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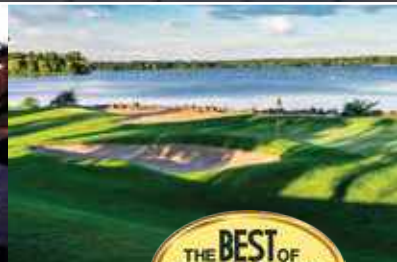
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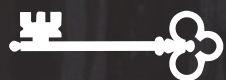


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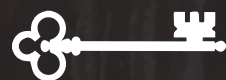
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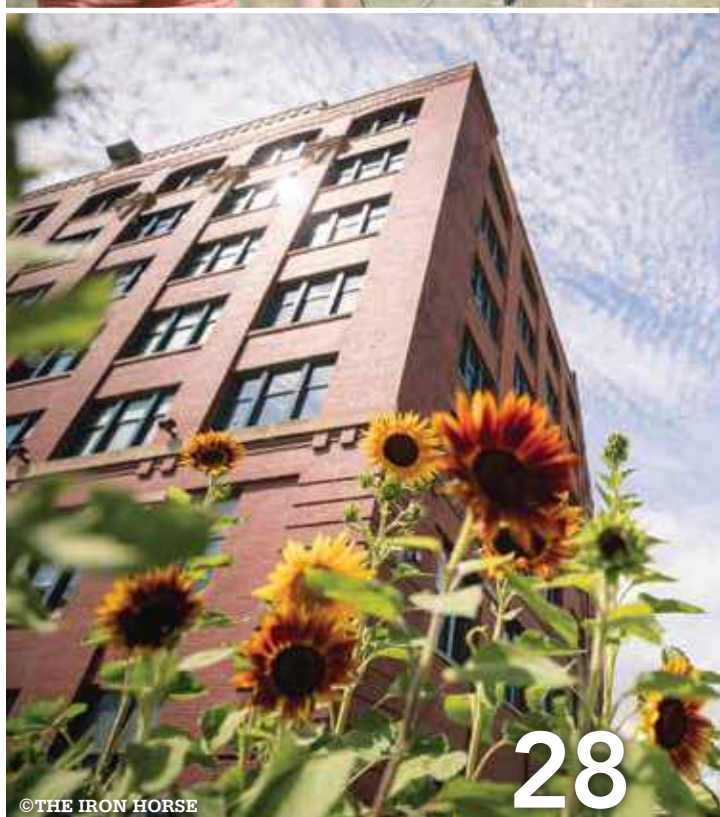
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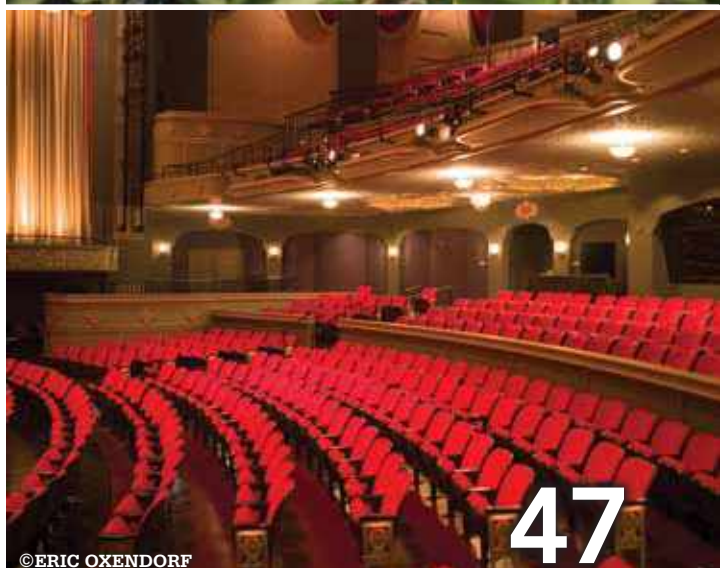
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©HO-CHUNK GAMING WISCONSIN DELLS

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EDITOR'S LETTER

As a young girl, I dreamed of having a backyard wedding. I imagined myself in a flowing updo and ethereal white gown standing beneath an aged oak tree as my beloved and I exchanged hand-penned vows. The breeze rustled the leaves and the sunlight warmed our faces, while a gathering of dear family and friends observed our perfectly romantic exchange.

Though a wedding differs immensely from a corporate meeting or event, brides plan these occasions to elicit a mood and produce a distinct experience for their guests. Brides excel at imagining and creating standout statements for their big day, and they often start their planning when they are little girls.

Our featured planner this issue, David Caruso, president of Dynamic Events by David Caruso, calls attempts to create a specific mood a "signature statement" and observes that all events — not just weddings — need to achieve it.

He reports attendees at every event — and in every industry — have one thing in common, they crave an engaging, immersive and emotional experience. When meetings surprise and delight, Caruso says attendees become more excited about what they're seeing and learning, and stay interested long after the event ends.

Experiential meetings entertain, inform and influence behaviors. They provide a wow factor and stand out. Learn how to make meetings more experiential in "Execute an Experience" on Page 22.

Event organizer Clark Sell hangs his hat on experiential meetings. Learn how he grew the THAT Conference from 400 attendees to 1,700 in seven years. He held onto his core values for work-family life balance by making the meeting family-friendly, then he focused on experiences that involved children and spouses in unexpected ways. He sees family involvement at corporate events as an added value rather than a distraction.

Our Destination Profile also concentrates on engaging experiences, and shares how Oshkosh delivers classic charm and modern amenities to thrill visitors. The city of 66,000 brims with historic buildings and contemporary offerings. Plus, Oshkosh's convenient and central location makes it accessible, and its reasonable size makes it easy for attendees to navigate.

Unexpected activities are an excellent means of keeping energy percolating during a meeting or event. Behind-the-scenes tours deliver on the unexpected and the state offers plenty of them. Planners can take attendees to witness robots in action at Amazon's Fulfillment Center; see how iconic, high-end Harley-Davidson motorcycles are made; and even walk onto a World War II submarine — just to single out a few. Learn how and why you want to take your group on a behind-the-scenes tour on Page 47.

Wrapping up the issue is a Venue Spotlight on Hotel Northland. The renovated historic hotel in Green Bay provides an extraordinary experience through a rare combination of football memories, nostalgic charm and contemporary offerings. This downtown venue holds a special spot in my heart. My husband and brother-in-law spent six months restoring the woodwork in this majestic hotel. To me, that alone makes it worth checking out!

Enjoy the read.

Ronnie Wendt
Editor
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IN THE NEWS

PHOTO COURTESY OF LEXIE MALLARY, WH&LA

John Chastan (left), general manager of Kalahari Resorts & Conventions, poses with last year's Innkeeper of the Year, Jon Jossart (right), general manager of the Ambassador Inn and Ambassador Hotel Milwaukee.

WH&LA HONORS KALAHARI HOTELIER

The Wisconsin Hotel & Lodging Association (WH&LA) honored John Chastan, general manager of Kalahari Resorts & Conventions, with its annual Innkeeper of the Year award for 2019. The award recognizes outstanding leadership in the Wisconsin lodging industry. Chastan received the award at the 2019 Wisconsin Lodging Conference held at the Kalahari in Wisconsin Dells in November.

MIDAS BUYS ALOFT MILWAUKEE DOWNTOWN

Midas Hospitality acquired the 160-room Aloft Milwaukee Downtown for \$26.5 million. The five-story hotel offers more than 5,000 square feet of meeting space, a bar, a fitness center, an indoor pool and a grab-and-go shop. It is adjacent to Fiserv Forum, the new arena for the Milwaukee Bucks basketball team.

OSTHOFF ADDS DIGITAL DIRECTORY

The Osthoff Resort in Elkhart Lake recently installed Crave Interactive's 8-inch T-Mini in-room tablets and charging docks in its 145 guest rooms and suites. The tablets serve as an all-in-one digital directory, in-room alarm clock and ordering solution for hotel amenities, including in-room dining, housekeeping, spa services and dining reservations. The one-touch tablets also give resort staff the ability to send messages to any room or group of rooms.



HOTEL NORTHLAND GETS ICONIC NEON SIGN

Hotel Northland, now a part of the Marriott Autograph Collection, installed an updated version of the hotel's iconic neon sign on its Pine Street canopy in Green Bay. Jones Sign Company recreated the sign, one of the more notable features of the hotel in its historic heyday.

OAK CREEK EYED FOR AVID HOTEL

Oak Creek could be home to the state's third Avid hotel. If constructed, this Avid hotel will join others being developed in Monona and Waukesha. The proposed 95-room InterContinental Hotels Group-branded hotel will include a large lobby area that can be used to conduct business or socialize, a fitness room and modern guest rooms. If approved by the city planning commission, it will employ 25 full-time workers.

WISCONSIN RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION SEEKS EXTENDED DNC HOURS

The Wisconsin Restaurant Association has begun to research moving closing time to 4 a.m. during the Democratic National Convention (DNC) this summer. The association is currently talking with legislators, and state and city officials about the idea. The law requires that establishments with Class B liquor licenses or permits close from 2 to 6 a.m. Monday through Friday, and from 2:30 to 6 a.m. on Saturdays and Sundays.

CULTURAL CENTER NEARS FUNDRAISING GOAL

The Central Wisconsin Cultural Center in Wisconsin Rapids has raised over \$200,000 (68% of the goal of its Grow the Arts capital campaign) to purchase a permanent home. When the center reaches \$300,000 in contributions, the Legacy Foundation of Central Wisconsin will match up to \$300,000 toward the center's building purchase. Central Wisconsin Cultural Center's mission is to foster creative experiences through classes, exhibits, music and social gatherings.

NEW HOTEL PROPOSED IN GREEN BAY

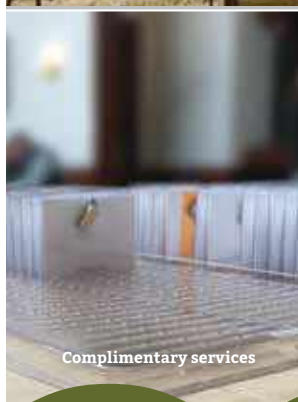
The village of Ashwaubenon has approved a new hotel to be located on Holmgren Way, which would push the Green Bay area over 4,500 hotel rooms. Every one of the 64 rooms in the My Place Hotel will include a kitchen with a cooktop, microwave and refrigerator. The hotel also will offer on-site laundry, pet-friendly accommodations and a small general store.



