless execution.”

WHO ARE YOU WORKING WITH?

Rightfully so, you and your attendees have high expectations for an exceptional meeting where the food is superb, the presentations shine, the staff sparkles and the ROI is evident. Anything less is, quite frankly, less. So how do you avoid the glitches?

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EDITOR'S LETTER

I was speaking with a colleague recently about becoming the editor of *Wisconsin Meetings* magazine and she commented: "Why would anyone want to have a meeting in Wisconsin, especially during the winter?" My response was, "Why would they not want to have a meeting here?"

When others want the state to defrost, all I can see is possibility among the mounds of snow and icicles. Where else can you host meetings around a roaring fire one minute and hold a team-building exercise on the ice the next? The truth is there is plenty Wisconsin can offer that places like Las Vegas, Orlando or San Francisco cannot, especially during the winter.

Find out how you can inject Northwoods nirvana and winter magic into your meetings and events in Mary Bergin's article about destinations and venues offering winter wonderland fun.

But, if winter activities are not your jam, perhaps hosting in one of the hottest—and growing—Midwest destinations is. Writer Shelby Deering reports, "The Fox Cities were once considered a quiet corner of Wisconsin, with nearby Green Bay often catching people's eyes with its gridiron glory. But recently, the Fox Cities have truly flourished into a hot Midwest destination. With cities that include Appleton, Kaukauna, Menasha and Neenah, among others, the region is a meeting planner's dream—3,500 hotel rooms, exciting activities and world-class convention centers." Find out why this destination is deservedly capturing attention.

The issue also promises some education. Find how to reduce waste at your events, how to meet the privacy requirements of GDPR and learn why video is a must for every event's social media marketing effort.

Saving the best for last, check out the results of *Wisconsin Meetings* Best of 2018 reader's choice awards, presented to amazing vendors and venues across the state. This list leaves little doubt that there is plenty Wisconsin has to offer.

As for me, I'm heading out of town now for some Northwoods nirvana. My parents tell me there is snow on the ground and ice on the lakes in my hometown of Minocqua, and I plan to make the most of it!

Enjoy the read!

Ronnie Wendt
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IN THE NEWS

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CENTER OFFERS A NEW WAY TO EXPERIENCE EAU CLAIRE

Visit Eau Claire's recently opened Experience Center on the first floor of the Pablo Center at the Confluence offers visitors and residents a microcosm of the best of Eau Claire experiences. The center draws upon live entertainment, pop-up shops, a sampling of local foods, artist demonstrations and a retail center to give visitors a flavor of all the area has to offer. This "visitor center of the future" is more engaging and interactive than typical tourism centers, with an added emphasis on less paper waste and more customized information that can be sent to mobile devices.

In tandem with this opening, the organization is launching its "signature experiences" program, where residents and visitors can sign up for uniquely local experiences with partner businesses, including Lazy Monk Brewing Co., Banbury Place, Leinenkugel's Brewery, Eau Claire Express, Forage and The Local Store. The experiences are geared toward groups of friends, family gatherings and team-building activities and vary from make-and-take activities to behind-the-scenes tours. For more details, log on to www.VisitEauClaire.com.

CONDÉ NAST GIVES WISCONSIN'S SUNDARA INN & SPA HIGH MARKS

When *Condé Nast Traveler* announced the results of its 31st annual Readers' Choice Awards, Wisconsin's Sundara Inn & Spa found its name near the top. The Wisconsin Dells venue took a spot among the Top 20 resorts in the central U.S. covering Texas and the Midwest. The honor is a fitting distinction as Sundara celebrates its 15th anniversary and completes a 40,000-square-foot expansion and renovation. The

expansion added eight new woodland suites, additional spa treatment rooms, a spacious fitness center, retreat spaces and quiet reflection rooms, a dedicated restaurant with outdoor dining terrace, a second outdoor pool, a new indoor/outdoor pool sanctuary, expanded locker rooms, and a rooftop greenhouse.

NEW HOTEL OPENS BY MILWAUKEE AIRPORT

Radisson has opened a hotel five miles from General Mitchell International Airport. The Radisson Hotel Milwaukee Airport offers a 24-hour complimentary shuttle to the airport and nearby attractions. Guests can enjoy the hotel's refreshed design and amenities. The hotel offers 151 guest rooms and suites. There are also four meeting rooms on site, totaling 10,000 square feet that can accommodate more than 1,000 guests.

WHAT ATTENDEES WANT IN A HOTEL

"What Do Hotel Guests Really Want?" is a report from Cornell's School of Hotel Administration that examines the amenities hotels offer versus those guests really want and use. The survey asked 724 guests across six hotel brands and 33 properties to list the amenities they seek in a hotel and later to list the ones they use during their stay. The resulting list is an interesting one for planners hoping to find the perfect place to host an event.

The study found guests seek and use the following amenities:	
SAFE IN ROOM	63%
IRON	56%
COFFEEMAKER IN ROOM	59%
BOTTLED WATER	51%
HOTEL BAR	51%
RESTAURANT IN HOTEL	46%
IN-ROOM INTERNET ACCESS	80%

The report also found guests often don't use the following amenities that they seek out:	
FITNESS CENTER	48% want one, but only 17% use it
MOVIES ON DEMAND	17% seek them out, but only 8% find time to watch one
ROBE	35% want one, but only 18% use them
POOL	21% seek out a pool, but only 6% use it

MILWAUKEE'S RESTAURANT GRADING SYSTEM IN JEOPARDY

It's looking likely that less than one year after Milwaukee implemented a restaurant grading system, it will be going away. The state Board of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection has voted 4-2 to update a series

of food rules to bring Wisconsin's food code in line with federal guidelines. Language prohibiting restaurant grading systems is among the new rules. The board's recommendation now moves to the governor and state legislature for approval. It is expected that the rules will go into effect next spring.

STILLMAN NABS TOP HONORS FROM WH&LA

The Wisconsin Hotel & Lodging Association (WH&LA) has named hotelier Greg Stillman, Foremost Management Services, Inc., Fish Creek, its "Corporate Champion of the Year" for 2018. This award recognizes one individual in key management of a company owning/operating multiple lodging properties in Wisconsin. As president of Foremost Management Services, Stillman is responsible for the management and oversight of four Door County properties – Westwood Shores Waterfront Resort, The Inn at Little Sister Bay, Newport Resort and the Parkwood Lodge.

INTERCONTINENTAL HOTEL UNDERGOING TRANSFORMATION

After the InterContinental Hotel in downtown Milwaukee undergoes a rebranding and renovation in early 2019, it will reopen as Saint Kate, Milwaukee's first independent arts hotel. The 219-room hotel will include art-inspired rooms, 13,000 square feet of meeting space, 11 event rooms and three restaurants, as well as bars and lounges. Design plans also include a theater, gallery space, a working artist-in-residence studio and event spaces. The name pays homage to Saint Catherine, the patron saint of artists. Saint Kate is expected to open in mid-2019.

NEW FAIRFIELD HAS LARGEST SOLAR ARRAY IN STATE

The newly constructed Fairfield Marriott Inn & Suites hotel in Pleasant Prairie features a \$130,000 solar array expected to generate more than \$13,000 worth of electricity per year. Hotel operator Varin Kenosha Hotel Partner, LLC contracted with Arch Electric Solar of Plymouth, Wisconsin for the project. The installation is considered the largest solar array on a Wisconsin hotel. The project includes more than 200 solar panels, which will generate more than 90,000 kilowatt hours of electricity per year.

WISCONSIN HOTELS GET CONDÉ NAST TRAVELER READERS' CHOICE AWARDS

Two of the three Marcus Hotels & Resorts properties recognized as top hotels in *Condé Nast Traveler's* 31st annual Readers' Choice Awards are in Wisconsin. The Pfister Hotel in Milwaukee was No. 4 on the list of top Midwest hotels. It is the second consecutive year that the iconic hotel, which celebrated its 125th anniversary in 2018, has been named a Top Hotel in the Midwest by *Condé Nast Traveler* readers. The Grand Geneva Resort & Spa, located in Lake Geneva, came in at No. 6 on the list. This is the third consecutive year the property has been named a Top Resort in the Midwest by *Condé Nast Traveler* readers. [wm](#)

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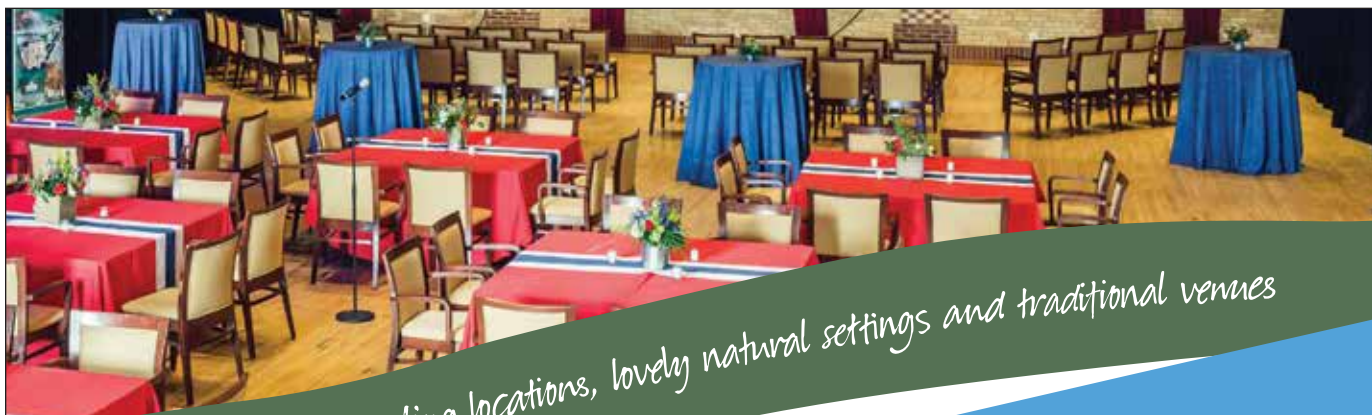


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VENUE SPOTLIGHT

BELOIT'S HIDDEN GEM

HOTEL GOODWIN COMBINES MODERN LUXURY WITH VINTAGE CLASS.

BY RONNIE WENDT

Beloit's newest downtown hotel, Hotel Goodwin, opened for business in September, continuing the gateway to Wisconsin's downtown renaissance by adding a splash of modern flair. The boutique, 34-room hotel at 500 Public Ave., is managed by Geronimo Hospitality Group, a company affiliated with Hendricks Commercial Properties.

Hotel Goodwin draws inspiration from the old Goodwin House, which Dana Borremans, hotel marketing specialist for Geronimo Hospitality Group, which also owns the Ironworks Hotel, explains was a turn-of-the-century hotel once located in the heart of downtown. "The old Goodwin House was actually located in a different building, not the building we are in," she adds. "But it was a hub in downtown and featured a restaurant and opera house."

The Geronimo Hospitality Group hopes to build on the old Goodwin House's rich history and offer Beloit visitors another overnight option. Borremans explains the nearby Ironworks Hotel often fills to capacity. Hotel Goodwin's accommodations options, which range in price from \$179 to \$300 a night, provide a unique experience that combines modern luxury with vintage class. Every room treats guests to turntables and record collections, one-of-a-kind art pieces and state-of-the-art rainforest showers.

"The hotel is stylish and chic—a true hidden gem," states Borremans. "It's not like any other hotel around

here and is certainly not something you'd find in a small town. We wanted it to be different than our sister property, Ironworks Hotel, which was inspired by America's industrial heritage. With Hotel Goodwin, we went edgier and more luxurious."

Though its sophistication reigns supreme and is found in everything from its gorgeous black lacquer doors to breathtaking art to its overall sexy vibe, it also transports patrons back in time with a vintage record collection that spans all genres.


"Every room has a record player and five random record selections," she says. "But if the records are not to your preference, you can swap out your selection at the front desk for music you like."

The hotel is situated close to everything a visitor might need. It is just a short walk from Beloit's varied selection of shops, where one can purchase everything from handmade quilts to bestselling books and spiritual crystals, and to nearby restaurants, which serve deli foods to seafood and steak. But for those who wish to stay in, Hotel Goodwin's in-house restaurant, Velvet Buffalo Café, can dish up flavors to suit every fancy, including stone-fired pizzas, shared plates and salads. The restaurant also offers a special banquet-style menu for those hosting events at the location.

Hotel Goodwin is poised to become the destination for events, weddings and meetings with its rooftop banquet space offering breathtaking views of downtown Beloit. The Grand Room is located on the fourth floor, "technically the roof," Borremans says. "We sectioned off part of the roof to create this space. Guests enter from the hotel to a room encased in glass on three sides. However, only two of the sides are permanent, the third glass side can be opened to a spectacular terrace area. It's really a lovely view at night when the city is lit up, and during the day when you can see the river."

For smaller meetings, Hotel Goodwin offers The State Room which seats 14 people. "It is a large space with a long table in the middle. It can be used for meetings or for a large dinner party. You can also rent the space during the day for other special events involving food," she says.

Karen Niffenegger, general manager, adds, "Hotel Goodwin is a great addition to downtown Beloit. It offers a chic vibe with genuine hospitality and is something everyone needs to experience for themselves."