CURD NERD RANKS STATE CURDS

EatStreet's Curd Nerd judged the state's cheese curds on flavor, texture, smell, squeakiness, presentation and sauce. The top 10 cheese curds in Wisconsin are as follows:

- Stone Arch Brewpub (Appleton)
- Longtable Beer Cafe (Middleton)
- Tavernakaya (Madison)
- Crafty Cow (Milwaukee)
- Avenue Club (Madison)
- The Sweet & Salty Pig (Fond du Lac)
- Milwaukee Burger Company (Wausau, Eau Claire, Appleton)
- Titledown Brewing Company (Green Bay)
- Fox River Brewing Company (Oshkosh, Appleton)
- 2510 Restaurant (Wausau) **WM**



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VENUE SPOTLIGHT

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TITLETOWN'S WINNING VENUE

THE REVITALIZED HOTEL NORTHLAND SCORES WITH A HISTORIC MEETING AND EVENT VENUE OFFERING A MODERN TWIST.

BY RONNIE WENDT

The Million Dollar Hotel, so named for the \$1 million it took to build it in 1924, reopened as Hotel Northland on Valentine's Day 2019 after a \$50 million update.

The renovated and revived historic hotel radiates nostalgic charm and stately elegance from the heart of downtown Green Bay. Guests marvel at the four-star, 160-room hotel's restored historic woodwork, plaster, terrazzo floors, accents and other details, while being treated to a contemporary and comfortable guest experience. The Marriott Autograph venue couples modern amenities — including valet parking, a fitness room, plentiful USB ports, high-speed Wi-Fi, luxury suites and on-site restaurants — with old-time appeal.

"We're on the National Register of Historic Places, so we kept the hotel as original as possible. In many areas, you'll see the original green and white penny tile, ornate chandeliers, pink terrazzo steps, oak wall paneling and decorative plaster ceilings," says Brandon Flitter, director of sales for Hotel Northland. "We treat guests to the most modern amenities. But the history makes this hotel unique. You can build a new hotel with the latest this or that, but you cannot replicate the history."

The venue is a true planner's paradise, offering exceptional and unexpected features. Its 11,000 square feet of flexible meeting space, available in beautifully appointed rooms, yields a dynamic experience that injects nostalgia, glamour and fun into any event.

The Crystal Ballroom, which seats up to 140 people, is the venue's main meeting and event space. It brings

back the grandeur of the 1920s with soaring high ceilings, luxurious chandeliers and towering floor-to-ceiling windows. It even has a balcony overlooking the room, which event planners can use to host a reception, house a full-service bar or extend seating for a banquet.

The Alley puts an experiential spin on corporate events. The entertaining and welcoming space, which holds up to 200 guests, includes two bowling lanes, a shuffleboard and pool table, a full bar and soft seating throughout.

"The Alley offers a great space for social events," Flitter says. "We [were recently] at the height of holiday party season and The Alley provided so many interaction points throughout the room. It's unlike any other space I've seen."

Breakout rooms are available to accommodate 14 to 75 people for smaller meetings and events. The hotel also offers two hospitality suites for even more intimate meetings.

The availability of on-site restaurants and catering simplifies meeting planning, adds Flitter.

The Walnut Room bar and restaurant provides one-of-a-kind cuisine and specialty drinks. The bar features unique hand-crafted cocktails and an extensive wine list, whereas the restaurant offers a comprehensive menu of dishes made from locally sourced produce, meats and dairy products. The chef bakes bread on-site daily and makes his own sausages.

Poke the Bear is a fan-focused restaurant that combines a pleasant, welcoming atmosphere and fresh, full-flavored food with a sports history theme. "The restaurant is a celebration of the fans with an approachable menu," Flitter says. "We do a lot of everyone's favorites, but we do them a little differently to make them unique."

A catering director is available to guide planners through menu planning. Banquet catering menus are available, but Flitter mentions the hotel accommodates special requests, too. And Fresh Bites room service can deliver wholesome food options to guests once the meeting ends.

The Titledown venue also stays steadfast to its football roots. Vince Lombardi gave his inaugural press interview at the hotel. The venue also hosted the 1927 National Football League (NFL) meeting and visiting teams, and served as home to many Packer players over the years.

Developers paid homage to the venue's NFL past by placing football memorabilia throughout, including a bronze coach's hat in the lobby. Guests can tap the coach's hat for good luck as they amble by.

Nevertheless, planners have little need for good luck when hosting a meeting or event at this luxury venue. Hotel Northland delivers a winning combination of yesteryear and modern-day comfort to help every meeting score.

To inquire about reserving space for your next meeting or event, please email sales@hotelnorthlandgreenbay.com or call 920-393-6022. **WM**



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them ... the more irrelevant information they see, the more they're attracted to it."

If heavy multitaskers have trouble filtering out distractions, perhaps they are better at switching from task to task? But no. They have more trouble, not less, organizing their memories for easy retrieval of relevant information, an ability necessary for switching mental gears.

WHAT IS MULTITASKING?

It's attending to multiple streams of input at the same time. When we claim to be multitasking, we're generally either background tasking (doing a task that takes focus and attention, while performing a task we know how to do so well that we can do it in the background) or switch-tasking (rapidly switching between tasks that each require focus and attention).

The term "multitasking" springs from the computing world. Yet even computers are switching between tasks so quickly that it appears they're performing multiple functions simultaneously. The word caught on in a human context and we've been bragging about it ever since. Unjustifiably, it turns out.

"People can't multitask very well and, when people say they can, they're deluding themselves," says Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) neuroscientist Earl Miller. "The brain is very good at deluding itself."

The brain is also very good at shifting attention quickly from one thing to another. But that may come at a cost. Researchers at the University of Sussex's Sackler Centre for Consciousness Science tested adults who routinely attended to several media devices at the same time (a common form of multitasking). They found a disturbing lack of grey-matter density in a part of the brain that handles cognitive and emotional functions. More research is needed to determine causality, but just the suggestion that it could be the result of multitasking is reason to pause.

"Brain Rules," a book by developmental molecular biologist and research consultant John Medina, describes what happens in the brain when we think we're multitasking:

- When we undertake a task, the executive network of the brain alerts the rest of the brain that it's about to shift attention (from whatever we were doing before).
- A search is initiated for the neurons (brain cells) capable of doing that task (say, writing

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

MULTITASKING DEBUNKED

THE IMPERATIVE OF GETTING IT ALL DONE — RIGHT NOW — COULD BE UNDERMINING COGNITIVE FUNCTION.

BY MOLLY ROSE TEUKE

"To do two things at once is to do neither."
— Publilius Syrus, Latin writer

"Attention, multitaskers (if you can pay attention, that is): Your brain may be in trouble."

Thus begins a Stanford University news release announcing a 2009 research study on multitasking. "What gives multitaskers their edge?" the researchers wondered. The answer, for anyone proud of being a champion multitasker, is not good news.

"They're suckers for irrelevancy," says Stanford researcher Clifford Nass. "Everything distracts

a proposal or a report). This is called “rule activation” and it happens so quickly — in just a few tenths of a second — that we don’t notice it happening.

- When we decide to attend to a new task, e.g., answering the phone, the brain must disengage the rules for writing and the executive network alerts the brain that a new task (a switch) is about to begin.
- The executive network then initiates a new search for the “phone conversation rules” and the appropriate neurons are activated.

It doesn’t take much time, but tracking all the data involved in the earlier task is a cognitive load. If you’ve ever said, “Now, where was I?” when you finish a phone call and turn back to your original task, you get the challenge of this attentional disconnect. According to Medina, “Studies show that a person who’s interrupted takes 50% longer to accomplish a task [and] makes up to 50% more errors.”

THE IMPACT

When we switch-task, whatever we’re trying to accomplish takes longer, errors increase and the overall quality of the output goes down.

Recent studies suggest that even our intelligence quotient (IQ) suffers when we attempt to multitask. Research at the University of London found that participants who attempted to multitask during cognitive tasks lost IQ points equivalent to the effects of smoking marijuana or staying up all night.

Another study found that people who let themselves be distracted by email and phone calls experienced a 10-point drop in IQ. Forbes reports, “IQ drops of 15 points for multitasking men lowered their IQ to the average range of an 8-year-old child.”

WHAT’S AN OVERWORKED PROFESSIONAL TO DO?

With shrinking budgets, reduced staffing and increased competition, many feel we have no choice but to multitask just to keep our heads above water. Yet when we stop trying to multitask and focus more deeply on what we’re working on, we’re likely to experience greater productivity, not to mention less stress.

Here are some tips to break the habit of multitasking/switch-tasking:

- Resist active switching — the switching you consciously initiate. Do what’s necessary to maintain an undisturbed, focused space for your work. Close your office door. Turn off your cell phone or at least silence notifications. Hold your calls. Block out time on your calendar so you and everyone else knows which time slot is sacred.
- Minimize passive switching — the interruptions that others impose on you. Set office hours to indicate when you will (and won’t) be available to others. Establish set

hours for checking email, perhaps just two or three times a day. Once others see that you’re not available 24/7 and that you will give their query focused attention during specific hour(s), they’ll adapt and perhaps appreciate the certainty. If this isn’t possible, at least set yourself up to be unavailable during times you need to be productive on a specific task.

- Make it a point to give others your full attention when you are engaged with them, whether it’s in a meeting, a one-off conversation or a phone call. No surreptitiously checking email, glancing at your texts, sneaking a peek at your calendar or scribbling packing notes for next week’s vacation. As you develop a habit of full attention, you may find that your encounters with others require less time because you’re fully aware of what’s being said, obviating the need for repeated questions, explanations or instructions. Besides being more efficient, it’s more satisfying to you and those around you.
- Use a timer to track how long you want to work uninterrupted. Instead of giving in to frequent, random distractions, work at a task as long as you can maintain focus. Then consciously stop that task, take up another and work at that one for as long as you can. Most of us find our attention wandering at some point — just go as long as you can. If you find yourself on a roll, great. Keep going. Just make sure you’re in charge of the interruptions and not at their mercy.
- Notice what distracts you and interrupts your thinking. Categorize them, and develop a plan for eliminating them or managing them in a way that allows adequate focus time. If, for example, you get a lot of random questions during budget season, schedule seasonal budget meetings in which people can rely on getting their questions answered without interrupting you.

Stop giving in to that misplaced cultural imperative to get it all done now. Accept multitasking for what it is — a surefire way to undermine your brain’s cognitive power. It will take practice, yet over time, you will learn to focus judiciously. Your brain will thank you for it — and chances are, everyone else in your life will, too. **WM**



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



SUSTAINABLE CATERING

GREEN CUISINE

OFFERING SUSTAINABLE AND GREEN FOOD AND BEVERAGE OPTIONS CAN COST MORE, BUT CAN ALSO INCREASE ATTENDEE SATISFACTION.

BY MAURA KELLER

As corporate, association, and other meeting and event patrons become food savvy, crave variety and demand a wider range of flavors, more planners view sustainable and green food and beverage options as an easy avenue to please attendees and keep clients coming back for more.

"The simple reason these efforts continue to gain momentum is because people want products and services that are safer and healthier, and have a reduced impact on the environment," says sustainability expert Steve Ashkin. "And because everything is so competitive, it gives caterers an opportunity to meet this growing awareness and differentiate from their competition."

Adrienne Koclanis, the director of events at The Pfister Hotel in Milwaukee, agrees that going green and pursuing environmentally friendly practices is gaining momentum in the catering industry.

Koclanis explains that consumers are increasingly concerned with eco-friendliness. In turn, they

are demanding more sustainable offerings as it relates to menu options, bottled water, serving utensils, etc.

"Meeting and event planners can green menus by offering localized menu options, sourcing meats and vegetables from smaller, local farms, and listing it on the menu," Koclanis says. "Using food sources that are closer can result in lower prices because it costs less to transport. It also usually tastes better because produce is picked when it's ripe."

Many restaurants and caterers are adding small gardens where they grow their own produce for menu dishes. This cuts costs and enhances the freshness of the meal.

While sustainable menu options are key, meeting planners also are turning their attention to such things as incorporating green utensils, which can include bamboo, wood and compostable options for guests.

SUSTAINABLE STEPS

Ashkin says meeting and event planners should be intentional about their sustainability efforts. First, define what green means within the food and beverage industry. Essentially, Ashkin says green menus include "products or services that reduce health and environmental impacts compared to similar products and services."

"Try to have at least some vegetarian and/or vegan options," Ashkin says. "And importantly, tell the guests what you have done. Include it on the menu or in the descriptions of the food. If you don't say what you've done, guests assume you have done nothing out of the ordinary."

When selecting a caterer to create a sustainable menu, the key question to ask is if the company has ever worked on a green event before.

David Porto, owner and director of events for Blue Plate Catering in Madison, says it's important to ask about the processes the caterer has implemented and what has been learned.

"The proof is in the pudding. A caterer can talk about going green and how wonderful it is without really doing it at all," Porto says.

COST VERSUS BENEFIT

Koclanis says that, in general, sustainable or organic meats and produce cost more than conventional meats and produce, but there are cost-saving benefits to embracing environmentally friendly practices.

"Although your food cost might increase, you can offset that by reducing expenditures in other areas,"

Koclanis says. For example, using energy-efficient bulbs to lower energy bills.

But keep in mind that locally sourced food pricing varies as Wisconsin includes a winter climate. From November to April it becomes more challenging and expensive to source food locally.

"And we still live in a disposable society, so making a conscious effort to be sustainable is more expensive, both in time and money," Porto says.

WHAT TO DO WITH WASTE

The sustainability of the food is paramount, but so too is the proper handling of the food waste that results from a green meeting or event.

According to Ashkin, this is probably the toughest issue to solve and it all comes down to what the local waste hauler is willing to do. In some places, there is no composting, so it doesn't matter if you separate the food. And in other places, there is no recycling.

"Begin with the waste hauler; let [the company] know you are interested in these things and see what it will do to work with you," Ashkin suggests.

ON THE HORIZON

Soon meeting planners interested in orchestrating a sustainable event are

"Meeting and event planners can green menus by offering localized menu options, sourcing meats and vegetables from smaller, local farms, and listing it on the menu."

—Adrienne Koclanis, director of events, The Pfister Hotel

going to need to think about the entire supply chain.

"The best caterers will build relationships with local farmers and florists. They will understand what local waste haulers can and cannot do," Ashkin says. "They will think about the service ware and how to green it. Catering will continue to be a very competitive business, and the future will belong to those who innovate and take advantage of the changing demands of their customers."

Koclanis says it is imperative that our country gravitates toward a greener movement.

"It is here to stay, but it is up to venues to be proactive and provide greener options, and the clients to request these items so that this becomes the norm," Koclanis says. "It is our responsibility to encourage clients to get on board and show them the benefits. However, these ideas will be more readily adoptable when they become more affordable." **WM**



Maura Keller is a Minneapolis-based writer and editor who frequently writes about meeting and event topics.



Eco-Conscious Questions for Your Caterer

The team at the Pfister suggests that meeting and event planners looking to go green ask caterers:

- Where is your food sourced?
- Do you offer recycling and/or food waste composting?
- What types of disposables, if any, do you use?
- Do you offer seasonal produce items?
- What do you normally do with surplus food?
- Is a tap water station available rather than bottled water?
- Do you offer locally sourced proteins, starches and vegetables?

— DESTINATION —

Oshkosh

FOR CLASSIC CHARM AND
MODERN AMENITIES, LOOK NO
FURTHER THAN OSHKOSH FOR
YOUR MEETING OR EVENT.

By Shelby Deering



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*"Another great aspect
of Oshkosh is its
people. Hardworking,
humble and friendly
— Oshkosh is warm
and inviting to visitors
and event organizers."*

— Michael Rust,
co-organizer, TEDxOshkosh

Amid lavish theater surroundings — classic seating in plush, red fabric; opulent décor; and a chandelier hanging overhead — 300 attendees enjoy historic ambiance while taking in an event that's as modern as it gets.

The event, TEDxOshkosh, lets the audience listen to TED talks given by inspiring speakers, while staring in awe at the theater's interior, first constructed in 1883.

TEDxOshkosh co-organizer Michael Rust, who is also CEO of the Winnebago Conflict Resolution Center, chooses The Grand Oshkosh for these popular, yearly events because of its historic appeal.

"The Grand has been an ideal partner for TEDxOshkosh because of the history that the theater provides," Rust says. "The same stage graced by Mark Twain has now had Nobel Prize winners and high school students expressing ideas that are worth spreading to the world."

This classic-meets-modern feel is something that can be experienced throughout



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Oshkosh. Tucked between Lake Winnebago and Lake Butte des Morts, the Fox River flows through this city of 66,000, brimming with historic buildings and current-day amenities alike. Full of personality and charm, this community is an ideal place to hold a meeting or event.

Got-It-All Venues

Cathy Cluff, sales director of the Oshkosh Convention & Visitors Bureau, explains why Oshkosh is a home run when it comes to meetings and events.

"Oshkosh's convenient and central location within Wisconsin makes it easily accessible," she says. "Unlike large cities, Oshkosh is easy to navigate, and it's home

to affordable hotels and unique venues."

Unique venues indeed. With a mix of hotels that provide accommodations and convention spaces, along with historic buildings that serve as event destinations, Oshkosh really has it all.

Oshkosh is nicknamed "Wisconsin's Event City," but its biggest draw is undoubtedly its yearly AirVenture event held at the grounds of the Experimental Aircraft Association, better known as the EAA. AirVenture, the largest airshow in the world, sees upward of 600,000 visitors, and that spirit and passion for all-things-aircraft-related can be experienced in the EAA's event spaces as well.

Lori Allman, EAA's manager of events and sales, shares that the EAA offers meeting spaces ranging from a small, formal conference room for five to 25 guests to exhibit hangars that can facilitate large-scale meetings and expositions for 1,000 or more. She says, "Surround yourself with World War II aircraft and artifacts in our highly demanded Eagle Hangar, where your guests are sure to be astounded. For those seeking high-tech capabilities, utilize our Founders' Wing or Vette Theater with built-in equipment for your next speaking engagement."

The EAA staff can help plan an event down to the tiniest details, including linens, décor, security and audiovisual needs. The



organization even has a culinary team in place so you can satiate your attendees with food and beverages. As Allman explains, the EAA is “more than just facility space.”

She adds, “We deliver an experience. During your visit, enjoy a variety of offerings, including inspirational speakers, a flight simulator, cockpit climbs or museum tours in a one-of-a-kind atmosphere.”

Another memorable Oshkosh locale for a meeting or event is Paine Art Center and Gardens. Once a grandiose 1920s estate, today the mansion and 3.5-acre property are home to art exhibitions and beautifully maintained gardens. Amid the stunning architecture, you can hold a truly distinctive event in a variety of spaces.

Laura Rommelfanger, Paine Art Center and Gardens director of events and patron engagement, says, “The most unique amenity offered at the Paine is access to our 20 different botanical gardens throughout your event. Groups can incorporate mindfulness into their programs with time to stroll in the gardens, igniting all the senses. Kick off your morning with yoga on the Great Lawn, or plan breakout sessions near the Rose Garden and inside the Formal Garden. Enjoy a refreshment break or cocktail reception in our Carriage House Courtyard with umbrella tables and stunning views of our gardens.”

Rommelfanger says, for an additional fee, the company can arrange mansion and exhibition tours. Food and beverages are provided through a local catering partner, Zuppa’s Café, and you likely won’t have to worry about décor: “Every space at the Paine is architecturally beautiful, so there is often not much more needed in terms of meeting décor,” Rommelfanger notes.

Another historic-building-turned-events-venue in Oshkosh is The Waters. Originally constructed in 1903, the Georgian Revival building offers lakeside views and space for 300 guests.



“The Waters has many amenities that make it an ideal place for a meeting or event,” says Kate Wyman, marketing and community relations manager. “We only host one event per day, and the guests have the full first and second floor to use. We are a great place for an intimate event for 25 guests and we are also ideal for big groups up to 300. The view is pristine any time of year.”

The Waters works with five preferred caterers that vary in price. The venue includes tables, chairs and even bartenders in the pricing.

For a 19th-century setting that’s striking, yet comfortable for an event, look to The Grand Oshkosh. Shawna Terry, program and events manager, sums up the feel, saying, “If you are looking for a unique space with some history, The Grand can be an ideal location.”



Terry adds that The Grand has two primary spaces dedicated to events. She says, “The theater seats approximately 550 people, and is equipped with a fully operational sound and lighting



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Events belong in Event City. It just makes sense.