To make a reservation, contact Hotel Goodwin at (608) 473-1400 or reserve directly at hotelgoodwin.com. To inquire about reserving space for your next meeting or event, email sales@hotelgoodwin.com. 



PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

THE MAGIC OF LETTING GO

MAKE NEGATIVITY DISAPPEAR AND POSITIVE BENEFITS WILL EMERGE.

BY MOLLY ROSE TEUKE

"If it doesn't agree with your spirit, let it go."
—Germany Kent,
Author, "The Hope Handbook" series

Much has been written about the benefits of letting go of grievances and wrongs and the bitterness and crankiness they carry with them. Mayo Clinic lists an impressive array of outcomes: Healthier relationships, less stress, less anxiety, lower blood pressure, stronger immune system, improved heart health, improved self-esteem. But perhaps the best reason for letting go is that it makes us smarter.

WHY BOTHER?

There's a reason we talk about people having "baggage" when they can't let go of things. When we embrace negative stuff, we're stuck carrying it around with us, and that takes a cognitive toll. Research suggests that when we're in a positive mood (not necessarily even happy—just a few degrees north of grumpy), we take in more visual information, have greater access to the language centers of our brain, are more willing to collaborate with others and are more creative problem-solvers. In other words, we're a bit smarter when our world-view is tinted at least a pale shade of rose.

The brain loves certainty, and familiarity brings certainty. The brain's job is to keep us safe, and when we feel certain (i.e., right), it feels safe and happy.

When we hang onto grievances, resentment becomes a familiar companion, and that familiarity is pleasing to the brain.

Another reality of our brain function is that we process emotional pain (say, from an insult) with the same networks and with the same intensity as physical pain (from a broken bone). It's why we have so many analogies for social pain. "My neighbor's rude comment hit me like a slap in the face." "I feel sick about the way I treated my friend this morning." No wonder we let other people's behavior get under our skin.

IT TAKES PRACTICE

Just as we tend a broken bone, it's wise to tend an emotional hit. The good news is, healing emotional pain can be easier and quicker. It's often the small stuff that gets to us, and if we practice letting go of life's little frustrations, we develop the ability to soothe our injured self more quickly when we experience bigger emotional hits.

I recently stopped at the cobbler a few minutes before closing time—and he was already closed! I fumed. How dare he close early when I'd made the trip into town specifically for that. Five o'clock means five o'clock, not 4:50 or 4:55. I felt righteous indignation wash over me. But I've been consciously noticing my reactions and trying to shift them in a more positive direction. As I glowered at the "Closed" sign, I realized I had an easy choice. I could spend the rest of the day disgruntled—which didn't sound like much fun—or I could let it go.

But letting go is easier said than done, right? We humans are wired to pay five times more attention to negatives. A negative input (an insult, a slight) hits us five times harder than a positive input (a kind word or gesture) and the impact lasts five times longer. No wonder we tilt toward resentment and anger.

HOW TO START LETTING GO

1. Shine a light. It's easy to develop a habit of chronic annoyance. When you feel yourself reacting, take a moment to notice the feelings, and consciously shift to a more positive response.
2. Focus on gratitude. When I found the cobbler closed, it was easy to reflect on how fortunate I am to: 1) have shoes to take to the cobbler, 2) have a car so I could make the trip another day, and 3) have enough resources that spending \$20 on shoe repairs didn't require tough choices.

I broke my arm not long ago. While I sat in the ER, I felt a wave of annoyance welling up as I realized what a hassle this was going to be. With a little effort, I was able to quickly realize how fortunate I was that I had ready access to health care, that it was an arm and not leg, and my left



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arm at that. Research shows that focusing on positive emotion literally decreases our sense of pain, so taking a brighter view of my mishap led me to experience less pain.

3. Change the story you tell yourself. To get a fresh perspective, talk the situation over with someone you trust, preferably with someone who's got a sense of humor. Nothing like being able to laugh at yourself to make you feel more positive.
4. Get rid of the evidence. Most of us have reminders of past hurts—a letter, an email, a message on our cell phone. Hanging on to them only encourages us to nurse the grievance. Clean house on that kind of tangible history.
5. Turn "I can never forget..." upside down. We all know someone who wants the world to know she'll never forget a slight. One such friend inspired me to develop my own version. When someone does something hurtful to me, it's become second nature to think, "But I can never forget that great thing that she did for me."

What if you're holding a grudge against yourself? We can all be our own worst enemy when it comes to dwelling on past mistakes, bad choices or embarrassing moments. Time to cut yourself some slack. Researchers at the University of Hertfordshire report that a daily habit of self-acceptance is a significant factor in most people's happiness.

Whether hurts are self-inflicted or come from someone else, lighten up. You'll not only enjoy better health and stronger cognitive function, but you're likely to live a longer and more joyful life. What could be wrong with that? **WM**



Molly Rose Teuke has an enduring curiosity about what makes our brains tick. She delivers a program for Nicolet College called Get Your Brain On Your Side, and delivers brain-based leadership training for the NeuroLeadership Institute, a global leader in the performance arena. She also hosts a weekly classical music program and a monthly audioblog called BrainWaves on WXPR-FM. You can reach her at mollyrose@mollyrosecoaching.com.

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TECHNOLOGY

ARE YOU READY FOR GDPR?

EVENTSFORCE CEO SHARES REASONS YOU NEED TO BE PREPARED AND STEPS TO HELP GET YOU THERE.

BY RONNIE WENDT

The EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is being hailed as the most important change in data privacy regulation in 20 years. This regulation will fundamentally reshape the way data is handled in every sector, from healthcare to banking, and yes, even meetings and events.

Though this regulation directly impacts Europe, savvy U.S. meeting and events planners are paying attention to the mandate and making changes now to ensure their compliance.

"Because GDPR is a European piece of legislation, many organizations in the U.S. wrongly believe it doesn't apply to them. But the truth is GDPR applies to any event collecting personal information on European attendees—regardless of where organizers are and where the event is taking place—and meeting planners need to be prepared," states George Sirius, CEO of Eventsforce, a global provider of online event management solutions.

Further, he warns, experts predict these regulations will eventually expand outside of the EU, as the subject of data privacy and security becomes more front of mind. "The UK government has already confirmed it will adhere to GDPR after it completes its exit from the EU, and there are similar regulations in Canada and Australia," he says. "In June, California became the first U.S. state to pass its own data privacy law, the California

Privacy Act. When it goes into effect in 2020, the act will provide the state's 40 million residents with rights like those granted to European citizens through GDPR."

PROTECT YOUR DATA

GDPR focuses on the rights of individuals over organizations. It was needed because existing legislation no longer met the privacy needs of individuals living in a digitally connected world. Sirius explains, "They were put in place long before the Internet, social media and cloud computing changed the way organizations use data—and GDPR aims to address that."

He adds, "GDPR is also happening because of the exponential rate that data is being collected by organizations—and the events industry is no exception here."

Meeting planners utilize many different collection tools—from registration systems and mobile apps to surveys, social media and lead capture tools—to gather and analyze information on attendees. Planners also collect personal information such as attendee names, contact details, employment data, gender, disabilities and dietary preferences.

"This is one of the key things GDPR wants to address: that organizations dealing with personal data are doing so in a transparent and secure way—and always in the individual's best interests," Sirius says.

That isn't always how planners handle data today. Sirius explains planners often do things that put their organizations at risk; things like using pre-ticked consent boxes on registration forms and apps and not having the proper processes in place to manage attendee consent. Or, sharing delegate lists through unsecure spreadsheets with venues, speakers and other attendees, as well as not paying attention to the information freelancers and temp staff can access, or even leaving unattended registration lists lying around.

GDPR requires meeting planners to be more careful about, and with, the personal information they collect for events; how they manage consent; and how they share that data with third parties such as event technology providers, venues, hotels, etc. He adds, "They also need to become a lot savvier in keeping the data safe, so it doesn't end up in the wrong hands."

If organizations fail to comply with GDPR requirements, they can face crippling fines, especially if they have a data breach. "For each instance of non-compliance, companies can be fined up to \$2.7 million or 4 percent of their global turnover of the preceding financial year (whichever is higher)—that's alongside any personal damage that may be claimed by individuals whose data has been compromised, as well as the serious damage it could cause to their reputation in the eyes of attendees, customers, partners and employees," he says.



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He adds it is important to remember that penalties for non-compliance apply to data controllers (the organization hosting the event) and data processors (event tech companies, event management agencies and other third parties processing data on their behalf). "Meeting planners now have the added responsibility of ensuring these organizations are also managing their data in a GDPR compliant way," he says.

THE CHARGE TOWARD COMPLIANCE

Sirius offers some steps to launch planners on the road to GDPR compliance:

- Figure out what personal data you or your clients hold on European attendees, speakers, sponsors, etc.; where it came from; and whether you have adequate consent (pre-ticked boxes and soft opt-ins will no longer count).
- Know which systems the data is stored in and where the data is hosted, when it was last used and what it was used for.

- Be aware of how accurate the information is.
- Know what processes are in place to keep the data safe.
- Determine whether the data has been shared with other suppliers and partners. "If it has, they need to ensure these parties also have consent and are doing everything they can to comply with GDPR regulations and keep the data safe," he says.

"It sounds like a big job, and it is," adds Sirius. "But there is no other way around it.

Yes, getting prepared for the new regulation is a complex and challenging process. But those who can show they're dealing with personal information in a transparent and secure way, and have respect for the privacy of individuals, will succeed in building new levels of trust. This will be key in deciding which organizations people choose to deal with in the future." **WM**

NEED HELP WITH GDPR COMPLIANCE?

Eventsforce has published an eBook titled, "The Event Planners Guide to Data Security in a Post-GDPR World." This book offers checklists for meeting planners and their teams, which can be used to assess areas of vulnerability and make changes to minimize the risk of data breaches.



Download the eBook at:
<https://www.eventsforce.com/us/ebook-the-event-planners-guide-to-data-security-in-a-post-gdpr-world/>.

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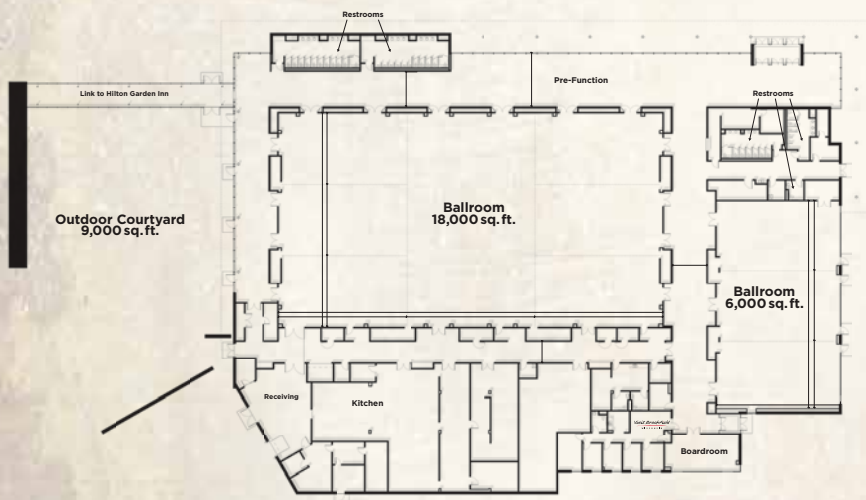
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PLANNING YOUR MEETING MEALS TO REDUCE FOOD WASTE

The industry is finding ways to reduce food waste and make the best of what's left.

By Jennifer Bradley

We've all been there. Standing in line at a buffet, only to realize later we took way too much food, and our eyes were way too big. Or, we had to miss a wedding at the last minute because of a family emergency, knowing that a delicious plate of Chicken Oscar with our name on it would not be eaten.

Food can be wasted even through our best efforts, but the meetings industry is working hard to make the best of what's left behind.

KNOW YOUR NUMBERS

Laura MacIsaac, director of sales at Monona Terrace, says there are two parts to reducing food waste for events: First, keep over-ordering to a minimum, and second, understand what the facility does on its end to help with this mission.

MacIsaac says planners must be careful not to order too much food. She explains the industry standard is to produce only up to 5 percent extra food above the guaranteed attendance numbers. For 200 people, that's only making food for 210, she explains.

"A reputable facility is always going to have an idea for portions based on per person," she adds. "Giving guarantees is probably one of the hardest things a meeting professional has to take care of."

At the Radisson Hotel in La Crosse, Executive Chef Douglas Neuschwanger doesn't follow industry practice of 5 percent overage. He says a successful event really comes down to the guarantees due from clients three days out. "If we have 300 people having chicken [three days out], I prep 300 chicken breasts," he explains.

He finds it easier to manage plated entrees when it comes to food waste, noting there is a slim chance a facility will see actual waste for these meals.



“... we take the opinion that we’ll always feed people, but aim for zero waste.”

—Laura MacIsaac, Monona Terrace

But even with plated entrees, “it’s very critical to know how many people we’re serving,” he emphasizes. “It allows us to have good judgment and be as accurate as possible, so we have enough but don’t end up with a lot of leftovers either.”

Neuschwanger tracks food consumption through various events, for different groups sizes and demographics and then fine tunes his approaches to prevent food waste.

Julia Spangler is a sustainable events consultant who helps planners from all industries reduce the environmental impact of their events. Spangler also recommends tracking how much food is ordered, used and left over. “It’s good to get an understanding so you can adjust for the next year,” she explains. “Regardless if it was plated or a buffet, remember to check in with the kitchen to see how many plates or pans were prepared but not served.”

FOOD WASTE – ON A NATIONAL SCALE

Food waste is not a Wisconsin issue—it’s a national one too. On Sept. 16, 2015, the USDA and EPA combined forces to establish the first-ever national food loss and waste goal. It calls for a 50 percent reduction in food waste by 2030. The USDA estimates a 31 percent food loss in retail and consumer venues, which was 133 billion pounds and \$161 billion in product in 2010.

To learn more about this initiative, visit: www.usda.gov/oce/foodwaste/faqs.htm.

KNOW YOUR CROWD, TOO

The audience demographic also is a big component in eliminating food waste. A crowd of senior citizens is unlikely to eat as much on a buffet as a group of construction workers, these professionals concur.

Plated options will be more uniform, but still need to be sized according to the dining audience. A buffet becomes more of a guessing game, however, especially if some guests fill their plates with three pieces of chicken and no potato salad. “You need to know your audience,” stresses MacIsaac. “Regardless, we take the opinion that we’ll always feed people, but aim for zero waste.”

Spangler even suggests using smaller-sized plates at buffets to help deter the “eyes bigger than the stomach” syndrome, which can afflict even the most conservative of diners.

Knowing the crowd also means knowing their dietary restrictions, a major trend facing both event planners and meeting venues. From low carb to gluten-free, low sodium to dairy-free and more, eliminating food waste also requires planners to ask for these important dietary details ahead of time.

“Caterers will accommodate these types of requests because in the end, it reduces food waste,” MacIsaac adds. “If you can do as much beforehand and help out, that’s a big deal.”

Neuschwanger agrees. He says the Radisson’s sales team works very closely

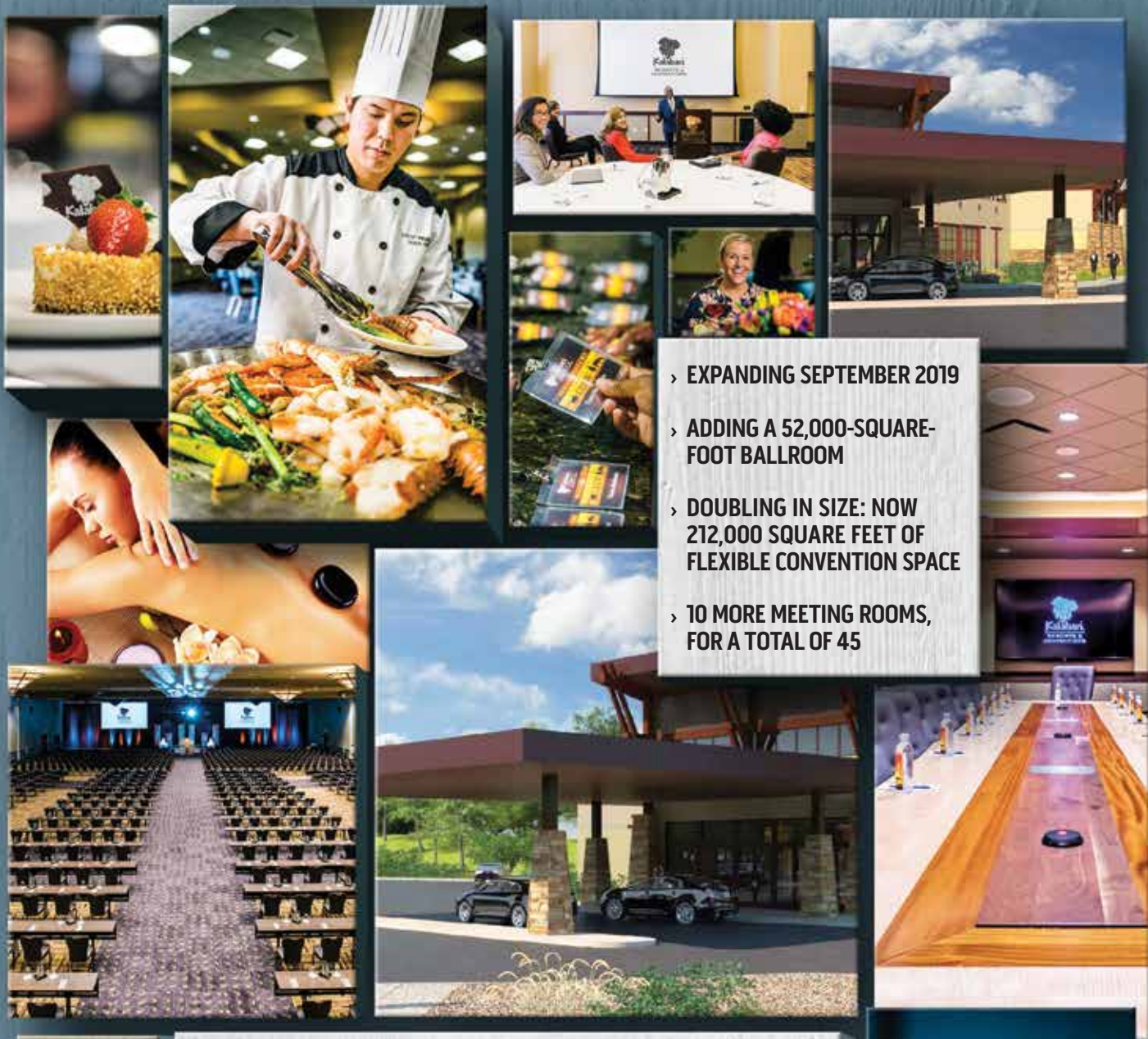
with meeting planners to calculate their needs, and determine how to save on more miscellaneous items such as condiments. “If a client’s group doesn’t want bread, or even mustard, for sandwiches, those are ways we can prevent food waste,” he explains. “Where are the places we can save on things we don’t even need to provide, but also save costs down the line when we don’t have to charge our clients for those things?”

CREATIVE MINDS

In Madison, the Monona Terrace catering group is involved in a newer trend: post-consumer food composting. MacIsaac says that if an event planner has over-ordered, or people didn’t show and there is leftover food, they are donating it to local pantries whenever possible.

And, when plates come back half-eaten, instead of scraping the food into the garbage, the facility’s composting program helps reduce the weight of the waste sent to landfills. The composting program involves a partnership with Sanimax, which provides a dumpster and weekly pick up service while Monona Terrace provides the biodegradable bags. Soiled paper products such as napkins, plates and cups are also considered post-consumer waste and accepted in the composting effort.

This program aids the venue in its sustainability efforts. MacIsaac explains that in 2015 Monona Terrace was certified as a “green building” at the Gold Level by the U.S. Green Building Council’s Leadership in Energy and



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Environmental Design for Existing Buildings (LEED-EB) program. Part of the points for this distinction involve reducing waste.

A few miles away in northwestern Wisconsin, Neuschwanger's team becomes creative when leftover food from an event presents itself. He says one example is using chicken breasts to make soups. His kitchen staff loves to find ways to re-incorporate high-quality extras when they can.

They then look for ways to donate leftovers that have been properly stored and are considered safe, based on the Health Department's parameters.

Spangler wants planners to know that legislation exists to protect those who donate food, so that their donations aren't deterred. The Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act eliminates liability for those who donate food, except in cases of gross negligence.

"We definitely donate to our local food pantries and the Salvation Army, and also the Hunger Task Force, which distributes to other food pantries, but each have their own rules," Neuschwanger adds.

DONATIONS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Maclaas reports conversations of donating food from both small and large events is becoming more prevalent on the national meeting planner stage. She explains this focus is sparking continued discussions about ways to creatively reduce food waste, but also ensure the product left behind is being used for good in the community.

"People intend to do good when presented with the option to do good," she says.

Spangler says Maclaas is right on track with the trends to reduce food waste. "Make sure you have a program in place to collect or deliver your food to a hunger relief organization, but also really understand your attendees and that you're preparing the right amount of meals for the right people," Spangler suggests.

This is where Ginny Schrag, executive director of The Gathering in Milwaukee, a non-profit dedicated to feeding the hungry, comes into play. She says it's important that those wanting to donate food connect

with their resources in advance. There are logistics to be figured out, such as amounts, transportation and storage. Spangler adds it's also important to research and vet donation partners to find the ones that fit best for your meeting or event.

The Gathering often feeds 200 people three times/day at every meal throughout its four locations over 51 weeks a year, so Schrag says pre-planning is essential in their case. All meals are prepared on site, which is unique to other donation programs, too. For them, bread is not a great donation, as they have much of it. But, large meat donations, prepared salads and other large-quantity foods are very welcome. She stresses the quantity focus here, as a few small pans of food won't go far in their kitchens, even if they might somewhere else.

Disposable food carriers are important too, as many operations don't have the ability to return pans, plates or serving utensils to a variety of places, she adds.

"Develop some relationships," she suggests. "Find out what's near you, within driving distance and can take things as you have them. We serve daily, but it could be more difficult if someone serves once a week." The organization has strong relationships with local Starbucks, McDonald's and even the Milwaukee Brewers, who support The Gathering's mission through the local Hunger Task Force. A local photography shop will even donate product after a shoot with food items.

Schrag says that in addition to donating food, many companies or facilities then become volunteers of The Gathering in some way or another. "They make an effort to learn about our organization, and the people we serve, and then we can learn about them too," she concludes.

When it comes to figuring out what to do with leftovers, there are options available to meeting planners, whether it be feeding the staff, the earth or the community. All you need to do is ask! [WM](#)



Jennifer Bradley is freelance journalist based in New Holstein, Wisconsin.

LEGAL PROTECTIONS FOR FOOD DONATIONS

The Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act provides a federal baseline of protection for food donors. This act covers individuals, businesses, nonprofit organizations, the officers of businesses and nonprofit organizations, and gleaners—individuals who harvest donated agricultural crops for a nonprofit organization that distributes the food to the needy.

The Emerson Act protections apply so long as the following criteria are met:

- 1. Donation Recipient:** The donor must donate to a nonprofit organization that distributes the donated food to needy populations. Direct donations from the donor to needy individuals are not protected.
- 2. Good Faith:** The donations must be made in good faith.
- 3. Qualifying Foods:** The donor must donate qualifying foods, unless specific reconditioning steps have been taken. Qualifying foods are those that meet "all quality and labeling standards imposed by federal, state and local laws and regulations," even if they are not "readily marketable due to appearance, age, freshness, grade, size, surplus or other conditions." State and local quality and labeling laws vary, and donors should be aware of requirements specific to their state or locality since the Emerson Act does not protect donations that are not in compliance with those laws.
- 4. No Charge for Food:** The ultimate recipients cannot pay anything of monetary value for the donated food. However, if one nonprofit donates food to another nonprofit for distribution, the Act allows the first nonprofit to charge the distributing nonprofit a nominal fee to cover handling and processing costs.

Source: Harvard Food Law and Policy Clinic



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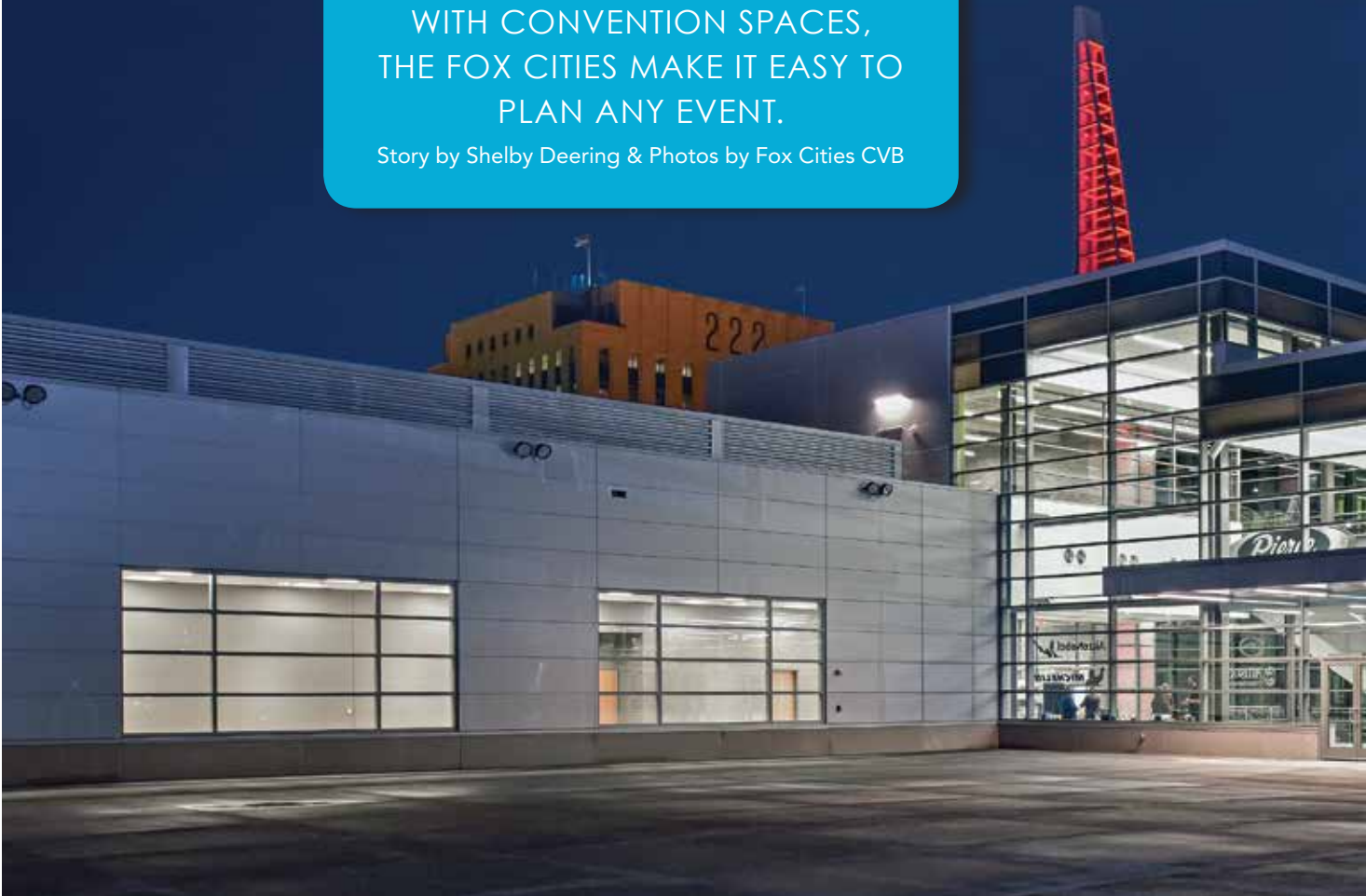
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— DESTINATION —

Fox Cities

CULTURAL AND WELL-OUTFITTED
WITH CONVENTION SPACES,
THE FOX CITIES MAKE IT EASY TO
PLAN ANY EVENT.