VisitOshkosh.com/meetings

After-Hours Fun

When the meeting ends, there's plenty to do in this college town. You can:

- Visit The Outlet Shoppes at Oshkosh. The mall has more than 50 name-brand outlet stores, such as Carter's, Coach, Eddie Bauer, Jockey, Michael Kors, Nike, Old Navy, Tommy Hilfiger, Under Armour and Yankee Candle.
- Check out Country USA if you're in Oshkosh between June 25 and 27. The annual country music celebration at Ford Festival Park offers entertainment by dozens of country music acts. Toby Keith, Little Big Town and Lauren Alaina are among the entertainers on deck in 2020.
- Treat yourself to the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) AirVenture Oshkosh, from July 20 to 26. The event draws more than 600,000 aviation enthusiasts from 60 countries to Wittman Regional Airport every year. Learn more about the past, present and future of flight during this six-day event.
- Take a walk on the wild side and visit Menominee Park. Not only is the park one of Oshkosh's largest and bordered by beautiful Lake Winnebago, the park has a free zoo, paved walking and bike trails, amusement rides, and kayak and stand-up paddleboard rentals.

system. The lounge can accommodate approximately 50 to 100 people, and has a full bar, mini stage setup and flat-screen television monitors."

The interior acts as décor, so she says that little to no decorating is needed for most events. Events must cater food into the venue and The Grand provides a list of preferred caterers.



For convention space with accommodations baked right in, consider one of Oshkosh's hotels geared toward events. The Best Western Premier Waterfront Hotel & Convention Center, with renovated interiors and state-of-the-art audiovisual equipment, provides 25,000 square feet of flexible meeting space and Fox River views to boot. Food is handled in house. And you can't beat the location.

"We are located just 1 mile from the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh campus, which is down a riverside walking trail from the hotel," says David T. Helgeson, CMP, the director of sales for Best Western Premier Waterfront Hotel & Convention Center.

The Hilton Garden Inn Oshkosh boasts a 4,800-square-foot banquet hall that can hold up to 350 guests or it can be broken down into smaller sections to fit an event's needs. It offers on-site catering, along with tables, chairs, linens, and setup and takedown included in the pricing. The locale is also convenient.

Valee Xiong, director of sales at the Hilton Garden Inn, says, "We are located within five to 10 minutes of most popular Oshkosh destinations and attractions."

Activities & Fun

Although it's not the largest city in Wisconsin, Oshkosh can easily compete with more populated areas with its myriad attractions and recreational activities. Besides the countless events held throughout the city, here you can find attractions, museums, supper clubs, breweries, wineries and delicious dining options.

Invite your guests to take a leisurely paddlewheel riverboat cruise or take

part in water sports. Go on a nature hike or take it indoors at Art Spot Oshkosh, where attendees can make their own paintings or jewelry creations. And you can always keep them laughing at The Backlot Comedy House.

EAA's Allman summarizes that this area abounds with things to do, saying, "Oshkosh is an ideal destination due to its central location in the heart of Wisconsin. The city gives guests an array of year-round activities similar to a large city, but in a small-town setting. Guests can explore the outdoors, including many activities around Lake Winnebago, catch a dinner show at a local theater, shop at many local businesses or boutiques, visit a variety of museums or indulge at the farmer's market."

Since Oshkosh is aptly called "Wisconsin's Event City," between AirVenture and other popular events, it can pay off to book an event far in advance.

"You won't be able to find a date without something else going on in town. This also means that venues book early," Rust says.

Rust sings the praises of the Oshkosh area, listing its rich history, natural beauty and water activities as prime reasons to throw an event in the region. He adds, "Another great aspect of Oshkosh is its people. Hardworking, humble and friendly — Oshkosh is warm and inviting to visitors and event organizers." **WM**



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

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Execute an **EXPERIENCE**

Find out how to create a meeting or event that engages attendees and evokes memories.

By Greg Gerber

Meetings have evolved over the past 20 years beyond formal functions where people travel great distances to sit in an uncomfortable seat in a cold room to listen to lectures read from a PowerPoint presentation.

Today's meetings are far more experiential and, as a result, attendees often retain more information while forming lasting memories of the event.

Organizations still need to facilitate gathering and training people, but even the way attendees learn is changing. Classrooms and videos are out, while live, hands-on training is gaining traction. When that's not practical, meeting planners are adding other experiences to the mix.

"It's no longer as simple as gathering 10 people into a room, setting up a projector and calling it a day," says Brad Lyles, director of sales and marketing at Grand Geneva Resort & Spa in Lake Geneva.



©KOHLER EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING CENTER

A new style of conference may include some classroom or large-group events, but also physical activities, unique food experiences and engaging entertainment options. Venues are taking note of the trend toward experiences.

The 1,300-acre Grand Geneva features two award-winning golf courses and other activities like rock climbing. The resort has hosted helicopters for rides, welcomed food trucks for specialty meals and set up rounds of night golf for events.

Even smaller meetings are taking advantage of activities like kickball, basketball and tennis, not to mention the full water park on campus.

The Kohler Experiential Learning Center in Kohler offers traditional meeting rooms, but also an outdoor challenge course and even zip lines for guests to enjoy. The staff orchestrates scavenger hunts and other quick activities to get people working together during corporate events, says Luke Nurnberger, manager and lead facilitator.

"Meetings are moving far beyond standard keynote presentations," agrees Tom Graybill, vice president of sales for Tri-Marq Communications, an event and video production company. "I've seen everything from marching bands maneuvering through the audience to people juggling chainsaws on a stage to internal fireworks and even science experiments," he explains.

A CHALLENGING DYNAMIC

Developing an experiential event requires creativity and the ability to manage all the dynamics that come into play, says Nurnberger. Personal preferences, comfort levels, energy, physical ability and participant buy-in are all critical considerations.

"It's like having a superpower with the ability to do a lot of good and to inflict a lot of damage if not handled properly," he explains. "Because of the dynamics involved, if an event isn't handled well, it can produce negative results, bad experiences and poor memories for participants."

Utilizing experts to create (and guide people through) positive and impactful experiential events is tremendously helpful to ensure people participate and feel respected, he adds.

"The key is to have a plan — and alter that plan on the fly — to handle a myriad of what-ifs that may arise based on the personalities of participants," Nurnberger suggests.

For example, doing athletic competitions may meet with challenges if participants aren't athletic and see it as a waste of time. Social engagement with a group of introverted people doesn't encourage meaningful interaction and may lead to them tuning out, he says.



©GRAND GENEVA RESORT

WHAT'S THE OBJECTIVE?

According to Lyles, determining a meeting's objective is the essential first step to creating a genuine experiential event. There can be several reasons for bringing a group of people together and each one is significantly different. Meetings can focus on:

- Product launches to teach people about a new item.
- Creating synergy by bringing different divisions together.
- Strategic planning.
- Celebrating a new year, a successful period or individual success.
- Meeting a new organizational leader.

"The vibe of a gathering changes how we plan the meeting," says Lyles. "In celebrating a successful year, a sales manager might want a rock star event with a band and fireworks that night. To break up sessions, perhaps he'll bring in virtual-reality gaming equipment.

"However, if the tone of the meeting is strategic planning with a manager and 10 direct reports, perhaps they need a quiet area off the beaten path for undisturbed discussion," he adds. "But those business sessions can still be offset with a unique lunch experience."

Discussing the objective with venue staff allows planners to tap into their creativity and experience to plan a memorable event.

"If planners can describe the objective, we can give them 10 examples of what other firms have done. We can show them what has worked and what hasn't," says Lyles.

ENGAGE THE AUDIENCE

There are little ways planners can enhance a meeting. Graybill recalls a gathering that used a Catchbox — a foam cube with microphones in it — to enhance audience participation in a question-and-answer session. Instead of passing a microphone, people were literally tossing the cube across the room.

"It was much more engaging and much less intimidating because people were holding a box, not a microphone," says Graybill.

Another fun way to involve the audience is to conduct a live poll or contest in which people use their smartphones to answer a question, with the results displayed in real time on the screens.

"This allows the audience to participate in providing material being presented," says Graybill.

FOOD IS A FACTOR

Food has always been an important part of meetings, but now it goes beyond providing a plated meal.

"We've seen a shift away from people only focusing on watching their diets to wanting to know where the food came from and how it was cooked," Lyles explains. "We've seen meeting attendees seeking healthier selections and embracing farm-to-table options. They also like to eat outside when possible."

For intimate gatherings of a few dozen people, meeting planners can make meals part of the experience. For example, Grand Geneva can set up a meal so a chef from one of its four restaurants shows how the food is prepared.

Kohler Learning Center's Team Cuisine challenge uses food competitions to encourage people to work as teams. The chef serves as a coach and participants create dishes that everyone gets to taste.

"We set up an environment where people are encouraged to interact naturally," says Nurnberger. "That's when their true personalities come out."