Story by Shelby Deering & Photos by Fox Cities CVB



*“The Fox Cities
area feels like
the heartbeat of
Wisconsin.”*

—Linda Hale,
meeting and event manager,
Wisconsin Credit Union League

The Fox Cities were once considered a quiet corner of Wisconsin, with nearby Green Bay often catching people’s eyes with its gridiron glory. But the Fox Cities have truly flourished into a hot Midwest destination. With cities that include Appleton, Kaukauna, Menasha and Neenah, among others, the region is a meeting planner’s dream—3,500 hotel rooms, exciting activities and world-class convention centers.

Linda Hale, meeting and event manager for the Wisconsin Credit Union League, agrees. She plans around 50 events a year and has held several in the Fox Cities region, one of which featured a boutique walking tour of Appleton’s downtown. She shares that she especially enjoys the area’s centralized location, accessibility, reasonable room rates and top-notch convention centers.

Hale sums up the flavor of the region, saying, “The Fox Cities area feels like the heartbeat of Wisconsin. The people are friendly, and it’s not an intimidating downtown environment for people coming from rural areas. The community spirit is welcoming and very tangible.”



New Kid on the Block

The new kid on the block is the **Fox Cities Exhibition Center**, a \$31.9 million sleek structure that opened in January 2018. Wisconsin Tourism Secretary Stephanie Klett hails the center, 30 years in the making, as a jewel for the entire state. "This is a huge asset to the Fox Cities and our state," she told reporters at its grand opening.

The center literally shines as a jewel too with an 82-foot spire, which lights up in various colors for the holidays and during events. The spire pays tribute to 1882, the year the first hydroelectric power plant began operating on the Fox River in Appleton.

Inside, the facility offers more than 30,000 square feet of exhibit space with over 9,000 square feet of lobby and a variety of multipurpose spaces. It also features a 17,000-square-foot outdoor space for programs and events.

Mary Rhode, marketing and communications manager of the Fox Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau, says the exhibition center holds three exhibit halls that can be made into two sections or fully opened to create one large space.

"The pre-function space outside of the exhibit halls can also act as a room to service food and beverage or be an exhibit space

or a lovely cocktail reception area with a fabulous view of Jones Park," Rhode adds.

The sustainable venue, which uses digital controls for heating and lighting, LED lights, recycled carpeting and tile, and natural stone, does not have an industrial kitchen where food can be cooked. However, it does offer a plating kitchen for caterers to use.

The Fox Cities Exhibition Center is conveniently connected via skywalk to one of the premier hotels in the area, the **Red Lion Hotel Paper Valley**, formerly the Radisson Paper Valley. The hotel was renovated as this rebranding took place.



These renovations included replacing the old entrance canopy with a new modern entrance, updating flooring and seating in public spaces and swapping out the Intermezzo island-themed bar with the contemporary Blaze whiskey and bourbon bar. The hotel also revamped guest rooms and corridors, installing luxury vinyl tile in guest rooms to reduce allergens and give them a modern look. All rooms have new beds and 55-inch wall-mounted TVs.

Presenting 388 hotel rooms and a well-situated downtown Appleton location, Mindy Lawson, director of sales and marketing at the property, explains that the rebranded hotel also has 38,000 square feet of flexible and newly-renovated meeting space. The hotel's team of chefs is also available to whip up catered gourmet fare for attendees at the hotel and the exhibition center.

Lawson says, "Hotel Paper Valley is Appleton's only full-service downtown hotel. Guests have access to complimentary Wi-Fi; five onsite restaurants, including the legendary Vince Lombardi's Steak House; an indoor pool, whirlpool and sauna; and

complimentary airport transportation."

In addition, the center lies next to Jones Park, which underwent a \$4.2 million renovation in 2018 and is expected to reopen this year. The upgrade includes a handicapped-accessible pedestrian ramp, a lighted ice rink, a lighted hockey ice rink, a 3,600-square-foot pavilion, a playground, public Wi-Fi and space for a temporary stage for concerts. An amphitheater is also planned.

The **Fox Cities Performing Arts Center (PAC)** is also close to the exhibition center and hotel. A cultural mainstay in the Appleton area, this 25,000-square-foot center opened in 2002 and continues to excel at hosting both receptions and extraordinary performances. Stars like Tony Bennett, Jay Leno and Diana Ross have graced its stage, along with Broadway acts including "The Lion King" and "Wicked."

"The Center can accommodate groups of 12 to 2,000," says Maria Van Laanen, president of the Fox Cities Performing Arts Center.

There are several distinctive spaces available for events at the PAC, tailored

to nearly every theme and event size. The biggest space is the Thrivent Financial Hall, which can hold up to 2,072 attendees who are sure to be mesmerized by the 5,000-square-foot stage, the second-largest in the state. The Kimberly Clark Theater is a flexible space and multi-purpose theater with a varying seating capacity. Then there are intimate spaces that include the Founders Room, Main Lobby, Dress Circle Lobby and the Entrance 21 Luxury Suite.

The next events center on the horizon is the **Fox Cities Champion Center**. Set to open in fall 2019, it will be a 164,000-square-foot sports complex offering hardwood courts and an ice surface.

Standout Spaces for Distinctive Meetings

Looking for something on the unique side for your event? You can quite literally embrace flights of fancy when booking an event at Appleton's **Platinum Flight Center**. The area is famous for its annual EAA AirVenture event, held in nearby Oshkosh, that draws up to 600,000, so an event at the flight center would be an appropriate nod to the region. In order to book the airplane

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hangar, Rhode shares that it needs to be empty, it can't take place during the EAA event, and an event decorating company and production company will be needed.

If you want to take your attendees out to the ballgame, you can book a banquet facility at the **Fox Cities Stadium**, home of the Timber Rattlers minor league baseball team. Called The Fox Club, this space can hold 250. You can also choose from a 14-seat conference room, the relaxed Leinie Lodge that's set up for 50 guests and six luxury suites, which can each hold up to 20 people.

There are 15 hotel properties in the Fox Cities, and even more are opening to accommodate the increased influx of visitors who come to the area for events. In 2019 and 2020, these properties will open in Appleton and the surrounding areas of Grand Chute and Neenah. They include **Cobblestone Hotel & Suites, Home 2 Suites by Hilton, Fairfield Inn & Suites, Holiday Inn** and **Holiday Inn Express**.

When you consider caterers for your Fox Cities event, be sure to contact the Fox Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau for a list of preferred caterers. In Neenah, Amy Barker, executive director of Future Neenah Inc., recommends **Zuppas** as a caterer of light Italian eats. She adds, "Most of our Neenah restaurants are very friendly and willing to work with you on catering for your event to make it special."

Cool and Cultural Activities

For your meeting or event, you know that fun outings can make a convention special and stand out from the rest. Luckily, the Fox Cities are a treasure trove of stylish restaurants, sought-after shops and can't-do-this-anywhere-else activities. Jennifer Stephany, executive director of Appleton Downtown Inc., has several recommendations in and around the city's famed College Avenue, the same area where you'll find Appleton's convention center.

Sharing that there are over 140 shopping and dining options in downtown Appleton, Stephany says, "The vibrant downtown turns a meeting into a great adventure. The linear walkability of downtown Appleton makes exploring easy, safe and enjoyable."

Downtown Appleton has become a traveler's utopia in recent years, a city that's equal parts college cool (Lawrence University is down the street) and cultural panache. Your outings can run the gamut, from family-friendly afternoons spent at the **Building for Kids Children's Museum** and the **History Museum at the Castle** to artistic ventures for adults that include stops at **Coventry Glassworks & Gallery, Pinot's Palette** and **Board & Brush**.

A shopping outing is a piece of cake to plan in downtown Appleton. There are scores of shops within walking distance of one another, and afterward, you can transport attendees to the **Fox River Mall**, one of the Midwest's foremost shopping destinations.

For after-hours activities, look no further than **Escape Room Wisconsin, Skyline Comedy Club** and multiple live music venues.

Neenah is another ideal town for outings. Besides the wide variety of shops and restaurants, the area holds natural beauty. The new **Loop the Little Lake Trail** has a trail-head downtown and connects to a three-mile loop. Barker says that in the winter the trails are always groomed, adding, "Taking a walk around the lighthouse at Kimberly Point is beautiful any time of year."

Visitors can also tap into their inner artist at the **Bergstrom Mahler Museum of Glass** to experience the beauty of glass art (the museum glass collection numbers over 3,500 objects), make their own creations in its glass studio or shop for distinctive gifts in the museum shop.

Magician Harry Houdini, who was raised in Appleton, might have been the first to create a little magic in the region but the magic lives on. The region combines city chic and small-town charm with unique and varied event spaces to deliver an enchanting meeting and event experience. [WMI](#)



Shelby Deering is a Madison, Wisconsin-based lifestyle writer contributing to national and regional publications such as *Country Living*, *Good Housekeeping* and *Experience Wisconsin*.

SPECIAL ADVERTISING SECTION



DESTINATION showcase inside



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YOUR GUIDE TO GREAT MEETING AND EVENT LOCATIONS THROUGHOUT THE BADGER STATE

Wisconsin has the best of all worlds, from the cosmopolitan atmosphere of its big cities to the welcoming charms of its small towns. Whether you're in search of a site to host a large-scale convention or a smaller, more intimate team building meeting, Wisconsin offers a variety of affordable and conveniently located facilities to suit your organization's needs. Add to that a wealth of convention and visitor bureaus staffed with professionals eager to share the best of their communities with your group, and there's no question that Wisconsin is the ideal place for your next meeting or convention.

As a meeting planner, you know that every detail counts. Wisconsin's CVBs understand this and make every effort to ensure that none are overlooked. They aim to be your resource throughout the planning process, from assisting with RFPs, setting up walk-throughs, recommending local vendors and planning group outings, to providing the kind of number crunching that guarantees you get the deals to keep you within budget while still ensuring that your event will be memorable.

In this issue we focus on the great meeting and convention destinations of Manitowoc and Racine. The community profiles include an overview of what makes their locations, facilities, accommodations and services unique. Some area activities and entertainment options are also highlighted to give you a sense of the offerings that can make the after-meeting hours as productive and enjoyable as the actual work sessions. The profiles list some of the specifics — number of hotel rooms, largest meeting facility, nearest airport, phone numbers, websites and more — that give you an idea of whether or not these communities are the right fit for your group and, if so, includes the contact information to get you started planning your event.

When you begin searching for a site for your next meeting or convention, look no further than Wisconsin, where your options are endless and your event's success is every CVB's top priority.

DESTINATION SHOWCASE



MANITOWOC

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Megan Bruckschen
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COMMUNITY INFORMATION

Population: 80,000
Number of hotel rooms: 1,000
Largest meeting facility:
20,000 sq. ft.
Largest exhibit facility:
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Airport: Austin Straubel
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DISTANCE FROM

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Wisconsin's WINTER WONDERLAND

The winter season is the perfect time to strategize, talk shop and promote teamwork in the Dairy State.

By Mary Bergin



So, strategize with hot chocolate or a hot toddy. Talk shop around the fireplace. Promote teamwork with a fun and revitalizing bout of exercise outdoors.

All of these settings are scenic. Some are beautifully secluded, an excellent environment for concentrating on a mission, meeting or project itinerary.

About 25 miles south of Lake Superior is **Minneaug Acres**, where only one group—optimal size 30 to 60—is accommodated at one time. Bonfires to wine tastings are arranged at this executive lodge with 35 quest rooms.

Among the indoor diversions are a bowling alley and indoor swimming pools. Outdoors, it's pretty much whatever activities your group desires, from broomball to trap shooting. Or let staff organize a unique version of the "Winter Olympics," games that can include bowling on outdoor alleys of snow and ice, using a frozen turkey.

about their adventure and experience for the rest of their lives," Gage says. "That is our hope anyway."

A favored winter roost is **Wild Eagle Lodge**, which houses up to 400 in one-, two- and three-bedroom units and has event coordinators. Snowshoe rentals are available too. The biggest on-site, indoor meeting space has room for 50; if your group is larger, consider booking the downtown **Northwoods Center's** mix of classrooms and 180-seat theater with projector equipment.

Today, Heartwood is a modern retreat of cabins, cottages, guest rooms and enough meeting space to host groups of up to 300. On the 700-acre, woodland property is a sledding hill, ice skating and cross-country ski trails. Surrounding the lodge are 20 miles of trails for hiking, cross-country skiing or snowmobiling. End the day in a 10-person hot tub or relax around a fire pit. Indoors are fieldstone fireplaces.

Wausau has long been a charismatic match for lovers of downhill skiing, thanks to the 74 runs and vertical rise of 700 feet at **Granite Peak Ski Area** in Rib Mountain State Park. Expect challenges for beginner to advanced skiers. Skis to snowboards are for rent.

Best base camp? That would be **Jefferson Street Inn**, a downtown, 100-suite boutique hotel with day spa and easy access—on foot—to shopping, art galleries and theater. Up to 400 can get down to business via board rooms and reception areas.



Groomed downhill and cross-country ski courses are part of the 800-plus acres at **Christmas Mountain Village**, just west of Wisconsin Dells. Cyber tubing turns slip-sliding into a 5,000-foot-long thrill ride, complete with music, lasers and color-changing lights. Arrange ski or snowboarding lessons, rent sledding tubes or simply enjoy the view from indoors.

Reserve rustic-looking log cabins to contemporary townhouses of up to three bedrooms as an employee reward for work well done. Overlooking the resort's ski hill and championship golf course is a banquet hall that seats up to 250 diners.



Grand Geneva Resort and Spa, Lake Geneva, bills its Mountain Top area as a judgment-free zone for giving downhill or cross-country skiing, snowboarding and ice skating a try. It's ground zero for lessons and equipment rentals (some specifically designed for beginners). Take a break from the rink and 20 ski runs by ducking into the cozy chalet.

Also, on the resort's 1,300 acres is 62,000 square feet of flexible meeting space,



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enough to accommodate up to 2,000. On-site staff are well versed on creating on-target and fun team-building events for any season of year. Name your game or goal and take it indoors or outdoors. Set up teams for a chili cook-off, for example, or extreme sled building.

Choices for overnight stays vary too: standard resort guest rooms to three-bedroom villas with a full kitchen and optional grocery delivery. To balance your indulgence in wintry sports, make time for the indoor waterpark at **Timber Ridge Lodge**, which also is part of the resort complex.

DISTINCTIVE SETTINGS

Although **The Edgewater** is in downtown Madison, it can feel a world away because the historic and 202-room hotel faces pretty Lake Mendota, where ice boats skim the frozen waterway in winter and the annual Frozen Assets Festival invites fat-tire bike riders, runners and walkers who gingerly race on the ice.

Frozen Assets is one of the many reasons why Madisonians and hotel guests gather



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YOU CAN'T PAINT WINTER JUST ONE WAY IN WISCONSIN. SETTING AND MOOD ARE ONLY LIMITED BY THE IMAGINATION.

at The Edgewater's popular outdoor plaza, where sunset views are especially spectacular. Open all winter to the public, as temps cooperate, is an ice-skating rink that faces the lake at one turn, then the State Capitol dome. Skates are for rent or bring your own. Watch the action from the comfort of indoor lounging areas too: A wide range of ages and skating ability find their way here.

Celebrities who perform in Madison—Elvis Presley to Elton John—have stayed at the hotel since it opened in 1948. As a meeting destination, expect adaptable spaces that can handle up to 500 in one room. Consider the intimate Sky Bar or Red Crown Club when

seating 50 or less. Whatever you choose likely comes with a gorgeous lake or cityscape view.

In Green Lake, population 960, the mood is peaceful and welcoming at **Heidel House**, whose 177 rooms on 20 wooded acres are next to the deepest inland lake in Wisconsin. Across the street is **Tuscumbia Golf Course**, the oldest in the state, and that enhances the serene setting.

Arrange a fun introduction to ice fishing for trout and more through **Mike Norton's Fishing and Hunting Adventures**, which provides transportation to and from heated fishing shanties, plus all fishing equipment,

tackle and bait. The outfitter also promises to clean and package whatever fish are caught.

For rent at Heidel House: snowshoes, ice skates, cross-country skis, sleds and bikes with tires chunky enough to barrel through snow. Recreation trails are plentiful in the area, and the resort's roomy **Evensong Spa** makes it easy to unwind. It's big enough for a group to simply lounge or take a contemplative walk along the indoor labyrinth (you can match that with a yoga or meditation class).

Heidel House's 18,000 square feet of meeting space includes board rooms for 12 to ballrooms with theater seating for up to 540. In some meeting areas are large windows with lakefront views.

Next to Lambeau Field in Green Bay is the sporty and fashionable **Lodge Kohler**, which anchors the 34-acre Titledown District, an interactive area that encourages outdoor play. Take advantage of it to break up or reward a hard day of work.

Snow-making equipment ensures that **Titledown District's** 46-foot-tall slope for

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tubing will be in prime condition whenever temps are not too warm. Rent skates or an ice bike to traverse the adjacent ice rink and skating trail. Much of this is the view from many of the 144 Lodge Kohler guest rooms.

Each of two private dining rooms at the hotel can be converted into a meeting space for 20. Fifth-floor areas with walls of windows accommodate up to 50 and come with a view of the football stadium.

Need more space? **Lambeau**, merely 100 yards away, rents board rooms, suites and banquet space for hundreds. **Rockwood Terrace**, on the second level of the manmade sledding hill, overlooks the ice rink and seats 200.

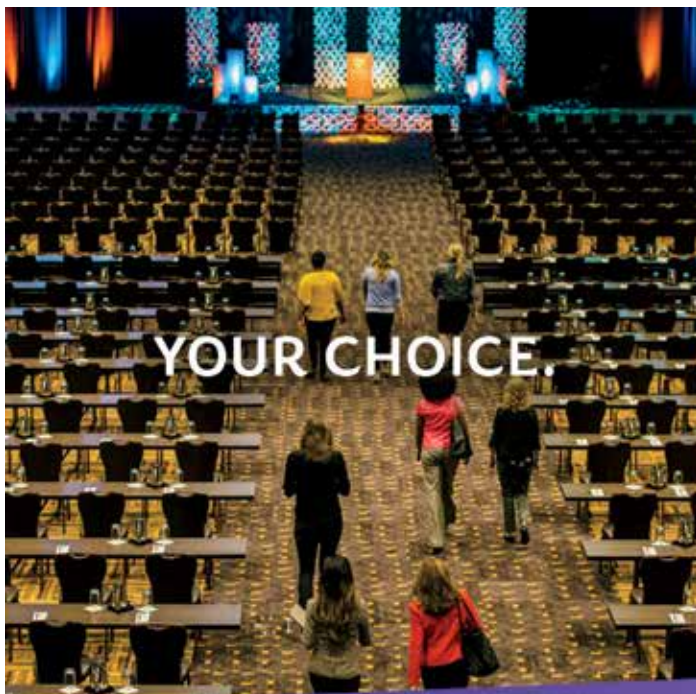
It all is evidence that you can't paint winter just one way in Wisconsin. Setting and mood are only limited by the imagination. **WM**



Travel/food writer Mary Bergin of Madison knows what it's like to ride across Lake Winnebago on frozen ice, skirting ice shanties along the way.



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THE **BEST** OF *Wisconsin* MEETINGS

The results of our readers poll to recognize the industry suppliers who exceeded expectations in 2018.

By Ronnie Wendt

This issue marks one of our favorite times of year; the time when we count the ballots and discover our readers' choices for the best the Dairy State has to offer the meetings and events world.

We know that in today's world suppliers need to be ever vigilant in their efforts to provide innovative ideas, products and services with great customer support within the confines of tightened budgets. It's a delicate balance. The list on the pages that follow are our readers' choices for those that have achieved this balance and have proven their dedication to their customers and the industry in 2018.



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BEST LARGE CONVENTION CENTER:

Grand Geneva Resort, Lake Geneva

Readers report there is reason the word 'grand' appears in Grand Geneva Resort's name—the Lake Geneva resort is nothing short of grand. Readers voted to once again put the resort's 62,000 square feet of conference space at the top of the list. Besides offering one of the largest non-waterpark resort convention centers in the state, readers like that the venue, once the Playboy Club, also offers a host of options for attendees after hours. Being situated on 1,300 acres in the woodlands affords guests a variety of options for their free time, from horseback riding, biking, hiking and golf in the summer to skiing in the winter. grandgeneva.com

BEST CONFERENCE CENTER:

Heidel House Resort, Green Lake

Tucked away on the shores of Green Lake, Heidel House Resort and Spa brings a rich history to the conference world. This year-round destination traces its roots back to 1945 when Herb and Lucille Heidel purchased the 12-acre Kelly Estate to turn it into a family-run retreat. The resort has expanded over the years and today the destination offers 177 guest rooms and meeting space for gatherings both large and small. The ideal setting for meetings and events also gives attendees a place to unwind, slow down and recharge. Guests can partake in exquisite on-site dining, enjoy excursions on the resort's *Escapade* yacht, relax in its Evensong Spa or venture out for a round of golf. heidelhouse.com



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©THE GENEVA INN

BEST BOUTIQUE PROPERTY WITH MEETING SPACE:

The Geneva Inn, Lake Geneva

Looking for understated elegance for your next corporate retreat? Readers say to look no farther than The Geneva Inn, reporting that it offers one of the best views of Geneva Lake, charming accommodations, attentive staff and delectable cuisine. Planning an unforgettable meeting or special event is made easy with the property's event space, which includes elegant spaces for groups up to 50, intimate settings overlooking the lake for smaller groups and a patio for lakeside cocktail receptions. After your meeting wraps up, attendees can dine at its waterfront restaurant, take a boat cruise around the lake or relax with a hike on the nearby Shore Path. genevainn.com

BEST RECEPTION FACILITY:

Lambeau Atrium, Green Bay

For seven years running, readers have pointed out that Lambeau Field is attractive to more than just football fans. The Lambeau Field Atrium offers an ideal place for corporate luncheons, dinners, cocktail receptions, meetings, outings and more. The impressive space, more than five stories high, can accommodate groups up to 1,000. A private stadium tour or a stroll through the hallowed halls of the Hall of Fame can add green and gold pizzazz to your meeting or event. packers.com



©PACKERS



BEST GOLF COURSE/GOLF RESORT: Geneva National Resort & Club, Lake Geneva

Geneva National Resort & Club scores a perfect round in this year's survey for its scenic 54 holes located on the shores of Lake Como. The three championship courses, designed by golf greats Arnold Palmer, Gary Player and Lee Trevino, offer meticulously manicured bentgrass tees, fairways and greens, as well as five tee boxes. After play ends, planners can pull together a personalized retreat experience by tapping into the destination's on-site reception and dining space, which combines stunning views of the fairway and the lake with tasty fare that is sure to be a hole in one. genevanationalresort.com

BEST CASINO WITH MEETING SPACE: Potawatomi Hotel & Casino, Milwaukee

The Potawatomi Hotel & Casino recently hosted a ceremony topping off an \$80 million expansion, which involves the construction of a new hotel tower that is attached to the property's existing 19-story hotel tower. The ceremony marked a milestone that would move construction inside the new 180,000-square-foot hotel tower expected to open in the spring. Though this expansion isn't yet complete, the casino already has a winning hand among readers, who voted it the best casino in the state for its comfortable meeting spaces large enough for events up to 3,000 people, delicious dining options, gaming action and world-class entertainment. paysbig.com



BEST GROUP OUTING: Lake Geneva Cruise Line

Readers share that to get the true Lake Geneva experience, you must get on the lake. They ranked Lake Geneva Cruise Line as the best way to gather a group for a memorable lake experience. Lake Geneva Cruise Line offers a variety of narrated boat tours, from unique sightseeing tours of the lake's beautiful estates and mansions to historical tours of the entire lake. Groups can also enjoy a delicious meal while on board or sip champagne as the sun goes down. Customized tours with entertainment options are also available to make your experience both memorable and unique. cruiselakegeneva.com

BEST LAKESHORE RESORT: The Osthoff Resort, Elkhart Lake

Some of the best places to stay in Wisconsin are on a lake, but few offer as rich a history as The Osthoff Resort. In 1885, Milwaukee resident Paulina Osthoff fell ill, and the family doctor recommended she convalesce at Elkhart Lake to take advantage of the waters "supposed" restorative powers. When she regained full health, the Osthoffs bought a farm on the shores of the spring-fed lake and opened The Osthoff Hotel. Fast forward 132 years, and the AAA Four Diamond hotel is still going strong. Readers appreciate the resort's spacious accommodations and superior offerings that include four dining areas; a premier cooking school; on-site event space; indoor and outdoor pools, saunas and whirlpools; and a scenic setting with 500 feet of shoreline. osthoff.com





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HOTEL WITH BEST SERVICE:

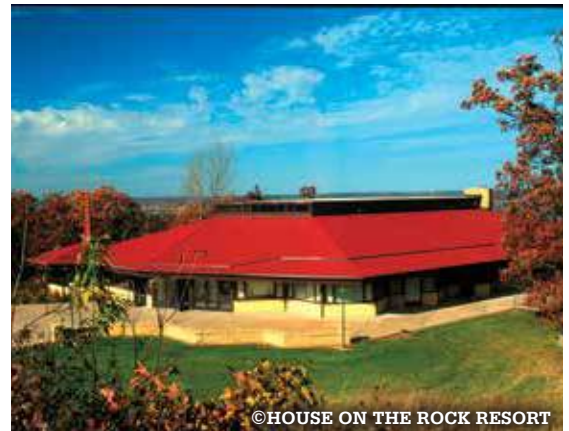
The Ridge Hotel, Lake Geneva

The Ridge Hotel in Lake Geneva is a perennial favorite among readers for its top-of-the-line services and well-appointed banquet spaces overlooking a secluded shoreline. The Ridge strives to make every event both personal and memorable. Its professional conference staff works with planners to personalize retreat experiences, from designing the optimal meeting space to customizing catering and fashioning unique team-building options and recreation. Its 10,000 square feet of flexible event space can accommodate groups up to 500. Whether planning a casual barbeque after golf or an elegant gala, readers say The Ridge offers the expertise, equipment and amenities to deliver. ridgelakegeneva.com

BEST PROPERTY FOR A CORPORATE RETREAT:

House on the Rock Resort, Spring Green

Travel Wisconsin reports Spring Green teaches visitors that anything at the top of a hill (or rock) is worth the climb, be it the American Players Theatre, the Tower Hill State Park shot tower or the House on the Rock. But our readers say a posh getaway for a corporate retreat is also found nestled in this wooded and rolling terrain. The resort thrills with an exceptional blend of spacious suites, spa services and dining delights with splendid views of the surrounding countryside and championship golf course. houseontherock.com



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VENUE WITH THE BEST


OUTDOOR RECEPTION SPACE:

Monona Terrace, Madison

Not only does Monona Terrace rooftop sport one of the best views in the city, but its William T. Evjue Rooftop Gardens bloom with gorgeous, landscaped bursts of color all summer long. The location's Art on the Rooftop also injects a bit of whimsy atop the roof. This free exhibition of public sculpture showcases beautiful artwork from regional artists. Readers say these features combine to make the venue a planner's paradise for an outdoor reception. mononaterrace.com

MOST HELPFUL CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU:

Visit Lake Geneva, Lake Geneva

Meeting planning can be a daunting proposition—but it doesn't have to be. Convention and visitors' bureaus join forces with planners and act as an extension of their teams by offering local knowledge and tailored services that can save time and money. This year a clear standout among readers was Visit Lake Geneva. Readers say Visit Lake Geneva personnel stand ready to help planners select the right venue and activities for extraordinary events. The Visit Lake Geneva staff all come from a hospitality background where the customers are the first priority. "With our dedication to our visitors and a steadfast goal of exceeding expectations we are honored to be recognized for all of our efforts," says Joe Tominaro, director of marketing and development. visitlakegeneva.com 



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VIDEO MAGIC

ADDING VIDEO INTO MEETING PROMOTION, ACTIVITIES AND POST-MEETING FOLLOW-UPS CAN IMPROVE ATTENDANCE AND EVEN THE EVENT BOTTOM LINE.

By Clair Urbain



Increasingly, meeting planners are using videos in their pre-event promotions, then following those with live feeds from the meeting itself, then getting extra mileage with timely video postings after the event.

“Using video before your event is all about generating enthusiasm for people who have already purchased tickets as well as persuading those who are on the fence about attending. By offering a conference sneak-peek, you give people a feel for what their experience will be like,” says Kristen Craft, business development expert at Wistia, where she specializes in leveraging video marketing.

While video is out of the skillsets of many meeting planners, experts in the field say with today’s smartphone technology, it’s easily within their grasp. That’s how Bonnie Oleson, meeting planner at Mid-West Family Events, sees it. She plans events for radio stations and media outlets in Wisconsin. “If you can show your event in your promotions, it will help response and attendance,” she says.

Oleson has been incorporating videos into her event promotions, and even the events themselves, for about four years. “It’s not that hard, but my advice: if you start, you must keep doing it. People expect it.”

At first, Oleson worked with some video studios in the Madison area to produce promotional videos, but several people at the radio stations she serves have taken an interest in video, and with smartphones, it’s rather easy to produce professional quality videos.

“You can get great quality with a smartphone and a remote microphone,” she says.

Now, staff members at the events capture video that can be used in the future. However, she cautions that using internal people can mean longer production cycles.

“Video houses can turn around good video into usable promotions fast and easily. Video houses also have access to more advanced lighting, which may be needed to capture quality video at some events.”

THINK AHEAD

While jumping into video promotion and subsequent event production with video seems to be a daunting task, Oleson suggests that, like planning a meeting, it is much simpler when it’s broken down into steps.

The first step is gathering video footage. Has anyone captured video from past events? Is there a way to stage some shots or use stock footage to kick-start your video? Often, the local chamber of commerce and visitor bureaus have stock footage that can make good lead-ins or lead-outs for videos.

“We put ‘get video’ on the event host’s or planner’s to-do list,” she says. They develop a shot list ahead of the event, which makes execution easier.

Oleson will work with the event sponsor to develop a promotion plan. “When they are involved, they are more likely to use their resources to help promote the event.” In some instances, like concerts or well-known

performances, Oleson has been able to work some trade-out deals with video production houses, getting quality video footage in return for free event tickets.

At the event, it’s simple to stream live footage. “If it’s a meeting with presentations, you can get virtual attendees by allowing subscribers to tap into presentations,” she says. Usually, a stationary camera trained on the speaker will suffice. Those presentations also can be packaged for resale after the event or used as a registration bonus for next year’s meeting.

Oleson says if you’re going to use a video presentation as a post-event promotion, be timely about it and do it right the first time. “If you get a high-quality post-meeting promotion posted that features a speaker, it’s likely that speaker will repost it, increasing its chances of going viral. But if you wait too long, even the presenter will lose interest in viewing or reposting it,” she says.

However, Oleson reminds that the quality must be there first time around. “Very few people will go back and watch a video again because you edited and produced it to look more professional. Do it right the first time,” she says.

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Releasing an online video during a conference on a social media platform will get people who aren't even attending chiming in and creating more momentum and enthusiasm. "By recording all your sessions, you can reuse that content and possibly even sell it if you're looking for more ways to drive event revenue. Make sure you have stakeholder buy-in about whatever videos you plan to show. This also means testing your equipment and connections before the event begins and then again during breaks. Nothing is as awkward for the speaker and the attendees than seeing someone on stage falter when something fails to play or display properly," Craft says.

SPEAKER INTRODUCTIONS

Video spots in promotions about speakers can create hype and set the expectation for a great presentation. Speaker promotions can be posted online to help promote the event and even just before the speaker takes the stage to set the tone and mood for the presentation.

"If you choose to go this route, there are some best practices to keep in mind," says Craft. "It's OK to poke fun a bit, but tread lightly. Don't risk offending any speakers or attendees. Also, don't use too many inside jokes. These kinds of intro videos work best when everyone feels included in the fun."

Often, speakers will have their own repertoire of videos that you may be able to leverage in your promotions, Craft adds.

PROMOTE THE PARTY

The opening or closing party can be one of the highlights of an event and offering video in real time is a fun way for people to record memories and highlights. The content can be quickly produced and shared on social media to generate even more buzz for your event, says Craft.

"We had one event that edited party footage in real time and shared it with people during the party. Much of the content was recorded earlier in the evening and then edited in an ad-hoc video booth set up in a corner of the party," she says.

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POST-EVENT PROMOTION

Post-event videos can extend memories, enthusiasm and knowledge retention of events. "Make sure some video content is freely available," says Craft. "Even if you want to monetize recorded talks, don't put everything behind a paywall. Share at least some of your video content for free, so that people get enough of a taste that they want to engage further."

Craft suggests creating different kinds of videos for different audiences. "Make short, teaser content to share on social media and share longer, uncut recordings of the talks on your website. You also can edit together testimonials and feedback for a high-energy video to promote the event with new audience members," Craft says.

Recaps and highlight videos are a great way to reach those people who didn't attend.

"A highlight video is one of the best ways to drive future sales and attendees because the videos can help create FOMO (fear of missing out)," says Craft.

Presentations captured during the event offer promising sales and exposure post-event. "Regardless of if people attended a specific session or not, they're going to want the recordings. Whether to re-watch themselves, share with their teams or show colleagues, make sure you record as many of the speaker sessions as you can. You'll be glad you did," Craft concludes. **WM**



Clair Urbain is a freelance writer based in Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin, and the owner of Urbain Communications LLC.

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RESOURCE GUIDE 2019

A directory of accommodations, destinations and venues to help guide your meeting planning.







// BEST WESTERN PREMIER WATERFRONT HOTEL AND CONVENTION CENTER //

With 176 newly renovated guest rooms, The Best Western Premier has quickly gained a reputation for attentive, friendly service accompanied by detailed event execution. The beautiful facility is conveniently located on the banks of the Fox River. Meeting professionals can plan their event around 25,000 sq. ft. of flexible meeting space with 19 breakout rooms. The Oshkosh Convention Center is conveniently connected by skywalk to the hotel. From conventions to board meetings, our professional meeting and banquet staff are available to assist with every aspect of planning your event.

a: 1 North Main St., Oshkosh, WI 54901
t: 920/230-6291 **tf:** 855/230-1900
w: oshkoshwaterfronthotel.com **e:** info@bwoshkosh.com

DINING

[2,200] RECEPTION CAPACITY
 [1,200] PRIVATE DINING CAPACITY
 [850] RECEPTION WITH DINING
 [1,500] TOTAL DINING CAPACITY
 [YES] ON-SITE RESTAURANT
 [YES] LOUNGE / ENTERTAINMENT

MEETING SPACE

[25,000] MEETING SPACE (SQ. FT.)
 [19] # OF MEETING ROOMS
 [1,240] MEETING CAPACITY
 [NO] OPEN CATERING
 [YES] ON-SITE CATERING

OTHER

[YES] HIGH-SPEED WIRELESS
 [YES] FITNESS / POOL
 [NO] SPA



// GRAND GENEVA RESORT: THE MIDWEST'S PREMIER MEETINGS DESTINATION //

Grand Geneva Resort & Spa is well established as one of the most spacious layouts in the Midwest with 355 guest rooms at its main lodge, and 29 secluded, upscale new villas. A 4-season destination, Grand Geneva offers unique spaces, alongside seasonal dining and team-building adventures.

a: 7036 Grand Geneva Way, Lake Geneva, WI 53147
tf: 800/558 3417 **f:** 262/249 4585
w: grandgeneva.com **e:** salesteam@grandgeneva.com

DINING

[1,000] RECEPTION CAPACITY
 [72] PRIVATE DINING CAPACITY
 [750] RECEPTION WITH DINING
 [2,500] TOTAL DINING CAPACITY
 [YES] ON-SITE RESTAURANT
 [YES] LOUNGE / ENTERTAINMENT

MEETING SPACE

[62,000] MEETING SPACE (SQ. FT.)
 [35] # OF MEETING ROOMS
 [1,200] MEETING CAPACITY
 [NO] OPEN CATERING
 [YES] ON-SITE CATERING

OTHER

[YES] GOLF
 [YES] INDOOR WATERPARK
 [YES] OUTDOOR WATERPARK



// HEIDEL HOUSE RESORT & SPA //

Conveniently located on 20 wooded acres in south central Wisconsin, this full-service lakeside resort welcomes business and leisure guests to experience timeless hospitality in an unforgettable setting. Heidelberg House Resort & Spa features 177 guest rooms ranging from lake view suites to private vacation rentals. Groups enjoy diverse spaces with 18,000 square feet of indoor meeting spaces. Green Lake sets a breathtaking backdrop for a general session or dinner reception, complete with on-site A/V equipment and support. Recreation abounds with the 60-foot Escapade yacht, luxurious Evensong Spa and 99 holes of golf within minutes. A knowledgeable and attentive team helps plan memorable events during any season.

a: 643 Illinois Avenue, Green Lake, WI 54941
tf: 800/444 2812 **f:** 920/294 6128
w: heidelhouse.com **e:** info@heidelhouse.com

DINING

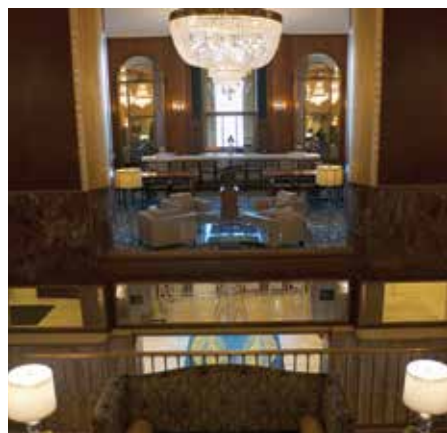
[600] RECEPTION CAPACITY
 [340] PRIVATE DINING CAPACITY
 [450] RECEPTION WITH DINING
 [1,360] TOTAL DINING CAPACITY
 [YES] ON-SITE RESTAURANT
 [YES] LOUNGE / ENTERTAINMENT