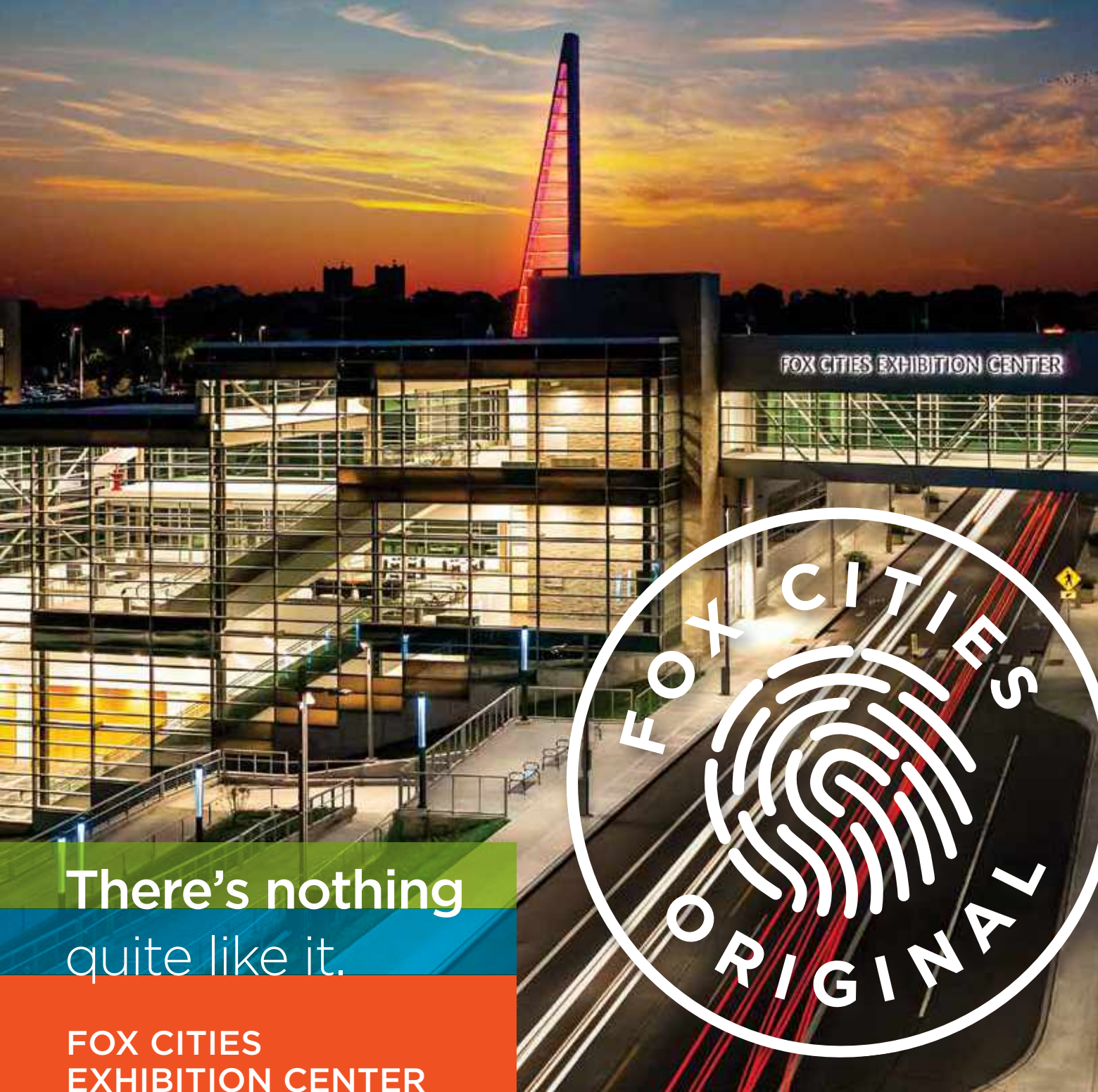
INCLUDE THE COMMUNITY

Experiences don't have to be confined to the ballroom, says Graybill. He has worked with a group that took the entire audience off site to clean up a school damaged by Hurricane Harvey.

"Experiences are most memorable when attendees are directly involved and not just viewing what others are doing," says Graybill. "Give them a chance to do good and feel good about doing it, and the event will truly stand out."

In making their events more experiential, meeting planners are involving local communities, not just the venues, in planning meals and activities, according to Lyles.

Groups are piggybacking on boating, fishing and nature excursions, as well as golf and spa outings. Ask hotels to help arrange transportation to take attendees to a paintball venue or even a theater to enjoy a play.



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FIVE WAYS TO MAKE A MEETING MEMORABLE

- Rely on social media. Assign your meeting a hashtag to make it interactive and shareable. Then encourage attendees to use the hashtag through giveaways and other contests during the event.
- Involve the audience. Connect with your audience by using Catchboxes and live slide-sharing tools. Audiences can use slide-sharing tools to participate in polls, and question-and-answer sessions.
- Bring on the entertainment. Hire live artists to capture the event and work the crowd. Magicians, caricature artists and even tarot card readers add a new dimension to an event.
- Focus on food. Surprise and delight with unexpected cuisine from around the world. Build teams through a shared cooking experience. Host a top chef type of contest.
- Have some fun. Take attendees boating, fishing and on a nature hike. Go zip lining. Take participants to a play or paintball venue. The sky is the limit when the objective is to have fun.

"I may not plan the entire event for you, but I can give you a list of things to consider on your own and show whom to contact to get that ball rolling," says Lyles.

STAYCATIONS

Lyles has noticed increased interest in

participants arriving a few days before a meeting or sticking around afterward to take advantage of things to do in the area.

"Meetings aren't about spending four days at a hotel and then going home," says Lyles. "People will extend their stay and turn it into a mini vacation. Our property becomes the base for other excursions in the local area."

In fact, planners may include some pre- and post-meeting downtime into their schedules to keep people at the event. If an area is known for great fishing or golf, then planning an excursion the day before or after a meeting may encourage people to stay longer.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Anytime a meeting involves something outside the norm, other factors come into play that could result in surprises, says Graybill.

"Will the sound be loud enough for everyone to hear? Will the stage be high enough for people in the back to see or will cameras be needed to put the action on multiple screens?" he asks.

In the case of juggling chainsaws, safety is a big consideration. Planners may need to create a special stage and block entrances to prevent accidental encroachment during the performance.

Fireworks require special permits and fire department personnel may need to be on site.

If a big choir performs or vehicles drive on stage, the platform may need reinforcing.

Firing off a confetti cannon may leave the audience applauding, but the meeting planner bawling when the venue presents the cleaning bill.

"One client wanted to create 'elephant's toothpaste,' which is a chemical reaction forming a substance flowing all over the stage," says Graybill, "but abandoned the idea after the hotel insisted the company pay for cleanup."

It's essential to consider the audience, too, because their experience may not line up

with what a planner envisions, he adds.

For example, caricature artists may create fast portraits of attendees. But, unless they broadcast the action to bigger screens, only the people up front or those crowding around the artist can appreciate what's happening.

PROPER SEQUENCING

To make an impact, experiential events must fit the meeting's flow. Ideally, experiences lead participants from one agenda point to the next. Or they reinforce information just learned and prepare participants for what they are about to hear.

Because meetings have a defined flow, experiences are best incorporated into one of those periods, says Nurnberger.

- For the beginning, you could plan a fun, networking event in which participants get to know each other.
- For the middle, you could recharge participants and raise energy, especially after big meals or a long day. At this point, planners can assume people are more comfortable and willing to step out of their comfort zones.
- For the end, you could wrap things up and help drive learning by answering so-what questions by showing why the information matters.

Many companies use personality tests, like a DISC assessment, to give people an idea of whom they are and how they communicate. Incorporating an experiential event in which all personality types interact shows how personalities play out in real time, he adds.

"In team activities, we found that someone will almost always behave in the same way in our environment as they will on the job — but without risk or consequences," Nurnberger notes. "If you want to break down walls, get people to connect and learn to trust each other, then some fun is required." **WM**



Greg Gerber is an author, speaker and owner of Faithfire Media, reporting on faith-based topics from Phoenix. He is also the former owner of RV Daily Report.



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THE **BEST** OF *Wisconsin* MEETINGS

Our readers have spoken: Here are your picks for industry suppliers that exceed expectations every time!

By Ronnie Wendt

We cap off every year with the holidays, but here at Wisconsin Meetings, the best part of our year-end is tallying the results of our Best of Wisconsin Meetings annual readers' poll. Discovering our readers' choices for the best the Dairy State has to offer is like opening a package at Christmas.

Competition in the meetings and events world is heating up. Today's suppliers must be ever vigilant in their efforts to provide fresh ideas, products, services and amenities, while offering top-of-the-line customer support. And they must innovate and support while staying within the confines of their own budgets. It's a tight line to walk.

The names that follow are your selections for vendors that meet and exceed customer expectations, while achieving their own business objectives. They have proven their dedication to their customers and the industry in 2019.



©GLACIER CANYON LODGE

BEST LARGE CONVENTION CENTER: Glacier Canyon Lodge at Wilderness Resort, Wisconsin Dells

Readers say Glacier Canyon Lodge offers massive and majestic facilities for memorable conferences, meetings and events. The gorgeous 56,000-square-foot conference center features private breakout rooms and banquet space for up to 1,200 guests. The resort also offers 1,151 lodging options, a championship golf course, award-winning spa services, and eight indoor and outdoor water parks, allowing groups to meet, eat and play in one location. Plus, the resort's professional planning team is there to guarantee your attendees have a great experience in the meeting, on the golf course, at the spa or as they dine. wildernessresort.com

BEST CONFERENCE CENTER:

The Madison Concourse Hotel and Governor's Club, Madison

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©MADISON CONCOURSE HOTEL



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BEST BOUTIQUE HOTEL PROPERTY WITH MEETING SPACE:

The Iron Horse Hotel, Milwaukee

Readers gave The Iron Horse Hotel rave reviews. The century-old repurposed warehouse just redid its lobby area and restaurant, and created an outdoor patio that doubles as outdoor meeting space. The new patio, enclosed with hedges for privacy, has firepits to warm attendees and build an unbeatable ambiance. Customized catering menus and top-of-the-line audiovisual capabilities round out the event experience. The posh boutique hotel accommodates events of a variety of sizes, from 10 to 200 guests. The Iron Horse Hotel's meeting facilities range from a well-appointed executive boardroom to a large-scale event space with custom artwork, wrought-iron chandeliers, pine timbers and exposed Cream City brick. Attendees cap off a busy day of meetings in lavish guest rooms with luxury bedding and bath products. theironhorsehotel.com

BEST RECEPTION FACILITY:

Lambeau Field Atrium, Green Bay

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BEST GOLF COURSE/RESORT FOR AN OUTING:

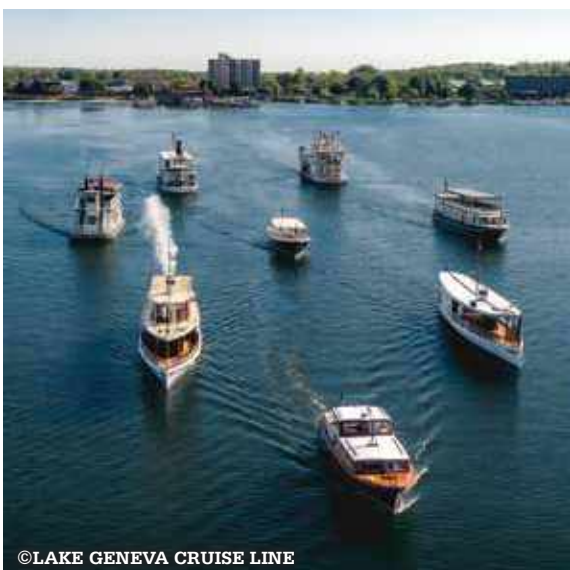
Wild Rock Golf Club at the Wilderness, Wisconsin Dells

Golf outings held at Wild Rock Golf Club score a perfect round. A dedicated meeting planner and tournament coordinator on staff helps you set up an outstanding golf outing, book overnight accommodations, make dining arrangements, plan therapeutic spa services (like a golfer's massage) and reserve meeting space. Golfers appreciate the course's most notable topography: an old stone quarry with rocky mounds and extreme elevation changes. End a busy day with mouthwatering food prepared by the course's dedicated catering staff and dine in the impressive rustic-style woodland lodge. wildrockgolf.com

BEST CASINO WITH MEETING SPACE:

Potawatomi Hotel & Casino, Milwaukee

Readers say Potawatomi Hotel & Casino delivers a winning hand for meetings and events. The venue recently completed an \$80 million construction project, which included a second tower with additional hotel rooms, meeting space and a spa. The largest entertainment destination in the Midwest offers comfortable and flexible meeting spaces that can accommodate events up to 3,000 people. After hours, delicious dining options, gaming action and world-class entertainment keep attendees busy long into the night. paysbig.com



BEST GROUP OUTING:

Lake Geneva Cruise Line, Lake Geneva

Give your attendees a breath of fresh air as your group cruises past amazing estates while aboard one of Lake Geneva Cruise Line's eight beautiful boats. The fleet of well-appointed boats accommodates groups of one to 200 or charter multiple boats for larger group outings. If teambuilding is your goal, try the company's popular geo-challenge cruise. Plan a cocktail cruise that takes you to Pier 290 restaurant for a lakeside dining experience, and cruise back with dessert and an amazing sunset. Lake Geneva Cruise Line also transports groups to one of the lake's fabulous mansions for a private tour, only available by boat. The cruise line's climate-controlled fleet operates from April to November. Its event coordinator works closely with your group to develop an experience that meets the unique needs of your group. Our readers say a day on the water with Lake Geneva Cruise Line can't be beat. cruiselakegeneva.com

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HOTEL WITH THE BEST SERVICE:

Grand Geneva Resort & Spa, Lake Geneva

Readers consistently rank Grand Geneva Resort & Spa at the top. This year, you recognized the Grand Geneva for its grand service. Whether planning an event or weekend at the resort, readers say the Lake Geneva resort always puts customers first, and staff go above and beyond to make every event personal and memorable. They are there to help you use the resort's 62,000 square feet of meeting and event space to bring your meeting goals to life. The resort's meeting space can accommodate from 10 to 1,500 guests in style. Its teambuilding opportunities include 3.5 miles of hiking trails, rock climbing, sand volleyball courts, a recreational area and a picnic spot. A variety of restaurant options suit every culinary taste, while an on-site spa provides relaxation after a busy day. grandgeneva.com

BEST PROPERTY FOR A CORPORATE RETREAT:

The Geneva Inn, Lake Geneva

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VENUE WITH THE BEST OUTDOOR RECEPTION SPACE:

Monona Terrace, Madison

Not only does the 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 [WM](http://wm.com)



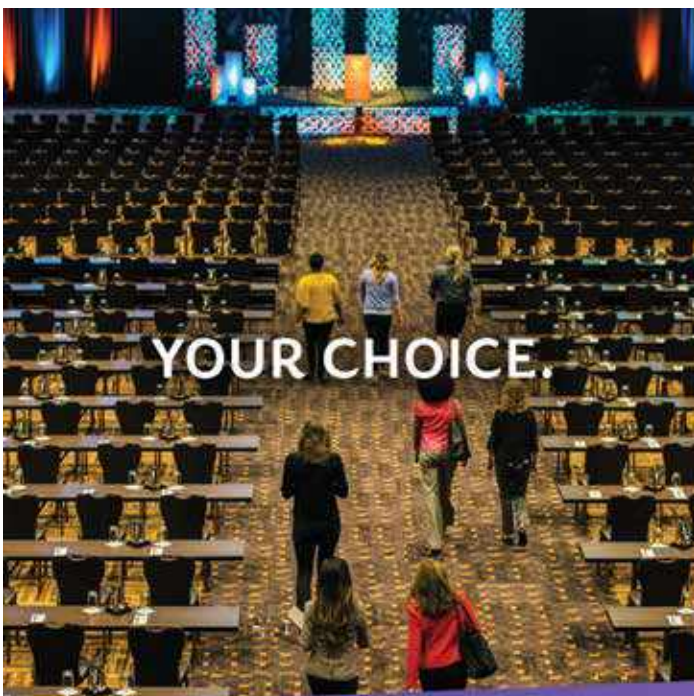
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The Potawatomi Northern Lights Theater draws world-class entertainment. ©POTAWATOMI HOTEL & CASINO



Wisconsin casinos step up to offer world-class amenities to individuals and groups alike.

By Jenny Lescohier

Few would say Wisconsin casinos are on the same level as their Las Vegas counterparts, but they sure are having a moment. In just about every corner of the state, you can find examples of construction, expansion and promotion that promise to propel state casinos to a level of sophistication never seen before.

This is great news for event planners searching for an upscale, full-service venue to host a variety of events, including conferences, conventions, meetings, trade shows and weddings, as well as musical entertainment and more. Just point your navigation tool in nearly any direction, and you can find a Wisconsin casino with a list of amenities sure to please your clients and their guests.



©POTAWATOMI HOTEL & CASINO



POTAWATOMI NEW BUILD

Perhaps the most dramatic story of expansion belongs to Potawatomi Hotel & Casino, a popular attraction for those in Milwaukee and across the state. The hotel opened in 2014, but the property as a whole was established in 1991 and has undergone several expansions since then.

Overlooking the Menomonee Valley, the 19-story complex opened an \$80 million second hotel tower last August, adding 119 rooms for a total of 500. This makes the property the second largest resort hotel in the Milwaukee area.

And all those rooms are going to be booked solid next summer when Milwaukee hosts the 2020 Democratic National Convention (DNC) at the Fiserv Forum, July 13 through 16. Milwaukee officials expect up to 3,769 delegates to visit the city as the U.S. Democratic Party chooses its nominees for president and vice president.

Construction on the second tower began in 2017, long before the DNC chose Milwaukee as the site for its convention, according to Jay Saunders, the public relations specialist for Potawatomi Hotel & Casino.

"Potawatomi has dedicated all its rooms to the event next summer, but that was not the reason for the project," he states. "It was just time to expand due to public demand. It's a happy coincidence that we'll be able to help the city accommodate the DNC."

Besides 60 additional standard guest rooms, the new accommodations include a 19th floor Chairman's Suite, which offers a gas fireplace, billiards table and butler's pantry. This is one of 59 suites in the tower that, along with the new guest rooms, all feature floor-to-ceiling windows with views of downtown Milwaukee and Lake Michigan. Every new room also

includes a spacious bathroom fitted with fixtures by Kohler, remote-control sheers/blinds and an energy-efficient, state-of-the-art thermostat system.

The project also added Ember Salon & Spa, the newest luxury amenity, which is accessible from the hotel's first-floor casino. The full-service, modern-day spa provides beauty treatments for both men and women.

The new tower features the Legacy Ballroom as well. The 5,000-square-foot space can be partitioned into three separate areas to serve a variety of event configurations.

The hotel offers a casual dining restaurant and bar/lounge on its first floor, a coffee bar, a business center, an exercise room and complimentary Wi-Fi. For corporate and social affairs, eight state-of-the-art meeting rooms and a pre-function area provide over 24,000 square feet, whereas the entire facility furnishes about 60,000 square feet.

The result is a world-class entertainment facility that draws over 6 million visits per year, and is helping to elevate Milwaukee's status to the next level as a destination for tourists and business travelers alike.

"We wanted to continue to build on the Potawatomi brand," Saunders says of the second tower construction. "The demand was there. Potawatomi is more than a place to play slot machines."

ONEIDA PARTNERS FOR SUCCESS

Meanwhile, in Green Bay, Oneida Casino was appointed the official team casino of the Green Bay Packers last August as part of a long-standing partnership between the two organizations. Oneida Nation and the Green Bay Packers have cooperated on a variety of programs for over 20 years, including a partnership

since 2002 that includes the Oneida Nation Gate on the east side of Lambeau Field.

Louise Cornelius, gaming general manager for Oneida Casino, reports the organization is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year and its people are proud of their partnership with the Packers.

"We hope to work more closely with the team as the official casino of the Green Bay Packers," she says. "We hope to offer unforgettable entertainment for fans, visitors and community members as a result."

Not to mention event planners.

"Oneida Casino completed a remodel that expanded non-smoking areas, restaurants, as well as more gaming options," explains Cornelius.

Oneida Casino connects to the award-winning Radisson Hotel & Conference Center located across from Austin Straubel International Airport and close to Lambeau Field, where the Packers play ball. The hotel is undergoing a renovation, which began last October and will be completed in 2020.

"The hotel is currently working on a large remodeling project, which started with a new look on the full exterior of the building," says Steve Ninham, general manager of the Radisson, noting that the hotel plans to replace all windows and remodel all rooms. Plans also include renovating the check-in and commons area, and adding a full-service supper club.

The Radisson offers 30,000 square feet of flexible meeting space, as well as complimentary shuttle service to the airport, making a trip to Green Bay a breeze for guests visiting for business or pleasure. Other amenities include free Wi-Fi, an indoor pool, sauna and fitness center.

©ONEIDA CASINO



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More lodging options are also available near the airport and Lambeau Field. Located across the highway from the casino is The Wingate by Wyndham Green Bay/Airport, for example. There, guests are treated to a complimentary hot breakfast, free Wi-Fi, a fitness room, weeknight social receptions, business services and free overnight parking. Jacuzzi and executive suites are also available.

"One of the first factors that makes Oneida an ideal meeting facility is the location," says Ninham. "We are located just over a mile away from the interstate, across the street from an international airport, in very close proximity to the Titledown District and Lambeau Field, and have very easy access in and out of the facility.

"We have many amenities on site, including food options, gaming options and beverage options, all under one roof," Ninham continues. "When you stay with us, there's no reason to leave the building after your meeting or convention. We also offer accessibility to our golf course (Thornberry Creek), which was host to

a Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) tour stop and is the official golf course of the Green Bay Packers."

GAME ON FOR HO-CHUNK

Ho-Chunk Nation has expansion plans of its own. Ho-Chunk Gaming presented its plans for expansion and received approval from the Madison Urban Design Commission last May, as it works its way through the city's approval process. Plans for the 49-acre site include adding 90,000 square feet to the gaming floor, creating a Heritage Center to share the Ho-Chunk story, building two parking structures, adding a 115,000-square-foot conference and entertainment center, and constructing a five-story, 150-200-room hotel, with a spa and restaurant. An article in The Capital Times reports the project is planned in phases, with construction to begin late 2020 at the earliest.

According to Casey Fitzpatrick, senior marketing director, Ho-Chunk Nation Department of Business, Ho-Chunk Nation recognizes the need to reinvest in





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its properties to serve a growing need from consumers.

"We've committed to updating and improving our facilities to meet the evolving needs of all our patrons," he says. "Our goal has been to create facilities that provide a level of service and elevated quality that is consistent with our Ho-Chunk Gaming brand overall."

Located on trust land in the city of Madison, the tribe owns an additional 49 acres at the site. The tribe currently operates six gaming facilities on its territory in Wisconsin.