MEETING SPACE

[18,000] MEETING SPACE (SQ. FT.)
 [16] # OF MEETING ROOMS
 [270] MEETING CAPACITY
 [NO] OPEN CATERING
 [YES] ON-SITE CATERING

OTHER

[YES] HIGH-SPEED WIRELESS
 [YES] FITNESS / POOL
 [YES] SPA



// HILTON MILWAUKEE CITY CENTER //

Combining 1920's grandeur and elegance with today's modern conveniences, the Hilton Milwaukee City Center is the premier choice of business travelers, families, corporate events, galas and weddings. The hotel features 729 guest rooms and over 30,000 square feet of meeting space, and more than 20 individual function rooms, including the ornate Crystal Ballroom and regal Empire Ballroom. The hotel is located in downtown Milwaukee on Wisconsin Avenue, and is connected to the city's convention center.

a: 509 W. Wisconsin Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53203
t: 414/271-7250
w: www.hiltonmilwaukee.com

DINING

[1,500] RECEPTION CAPACITY
 [n/a] PRIVATE DINING CAPACITY
 [700] RECEPTION WITH DINING
 [n/a] TOTAL DINING CAPACITY
 [YES] ON-SITE RESTAURANT
 [YES] LOUNGE / ENTERTAINMENT

MEETING SPACE

[30,000] MEETING SPACE (SQ. FT.)
 [19] # OF MEETING ROOMS
 [n/a] MEETING CAPACITY
 [NO] OPEN CATERING
 [YES] ON-SITE CATERING

OTHER

[YES] HIGH-SPEED WIRELESS
 [YES] FITNESS / POOL
 [NO] SPA



// HOTEL GOODWIN //

Inspired by the 19th century Goodwin House, Hotel Goodwin offers 34 chic guest rooms and an impeccable mixture of history and modern luxury. Each room is distinctive with eye catching art, turntables and unique vinyl collections. When not in your room, dine at the in-house wine-focused restaurant Velvet Buffalo.

Take the party upstairs to the only rooftop in downtown Beloit. Perfect for business meetings and wedding rehearsals. Hotel Goodwin's rooftop is Beloit's quintessential spot for any occasion.

a: 500 Public Avenue, Beloit, Wisconsin 53511
tf: 608/473 1400
w: hotelgoodwin.com

DINING

- [60] RECEPTION CAPACITY
- [59] PRIVATE DINING CAPACITY
- [129] TOTAL DINING CAPACITY
- [YES] ON-SITE RESTAURANT
- [YES] LOUNGE / ENTERTAINMENT

MEETING SPACE

- [1,200] MEETING SPACE (SQ. FT.)
- [2] # OF MEETING ROOMS
- [75] MEETING CAPACITY
- [YES] ON-SITE CATERING

OTHER

- [YES] HIGH-SPEED WIRELESS
- [YES] FITNESS CENTER



// THE INGLESIDE HOTEL //

Our complete property renovations provide a simple yet beautifully designed space for business and leisure travelers. Featuring 192 guest rooms and over 40,000 sq. ft. of flexible banquet and meeting space, we invite you to experience contemporary Lake Country hospitality at its natural, vibrant best.

a: 2810 Golf Road, Pewaukee, WI 53072
tf: 800/247 6640
w: theinglesidehotel.com

DINING

- [720] RECEPTION CAPACITY
- [540] RECEPTION WITH DINING
- [YES] ON-SITE RESTAURANT
- [YES] LOUNGE / ENTERTAINMENT

MEETING SPACE

- [40,000] MEETING SPACE (SQ. FT.)
- [20] # OF MEETING ROOMS
- [NO] OPEN CATERING
- [YES] ON-SITE CATERING

OTHER

- [YES] HIGH-SPEED WIRELESS
- [YES] FITNESS / POOL / WATERPARK
- [NO] SPA



// KALAHARI RESORTS & CONVENTIONS//

Kalahari Resorts & Conventions is expanding the venue that consistently delivers attendance-increasing events of all sizes. More space, more amenities means that your convention will be even more incredible. 212,000 flexible convention space, 52,000-square-foot ballroom added, 10 additional meeting rooms, premium dining and more!

a: 1305 Kalahari Drive, Wisconsin Dells, WI 53965
tf: 855/411 4605
w: KalahariMeetings.com

DINING

- [5,200] RECEPTION CAPACITY
- [2,300] PRIVATE DINING CAPACITY
- [1,300] RECEPTION WITH DINING
- [2,300] TOTAL DINING CAPACITY
- [YES] ON-SITE RESTAURANT
- [YES] LOUNGE / ENTERTAINMENT

MEETING SPACE

- [212,000] MEETING SPACE (SQ. FT.)
- [45] # OF MEETING ROOMS
- [5,200] MEETING CAPACITY
- [NO] OPEN CATERING
- [YES] ON-SITE CATERING

OTHER

- [YES] HIGH-SPEED WIRELESS
- [YES] FITNESS / POOL / WATERPARK
- [YES] SPA



// LAKE LAWN RESORT //

This full-service convention facility boasts 2 miles of shoreline and 250 acres in Wisconsin's Geneva Lakes region. 90 minutes from Chicago. Within 60 minutes of Milwaukee, Madison, and Rockford. Custom team building, myriad meeting rooms, expansive guest rooms, award-winning on-site dining, spa, 18-hole golf course, pools, marina, and more.

a: 2400 E. Geneva St, Delavan WI, 53115
t: 262/728 7950 **f:** 262/728 7976
w: lakelawnresort.com **e:** sales@lakelawnresort.com

DINING

- [600] RECEPTION CAPACITY
- [320] PRIVATE DINING CAPACITY
- [450] RECEPTION WITH DINING
- [2,400] TOTAL DINING CAPACITY
- [YES] ON-SITE RESTAURANT
- [YES] LOUNGE / ENTERTAINMENT

MEETING SPACE

- [32,000] MEETING SPACE (SQ. FT.)
- [22] # OF MEETING ROOMS
- [300] MEETING CAPACITY
- [NO] OPEN CATERING
- [YES] ON-SITE CATERING

OTHER

- [YES] HIGH-SPEED WIRELESS
- [YES] FITNESS / POOL
- [YES] SPA



// THE MADISON CONCOURSE HOTEL AND GOVERNOR'S CLUB //

This renowned largest convention hotel in downtown Madison offers 373 guest rooms and 27,000 sq. ft. of flexible, freshly-renovated meeting space. From conventions to small strategic planning sessions — they have the contemporary space, award-winning service, superb cuisine and perfect downtown location to make your next event a success. Featuring complimentary wireless internet, underground parking and the exclusive 100-room Governor's Club with a newly renovated 12th floor private lounge overlooking the Capitol.

a: 1 West Dayton St., Madison, WI 53703
tf: 800/356 8293
w: concoursehotel.com

DINING

[1,800] RECEPTION CAPACITY
 [1,000] PRIVATE DINING CAPACITY
 [700] RECEPTION WITH DINING
 [2,000] TOTAL DINING CAPACITY
 [YES] ON-SITE RESTAURANT
 [YES] LOUNGE / ENTERTAINMENT

MEETING SPACE

[27,000] MEETING SPACE (SQ. FT.)
 [27] # OF MEETING ROOMS
 [1,500] MEETING CAPACITY
 [NO] OPEN CATERING
 [YES] ON-SITE CATERING

OTHER

[YES] HIGH-SPEED WIRELESS
 [YES] FITNESS / POOL
 [NO] SPA



// MADISON MARRIOTT WEST //

Madison Marriott West will bring something bold and new to the Meetings and Travel industry with a Top-To-Bottom Renovation in 2019. Offering over 60,000 square feet of flexible, modernized meeting space, 292 beautifully renovated guestrooms and suites and full-service amenities including Marriott's exclusive new M-Club.

a: 1313 John Q. Hammons Drive, Middleton, WI 53562
t: 608/831 2000
w: Marriott.com/msnwe

DINING

[3,800] RECEPTION CAPACITY
 [1,800] BANQUET CAPACITY
 [150] LOUNGE

MEETING SPACE

[60,000] MEETING SPACE (SQ. FT.)
 [20] # OF MEETING ROOMS
 [3,800] MEETING CAPACITY
 [YES] ON-SITE CATERING

OTHER

[YES] HIGH-SPEED WIRELESS
 [YES] HOTEL



// RED LION HOTEL PAPER VALLEY //

Where it all happens.

- 40,000 sq. ft. of Conference and Meeting Room Space
 - 390 Guest Rooms
 - Free Wireless Internet Throughout the Hotel
 - 5 Restaurants
 - 3 Lounges
 - Pool and Fitness Center
 - Additional 38,000 sq. ft. of event space in the new Fox Cities Exhibition Center connected to the hotel
- No matter what the occasion, we have everything you need.

a: 333 W. College Ave., Appleton, WI 54911
t: 920/733 8000 **tf:** 800/242 3499
w: redlion.com
w: fcexhibitioncenter.com

DINING

[1,500] RECEPTION CAPACITY
 [1,200] PRIVATE DINING CAPACITY
 [1,000] RECEPTION WITH DINING
 [1,200] TOTAL DINING CAPACITY
 [5] ON-SITE RESTAURANT
 [YES] LOUNGE / ENTERTAINMENT

MEETING SPACE

[40,000] MEETING SPACE (SQ. FT.)
 [26] # OF MEETING ROOMS
 [1,750] MEETING CAPACITY
 [NO] OPEN CATERING
 [YES] ON-SITE CATERING

OTHER

[YES] HIGH-SPEED WIRELESS
 [YES] FITNESS / POOL
 [NO] SPA



// THE RIDGE HOTEL //

Just about an hour's drive from Milwaukee or Chicago, the Ridge Hotel is conveniently located for corporate meetings and retreats, yet feels days away with a tranquil transformation from urban to shoreline setting. The flexible meeting space at our midcentury-modern hotel can be sectioned off for groups from 10-350 and accommodate every event from a casual outdoor barbecue post golf to an elegant gala. Our professional staff takes great pride in creating a personalized experience—from customized catering and optimal meeting space to arranging unique team-building and recreation—all at a fraction of the cost of a city stay. Awarded "Best Outdoor Reception Space" Best of Wisconsin Meetings 2018.

a: W4240 State Hwy 50, Lake Geneva, Wisconsin 53147
t: 800/225 5558 **f:** 262/249 3856
w: ridgelakegeneva.com **e:** groups@ridgelakegeneva.com

DINING

[350] RECEPTION CAPACITY
 [300] PRIVATE DINING CAPACITY
 [300] RECEPTION WITH DINING
 [410] TOTAL DINING CAPACITY
 [YES] ON-SITE RESTAURANT
 [YES] LOUNGE / ENTERTAINMENT

MEETING SPACE

[10,000] MEETING SPACE (SQ. FT.)
 [6] # OF MEETING ROOMS
 [NO] OPEN CATERING
 [YES] ON-SITE CATERING

OTHER

[YES] GROUP TEAM BUILDING
 [YES] WATER ACTIVITIES
 [YES] GOLF
 [YES] MARINA/WATERCRAFT RENTALS



// BROOKFIELD: CONNECT. COLLABORATE. CELEBRATE. //

Located along I-94, Brookfield is the perfect spot for corporate and social events. Traditional and unique meeting space available for small events to large scale conferences. 16 hotels with ample free parking, 150 restaurants to please any appetite and 3 million sq. ft. of shopping. Coming in 2020, The Brookfield Conference Center—featuring 44,000 sq. ft. of meeting space, beautiful atrium and seasonal outdoor plaza! Visit Brookfield and let us exceed your expectations.

a: 17100 W Bluemound Rd. Ste. 201, Brookfield, WI 53005
tf: 262/789 0220 **f:** 800/388 1835
w: visitbrookfield.com **e:** kim@visitbrookfield.com



// ELKHART LAKE, WISCONSIN //

Take your team to Elkhart Lake with beautifully designed meeting facilities and accommodations in a lakeside setting. The quaint, walkabout village gives your busy, hardworking employees a place to relax and rejuvenate. Resorts, pools, beaches, golf, cooking school, award winning Aspira Spa, shopping and upscale dining are just a few blocks from the conference center. Fun pubs, al fresco dining and live music on the lakefront make a few hours of free time seem like vacation time. Build a stronger team and better business. Plan your next meeting—Elkhart Lake Style.

a: 41 E. Rhine Street, P.O. Box 425, Elkhart Lake, WI 53020
t: 920/876 2385 **tf:** 877/355 4278
w: elkhartlake.com/meetings **e:** Kathleen@elkhartlake.com



// EXPLORE LA CROSSE //

One of western Wisconsin's most energetic cities rests along the banks of the Mississippi river. Your attendees and guests will enjoy stunning views, exciting recreational activities, diverse dining, and unique shops waiting to be explored. A wealth of festivals, activities, exciting night life, and affordable amenities will make your convention or event a memorable experience.