Fitzpatrick points out the facility in Wisconsin Dells is perhaps the one best designed for meetings and events.

"Ho-Chunk Gaming, Hotel and Convention Center Wisconsin Dells offers 35,000 square feet of convention space, including two grand ballrooms, as well as two executive board rooms," he says. "It also includes five different dining options on site, ranging from fine cuisine

to cafe-style fare, all within the dynamic Wisconsin Dells community, which is obviously already a popular destination with so much to offer visitors."

He adds, "Ho-Chunk Nation and all of its facilities stand ready for whatever meeting or event our customers have in mind."

There are over 20 casinos in Wisconsin, offering a wide range of attractions and amenities to guests, whether they're visiting just to gamble or to attend a business event. Either way, Wisconsin's casinos are growing to meet the needs of the groups they hope to attract. **WM**



Jenny Lescohier is a freelance writer based in Fort Atkinson. She is the former editor of Rental magazine, a position she held for over 20 years.

CASINO HIGHLIGHTS

POTAWATOMI HOTEL & CASINO

The organization recently completed an \$80 million expansion that added:

- 119 new hotel rooms for a total of 500.
- A new luxury spa.
- A new ballroom offering 900 square feet of flexible meeting space.

The hotel now offers eight state-of-the-art meeting rooms and a pre-function area for over 24,000 square feet of meeting space, bringing the casino's total offering up to 60,000 square feet.

ONEIDA CASINO

This facility:

- Is the official team casino for the Green Bay Packers.
- Boasts a prime location near Austin Straubel International Airport, Titledown District and Lambeau Field.
- Connects to the Radisson Hotel & Conference Center, where a full remodel will be complete in 2020.
- Underwent a \$28 million casino revamp in 2013 to give it a new look, while adding four restaurants, a Players Club, poker room and more.

HO-CHUNK GAMING MADISON

The casino received approval from the Madison Urban Design Commission to:

- Add 90,000 square feet to the gaming floor.
- Create a Heritage Center to share the Ho-Chunk story.
- Construct two parking structures.
- Build a 115,000-square-foot conference center, and a five-story hotel with a spa and restaurant.



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Pictured: Pontiac Convention Center

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CONTACT INFORMATION

RaeAnn Thomas
920-686-3077
4221 Calumet Ave.
Manitowoc, WI 54220
rthomas@manitowoc.info
manitowoc.info

COMMUNITY INFORMATION

Population: 80,000
Number of hotel rooms: 1,000
Largest meeting facility:
20,000 square feet
Largest exhibit facility:
36,000 square feet
Airport: Austin Straubel
International, Green Bay

DISTANCE FROM

Madison: 139 miles
Milwaukee: 81 miles

Green Bay: 42 miles
Stevens Point: 110 miles



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QUICK FACTS

CONTACT INFORMATION

Eileen Arnold
262-884-6407
14015 Washington Ave.
Sturtevant, WI 53177
eileen@realracine.com
aboutracine.com

COMMUNITY INFORMATION

Population: 130,000
Number of hotel rooms: 1,400
Largest meeting facility:
10,000 square feet
Largest exhibit facility:
17,000 square feet
Airport: General Mitchell
International, Milwaukee

DISTANCE FROM

Madison: 100 miles
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Chicago: 68 miles
Minneapolis: 356 miles

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CASE STUDY:



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CONFERENCE

**THAT CONFERENCE SHATTERS ATTENDANCE RECORDS WITH
A FOUR-DAY, FAMILY-FRIENDLY EVENT IN WISCONSIN DELLS.**

By Ronnie Wendt

Images Courtesy of THAT Conference

Clark Sell once imagined a family-friendly conference that supported work-life balance and helped shape the next generation of “tech geeks.”

The software developer was tired of the traditional conference and trade show format. IT and software events often take industry professionals away from their families for up to a week at a time. While families could tag along, the conferences took attendees to destinations that were not very family-friendly or were cost-prohibitive for entire families to travel to.

When families did come along, it created a push-pull feeling for attendees. They knew they needed the education and networking opportunities, but wanted to be with their families instead.

Sell felt there had to be a better way. “I wanted an event that connected the Midwestern tech community, but beyond that, I wanted to connect the whole person, their kids, their spouses, the whole family,” he says. “I wanted them to be part of our [conference] family.”

Today, his dream is a reality. THAT Conference was born out of Sell's passion to build a family-friendly technology event. Dubbed "Summer Camp for Geeks," the conference offers presentations for professionals while also providing over 30 student workshop sessions, some of which kids lead. The science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) sessions for kids feature hands-on, activity-based learning.

GROWING THE DREAM

Sell started THAT Conference in 2012 with \$5,000 of seed money and a dream. He began placing cold calls for additional funds.

The first event, held at Kalahari Resorts & Conventions in Wisconsin Dells, attracted 400 attendees, cost around \$90,000 to host and closed in the red. But Sell kept pressing forward, and each year, both funding and attendance grew. The 2019 conference drew 1,700 participants, including 1,100 professionals, 250 spouses and 350 children.

"Early on, sponsors told me we were crazy and they would not do this," Sell recalls. "There are still some companies today that tell me it is inappropriate to send professionals and their families on a 'family vacation.'

"We tell sponsors that there are two halves to this event: the professional side with a keynote and educational sessions, and the family side, and they have to cater to both," he adds. "We tell them to expect children and spouses to come to their booths. We've had interesting stories come out of that. We've had kids get internships and kids who have purchased software from vendors because they are a 13-year-old programmer with an app."

Sell adds that treating the entire family as first-class citizens contributes to the event's success and growth. He explains, "For us, the 2-year-old is just as important as the 50-year-old. They are not off to the side. And if a sponsor doesn't want spouses and children involved, I politely tell them they are not invited."





< NAME > THAT Conference

< TYPE OF EVENT >

An inclusive, multi-day event for anyone passionate about learning and sharing all things mobile, web, cloud, Internet of Things (IoT) and technology

< LOCATION > Kalahari Resorts & Conventions in Wisconsin Dells

< NUMBER OF ATTENDEES >

1,700 total (1,100 IT and software development professionals, 350 kids and 250 spouses)

< GOAL > A family-friendly event that supports a philosophy of work-life balance

< STANDOUT EXPERIENCES >

Kids welcome. Some young people even teach classes for their peers in the student track.

Open Spaces speaking opportunities. The main seminar track is heavily curated, but people interested in speaking can do so during Open Spaces, which is an open-mic opportunity.

A family reunion kicks off the conference with a hog roast.

30-minute networking gaps exist between seminars.

< ATTENDEE GIFTS > A tree from the Arbor Day Foundation



SESSIONS FOR ALL

THAT Conference offers three types of sessions for attendees young and old.

There is the long-form workshop, which is a multi-hour event that covers a specific subject or skill; a short-form presentation, which spans an hour; and Open Spaces events, which are unstructured sessions.

"A long-form session for a child might be a science project, or involve building or coding a robot," Sell says. "If you're an adult, the long-form session might take a deep dive into some nerdy thing that is the latest and greatest, or take an educational format to build a specific skill."

THAT Conference organizers curate the long- and short-form sessions.

"We put out an open call for speakers and anybody can submit, even spouses and kids," Sell says. "On the family session side, we curate pretty heavily. We look at topics covered in the past and the kids who presented before. We want to give everyone a chance to speak. On the professional side, there is an open vote on suggested topics, then we curate after that."

Open Spaces are available to all ticket holders during the event. There is a schedule board hanging outside each Open Space room. Attendees write a topic on a sticky note and put it on a specific time slot on the board. They come to the

“FOR US, THE 2-YEAR-OLD IS JUST AS IMPORTANT AS THE 50-YEAR-OLD. THEY ARE NOT OFF TO THE SIDE. AND IF A SPONSOR DOESN'T WANT SPOUSES AND CHILDREN INVOLVED, I POLITELY TELL THEM THEY ARE NOT INVITED.”

—CLARK SELL, FOUNDER, THAT CONFERENCE

room, arranged with chairs in a circle, at the appointed time to talk.

"Anybody can walk past that board and say, 'Cool, I want to be part of that conversation,' and that conversation has no other agenda other than what's written on a sticky note," Sell says. "There might be a handful of people in attendance or there might be 50, like there was last year when a kid put on a magic show."

THAT Conference offers fewer sessions to incorporate longer breaks for networking into the day.

"If the time between sessions is too short, attendees become hyper-focused on sessions," Sell says. "We do 30-minute gaps because it allows people to connect with each other and the speaker while the topic is fresh in their minds. They don't feel like they have to run to the next room to make sure they get a seat."

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FUN ACTIVITIES FOR ALL

Hosting the event at a Kalahari convention center makes sense because it offers something for everyone, says Sell. The Wisconsin Dells resort has a 125,000-square-foot water park; indoor adventure playground with go-karts, an arcade, a ropes course, etc.; and a full-service spa.

However, Sell reports it takes more than a family-friendly venue to create a fun event for the entire family.

Every THAT Conference kicks off with the annual family reunion, which is a hog roast for attendees and their families. There is a game night in which attendees and their families play board games until the wee hours of the night. The conference even rents out the water park for an evening, and all attendees have the opportunity to splash and play.

"We have a happy hour, too, but we offer different things throughout the day to bring everyone together and help them connect. We try to keep it fresh. And we're always learning on the family side because we have such a diverse group. What is fun for a 6-year-old might not be fun or interesting to a 16-year-old," laments Sell.

The conference's overarching objective is to foster union throughout the Midwestern technology community and build the next generation of technology professionals. Every session and family activity pushes toward that goal.

"I am grateful for the opportunity THAT Conference brings to help people connect," he says. "My parents always said to leave the house better than you found it. I hope THAT Conference leaves the community and their families better than they were before." **WM**



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- Chris Mode, Event Planner, Art Glass & Bead Show

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GO BEHIND THE SCENES

Planners can easily find great event experiences in behind-the-scenes tours of local attractions.

By Kristine Hansen

One way to keep energy zipping during a meeting is to arrange a behind-the-scenes tour of a local attraction. There are many options for planners to tap into around the state. There are behind-the-scenes tours of specialty interests, like a stadium tour of the legendary Lambeau Field, to tours providing a window into a niche industry, like watching Amazon's robots in action.

Arranging the tours is a matter of picking up the phone or registering online. Attractions that offer tours know how to work with groups and often employ dedicated staff to facilitate them.

Drew Denney, senior investment advisor with Baird Financial, organized a private tour of Lambeau Field for a group last summer. It was a hit.