Book it now! Contact the La Crosse County Convention & Visitors Bureau at 800-658-9424 to reserve a date. We provide full-service planning assistance to make your conference a success. Visit meeting planners at explorelacrosse.com/wm to get started. View the range of on-site, planning, referral, and marketing services available to you.

c: Dana Ecker, Director of Convention Sales
tf: 800/658 9424
w: www.explorelacrosse.com **e:** ecker@explorelacrosse.com



// FOND DU LAC & THE LAKE WINNEBAGO REGION—WELCOME TO LEGENDARY WISCONSIN HOSPITALITY //

Immerse your delegates into unique activities that incorporate all the senses. Build a true meeting design that offers a complete experience that creates a lasting impact, vibrant memories and energized attendees. The fact is, there's no more engaging, convenient and affordable meeting location in Wisconsin than Fond du Lac. This remarkable setting is anchored at the foot of one of the country's largest inland lakes. Tired of the ordinary? Find extraordinary in Fond du Lac and the Lake Winnebago Region.

a: 23 South Main Street, Suite 201, Fond du Lac, WI 54935
tf: 800/937 9123 **f:** 920/923 3010
w: fld.com/meetings **e:** mdenis@fdl.com



// FOX CITIES CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU //

Start Planning. Make your event a success in the Fox Cities. Convenience and an array of venues along with 3,500+ lodging choices, exceptional dining, nightlife and group activities are sure to please. Now Open—the Fox Cities Exhibition Center in Downtown Appleton. Contact Amy Karas at akaras@foxcities.org or 920-734-3358.

a: 3433 W. College Ave., Appleton, WI 54914
t: 920/734 3358 **tf:** 800/236 6338
w: foxcities.org **e:** akaras@foxcities.org



// JANESVILLE, WISCONSIN'S GREAT OUTSIDE AND GREAT MEETING PLACE //

Janesville, Wisconsin's Great Outside is the perfect destination to hold your next meeting, convention or retreat! Janesville offers a variety of meeting spaces and a wide selection of hotels, restaurants and attractions including many affordable options that provide you with great value.

Our team will work with you every step of the way to ensure the best experience for you and your group. Janesville is easily accessible—right off of I-39/90.

Pictured: Janesville Armory.

a: 20 S. Main Street, Suite # 17, Janesville, WI 53545
t: 608/757-3171
w: janesvillecvb.com



// MANITOWOC AREA VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU //

Connect on the Coast at your next event! Manitowoc-Two Rivers offers a convenient location, renovated conference hotel, unique meeting spaces and friendly faces for you and your delegates. After the meeting explore Manitowoc with an entertaining teambuilding experience at an escape room or ax throwing bar. For those wanting a more calming experience enjoy a walk or bike ride near the Lake Michigan coastline. The newly opened Farm Wisconsin Discovery Center near Manitowoc is a state-of-the-art, interactive discovery center offering a 4,500 sq. foot conference center now booking events for 2019 and beyond.

a: 4221 Calumet Avenue, Manitowoc, WI 54220
tf: 920/686 3077
w: Manitowoc.info **e:** mbruckschen@manitowoc.info



// MEET IN MIDDLETON //

Middleton has it all: excellent meeting venues, unique attractions and great recreational options. This thriving community is conveniently located in south-central Wisconsin. Meeting spaces range from small conference rooms to a 60,000-square-foot flexible meeting and convention space. Stay in one of Middleton's six Travel Green certified hotels and take a break to explore some of its award-winning trails. Learn more about this outstanding meeting location.

a: 1811 Parmenter Street, Middleton, WI 53562
t: 800/688 5694
w: meetinmiddleton.com



// MEET IN MILWAUKEE //

When people convene in Milwaukee, they're getting more than your typical convention. They're getting our exceptional blend of stunning natural beauty, meeting facilities, and urban-easy charm in one budget-friendly package. Check out the Wisconsin Center District three-venue convention campus with three connecting hotels. Just blocks away are downtown nightlife and restaurants. Not to mention our new additions, the state-of-the-art Fiserv Forum sports and entertainment center as well as Milwaukee's modern streetcar "The Hop." Major city attractions like the world's only Harley-Davidson Museum, "flying" Milwaukee Art Museum on Lake Michigan, and exciting Potawatomi Hotel & Casino all double as impressive event venues. And visitors never want for things to do with Milwaukee's renowned culinary scene, engaging brewery tours, river excursions, distinctive neighborhoods, and lakefront festivals.

a: 648 N. Plankinton Ave., Suite 220, Milwaukee, WI 53203
tf: 800/576-6466 **f:** 414/273-5596
w: visitmilwaukee.org/meetings **e:** MBloemendaal@milwaukee.org



// REAL RACINE //

Location, location, location! Situated along Lake Michigan between Chicago and Milwaukee, Racine County is a convenient and beautiful site for you and your attendees. You'll experience a vibrant community ready to wow your group without hurting your budget. Our full-service lodging properties have mastered the art of pampering. Racine County attractions include a spectacular lakefront, fascinating Frank Lloyd Wright-designed architecture and authentic Danish Kringle pastry. Because Racine County is between two major markets, you'll find the amenities of a large city at affordable rates. Smart planners have enjoyed our team's outstanding, free services. Attendees have enjoyed their stay. Call or email Eileen Arnold today to get started.

a: 14015 Washington Ave, Sturtevant, WI 53177
t: 262/884 6407
w: realracine.com **e:** eileen@realracine.com



// MEETINGS MEET SUCCESS IN WAUKESHA PEWAUKEE //

Waukesha Pewaukee is conveniently located between Milwaukee and Madison (right off I-94) in the heart of southeastern Wisconsin's Lake Country. Meeting planners will find more than 100,000 square feet of flexible meeting space, 1,100 guestrooms with complimentary parking and many options for post-meeting activities to keep attendees entertained during their stay. Learn more at visitwaukesha.org/meetings.

a: N14 W23755 Stone Ridge Dr., Ste. 225, Waukesha, WI 53188
tf: 262/542 0330
w: visitwaukesha.org/meetings **e:** meet@visitwaukesha.org



// WISCONSIN DELLS VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU //

Planning a successful meeting is about more than just great facilities, it's about making the most of your experience. In "The Waterpark Capital of the World!®" our facilities can accommodate nearly any size group, and with 16 million gallons of waterpark fun, championship golf courses, multiple spas, a 24-hour casino and over 90 area restaurants; your meeting won't just be successful, it'll be unforgettable.

a: 701 Superior Street; P.O. Box 390, Wisconsin Dells, WI 53965
tf: 888/339 3822 ext. 342
w: meetinthedells.com **e:** sales@wisdells.com



// ALLIANT ENERGY CENTER //

The Alliant Energy Center is located at the gateway to downtown Madison, WI. This multi-venue campus offers facilities for sporting events, trade and consumer shows, as well as conferences and banquets. As a full service provider we customize our expansive menu of equipment and services to fit your specific needs. Accommodations available for groups of 10 – 10,000.

a: 1919 Alliant Energy Center Way, Madison WI 53713
t: 608/267-1549
w: alliantenergycenter.com **e:** kaltenberg@alliantenergycenter.com

DINING

[4,000] BANQUET CAPACITY
 [4,000] RECEPTION CAPACITY
 [YES] ON-SITE CATERING
 [YES] LOUNGE/ENTERTAINMENT

MEETING SPACE

[120,000] MEETING SPACE (SQ. FT.)
 [10,000] MEETING CAPACITY
 [21] # OF MEETING ROOMS

OTHER

[YES] HIGH-SPEED WIRELESS
 [YES] HOTEL



// MADISON, WISCONSIN: WHERE INSPIRATION MEETS FOCUS. //

Striking that perfect balance between flowing energy and laser focus is at the heart of every great meeting. Leave it to the experts at Monona Terrace to ensure that at your next meeting or convention, your attendees are both dialed up and dialed in. From our concierge-caliber service to the Frank Lloyd Wright design, Monona Terrace provides a springboard for great ideas and frees you from worrying about the details. Call Monona Terrace today to book your next meeting, conference or convention or visit mononaterrace.com to fill out a request for proposal.

a: One John Nolen Drive, Madison, WI 53703
t: 608/261.4000
w: mononaterrace.com

MEETING SPACE

[85,000] MEETING SPACE (SQ. FT.)
 [3,300] MEETING CAPACITY
 [21] # OF MEETING ROOMS

DINING

[2,000] BANQUET CAPACITY
 [YES] ON-SITE CATERING

TRADE SHOWS

[85,000] FUNCTIONAL SPACE (SQ. FT.)
 [40,000] EXHIBIT SPACE (SQ. FT.)



// MILWAUKEE PUBLIC MUSEUM //

Just two blocks from the Wisconsin Center in the heart of downtown Milwaukee, the Milwaukee Public Museum is one of the area's largest and most versatile venues. MPM offers planners customizable meeting spaces, a 212 seat lecture hall, built-in entertainment, and on-site coordination – all within 80,000 square feet of indoor space.

a: 800 West Wells Street, Milwaukee, WI
tf: 414/278 6997
w: mpm.edu/rentals

DINING

[3,500] RECEPTION CAPACITY
 [450] BANQUET CAPACITY
 [NO] OPEN CATERING
 [YES] ON-SITE CATERING

MEETING SPACE

[80,000] MEETING SPACE (SQ. FT.)
 [5+] # OF MEETING ROOMS
 [3,500] MEETING CAPACITY
 (\$SAME AS TOTAL MUSEUM CAPACITY)

OTHER

[YES] ADJACENT COVERED PARKING
 [YES] FREE WI-FI



// POTAWATOMI HOTEL & CASINO //

The Midwest's Premier Entertainment Destination is also your best bet for full-service meetings—everything from an intimate get-together or a conference for 3,000 guests.

Make an unforgettable impression in Milwaukee with the most hotel event space under one roof, free covered parking, free Wi-Fi, state-of-the-art AV and professional catering managers to customize every detail of your event, all just steps from nonstop gaming, dining and luxury accommodations.

Visit paysbig.com or call 414-847-8600 to see how we can help bring your vision to life.

a: 1611 West Canal Street, Milwaukee, WI 53233
tf: 800/ PAYS BIG
w: paysbig.com/meetings

DINING

[1,200] BANQUET CAPACITY
 [2,750] RECEPTION CAPACITY
 [7] # OF RESTAURANTS
 [YES] ON-SITE CATERING
 [YES] LOUNGE/ENTERTAINMENT

MEETING SPACE

[60,000] MEETING SPACE (SQ. FT.)
 [3,000] MEETING CAPACITY
 [9] # OF MEETING ROOMS

OTHER

[YES] HIGH-SPEED WIRELESS
 [YES] HOTEL

WISCONSIN meetings

www.wisconsinmeetings.com

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PROFESSIONAL PROFILE

BET YOUR MEETING ON WISCONSIN

MPI-WISCONSIN PRESIDENT TAMARA JESSWEIN CHATS UP THE STATE'S MEETING AND EVENTS INDUSTRY.

BY RONNIE WENDT

When asked to recall the most challenging meeting she ever planned, Tamara Jesswein, CMP president, MPI-Wisconsin Chapter, says hands down it was a global sales meeting in Siem Reap, Cambodia. The nearly 20-year events industry veteran recalls that the difficulties of dealing with a poverty-stricken, Third World country ran the gamut from communications issues to response times to finding the right venue.

"My greatest challenge was the need to create a ballroom that would be sufficient to host our full production set," she states. "We had to hire a local contractor to build a floor over swampland adjacent to the hotel and ship a fully air-conditioned tent in from China."

Organizing a meeting in Wisconsin is no doubt far less complicated than planning one in a Third World country. It is unlikely you'll have to erect a venue over a swamp! The state offers a meeting and event bounty that spans more than just brats, cheese and

beer. Planners can host meetings in bustling cities with a small-town feel or opt for more out-of-the-way destinations near natural wonders like the Cave of the Mounds, the mainland sea caves or the state's 17.1 million acres of forest land.

With opportunities galore, Jesswein underscores the importance of becoming a member of MPI, which she says, connects planners and suppliers to valuable resources across the state.

"When you join MPI you become part of an organization dedicated to your personal and career success. You will connect with innovative learning, passionate people with big ideas that will empower you to become an agent of change," says the corporate meeting planner. "Networking with other planners expands your opportunity to learn and grow. And, sharing best practices is 100 percent worth its weight in MPI membership."

She adds the support the chapter offers becomes essential as planners face an ever-changing meetings and events landscape, especially when it comes to technology.

"Keeping pace with a constantly changing world of technology is something event professionals are not immune to. We no longer have attendees we have participants, meaning we need to constantly find new ways to engage those participants," she says. "As existing brands and event organizers engage with new technologies, it will be critical to evaluate potential partners based on how easily their tech can be integrated with current systems, and whether or not they have experience in the scale of event that your company is organizing."

The value of industry connections is also essential as competition for finite event space heats up and planners must look further out when booking venue space.

"We are still playing catch up from when many new builds were put on hold," Jesswein explains. "It is becoming increasingly difficult to find available space when you are not booking 18 months in advance."

These challenges aside, Jesswein sees a great future for meetings in Wisconsin as new and unique event spaces continue to open. The U.S. Bureau of Statistics seems to support her enthusiasm, projecting that the meetings and events industry will grow 44 percent nationally by 2020.

"From the booming cities of Madison and Milwaukee to the unique and boutique opportunities throughout the Fox Valley to our beautiful Northwoods, Wisconsin is a great place to hold an event," she says. "Our CVBs work diligently to support the properties and venues across the state to continually bring in annual and new opportunities." **WM**

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