"I had several clients call and tell me that 'The day was perfect,'" Denney says. "In my 28 years of doing local client events, this one went over the best."

Denney recalls that Frank Winters, a former Green Bay Packers player, led the tour. "Behind the scenes with an alumnus made the tour extra special," he says, noting that Winters made extra efforts to make a wheelchair-bound client feel comfortable.

"We learned that Lambeau has the highest point in Green Bay — a great location to take a selfie. All my clients got selfies there with Frank Winters," he says.

As a bonus, Denney mentions the tour "also enhanced some of my business relationships."

Wisconsin Meetings takes a closer look at six tours worthy of consideration. However, there are a plethora of behind-the-scenes activities available across the state. And if a location doesn't publicly state that it offers behind-the-scenes tours, planners can often arrange one just by asking.



©GREEN BAY PACKERS



Five years ago, coinciding with its 2015 opening, tours debuted at this 1-million-square-foot fulfillment center, running January through mid-November (the remaining six weeks of the year are busy for the holiday season). Tours take place at 10:30 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. About 1,000 employees work around the clock at this bustling business. The tour covers where the company stores and processes products sold on Amazon.com.

"The tours show guests the magic that happens after they click 'buy' on Amazon.com," says Donna Beadle, an Amazon public relations specialist at Rylem. "Most people enjoy watching humans interact with our robotics."

Planners can book free tours for groups of up to 10 people by signing up at amazonfctours.com. For larger groups, contact tours@amazon.com.



Even if you have been to a Green Bay Packers game at Lambeau Field, and even if that visit included checking out the Packers Hall of Fame, a stadium tour for a small group (between 20 and 35 people at a time) is still special. Experiences include slipping on curator gloves to handle archives, viewing private art collections inside executive-level boxes and taking part in a scavenger hunt, which is great for team building.

There are four tours, ranging from \$12 to \$26 a person, that last one to two hours. Planners can also book a private alumni tour, led by a former Packers player. Make reservations

at least two weeks in advance to secure a spot. Call 920-569-7145 or email hoftours@packers.com to get on the schedule.



Check out Harley-Davidson's storied history in a tour of the 117-year-old company's Pilgrim Road facility in Menomonee Falls, where the company makes its high-end motorcycle engines. Tim McCormick, who handles public relations for the Harley-Davidson Museum, likes the plant's 90-minute Steel Toe Tour, which takes visitors through employee-only areas.

"This means guests are walking directly alongside the machinery and working operations on our plant tour," he says. "This provides a perfect photo op for those looking to get up close and personal with how the heart of a Harley-Davidson — our engine — is made. Steel Toe Tours communicate our manufacturing and assembly processes, while guests see the work being done." The tours are at 10 a.m. and noon, Monday through Friday. Call 262-502-8239 to book a tour.

The company offers special rates for groups of 15 or more, in addition to a one-hour Engines 101 class (which requires no mechanical ability) for \$20. Planners can book the class for their groups through h-dmuseum.com. Otherwise, planners can select a free tour at h-d.com/factorytours.



Overture Center's Behind-the-Scenes Tour showcases what ticketed guests at its per-

formances don't see, including backstage.

"The architecture, the history and the state-of-the-art technology are second to none in the Madison market," says Gary Kohn, Overture Center's director of public relations, about the 15-year-old contemporary building. "From the over 90-year-old Capitol Theater to the Kids in the Rotunda stage to Overture Hall to the five galleries, the building is a marvel and a must-see. Each tour may be a little different based on what venues are available, as well as the tour guide giving the tour. Each tour guide has their own little spin."

A two-week notice is required to book a group tour during business hours. Visit overture.org/about/tours or email ushers@overture.org. Overture Center also offers free drop-in tours on the second and fourth Saturdays of each month at 11 a.m.



Home to the Milwaukee Brewers, this stadium — one of only six parks in the league with a retractable roof — hosts 90-minute tours for \$15 a person. The tour shows off the park's Visitors' Clubhouse, bullpen, exclusive Club Level and Uecker's broadcast booth, says Jonelle Johnson, the guest services coordinator at Miller Park. Completed in 2001 (replacing Milwaukee County Stadium), the new stadium offers tours between late March and late September only.

"Miller Park's tour guides are baseball aficionados," says Johnson, "and are well-versed in the exciting history of the Milwaukee Brewers Baseball Club."

There are also two pre-game experiences available: Bernie's Slide Experience (up to five Bernie's Slide rides per person, plus a ballpark tour, for \$150 to \$175 per person) and the VIP Experience (a ballpark tour

before the game and on-field viewing of batting practice for \$75 to \$100 per person). Groups of over 20 need to complete an online request form and pay a \$100 deposit. Call 414-902-4635 or email tours@brewers.com.



Many Wisconsinites aren't aware you can walk onto a World War II (WWII) submarine, part of the permanent collection at Wisconsin Maritime Museum, along the Lake Michigan shoreline in Manitowoc.

"We're one of the few historic submarines in the country that offer guided tours," says Karen Duvalle, the museum's submarine curator and retail manager. Included in the 45-minute tour is a taste of what life was like on a WWII submarine. A guide narrates stories about daily life on board — including a peek at sleeping quarters — as well as the mechanics in how a submarine of this size operates. "A huge perk to having a guided tour is visitors can ask questions throughout," says Duvalle. "Also, every tour is different so if you come back again, you'll always learn something new."

The guided tour is \$10. A group of 10 or more should book two weeks in advance to receive discounted rates, which include museum admission for the day. Visit wisconsinmaritime.org/visit/groups-and-tours to learn more. www.wisconsinmaritime.org



Kristine Hansen is a freelance writer based in Milwaukee. She writes about food and drink, design and travel for a mix of regional and national audiences. Her clients include ArchitecturalDigest.com, Fodors.com, Vogue.com, Midwest Living magazine and Milwaukee magazine. She recently published Wisconsin Cheese Cookbook, which is available on amazon.com.



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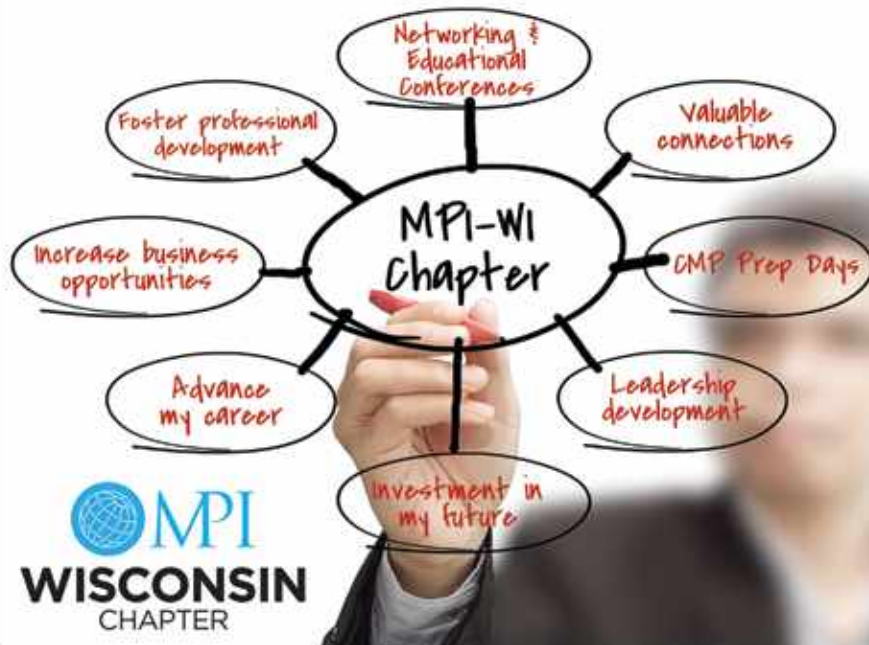
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Wausau, WI 54403
715.845.6500
jeffersonstreetinn.com**

RESOURCE GUIDE 2020

This directory of accommodations, destinations and venues can help guide your meeting planning.



DESTINATIONS



// 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. Opening in April 2020, The Brookfield Conference Center features 44,000 sq. ft. of meeting space, beautiful atrium and seasonal outdoor plaza! Visit Brookfield and let us exceed your expectations.

a: 325 S. Moorland Rd., 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 meeting or group outing — 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



// 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 creating 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 S. Main Street, Suite 201, Fond du Lac, WI 54935
tf: 800/937 9123 **f:** 920/923 3010
w: FDL.com/Meetings **e:** dholte@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 Rivera at arivera@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:** arivera@foxcities.org



// JANESVILLE, WISCONSIN'S GREAT OUTSIDE WISCONSIN'S 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: Bodacious Shops of Block 42.

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

Group Sales: 608/782 2220 **Convention Sales:** 608/782 2298
tf: 800/658 9424
w: www.explorelacrosse.com **e:** morgan@explorelacrosse.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. ft. conference center, and is now booking events for 2020 and beyond.

a: 4221 Calumet Ave., Manitowoc, WI 54220
tf: 920/686 3077
w: Manitowoc.info **e:** rthomas@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, just 10 minutes from Madison. Meeting spaces range from small conference rooms to a 60,000-square-foot flexible meeting and convention space. Stay in one of Middleton's seven 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 St., 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, venues, and urban-easy charm. Check out the Wisconsin Center District three-venue convention campus with three connecting hotels, as well as downtown nightlife and restaurants surrounding the convention center. The Milwaukee Bucks' Deer District features the state-of-the-art Fiserv Forum arena at its center in addition to stellar food, beverage, and entertainment spots. 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. Ride Milwaukee's streetcar, The Hop, through downtown neighborhoods. 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-and-conventions **e:** info@milwaukee.org



// VISIT OSHKOSH //

Oshkosh offers unique, affordable and flexible meeting spaces accompanied by convention and meeting services that go above and beyond our customers' expectations. Located along the western shore of Lake Winnebago, Oshkosh provides visitors with an abundant selection of activities, restaurants, entertainment, recreation, shopping and events.

Make your next convention or event positively memorable with the help of our event experts. Contact the Oshkosh Convention & Visitors Bureau for full-service planning assistance. We guarantee you will find yourself enjoying more than just meeting time in Wisconsin's Event City.

c: Cathy Cluff, Sales Director
tf: 877/303 9200
w: VisitOshkosh.com **e:** cathy@visitoshkosh.com



// 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 guest rooms 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., Suite 225, Waukesha, WI 53188
tf: 262/542 0330
w: visitwaukesha.org/meetings **e:** meet@visitwaukesha.org



// WISCONSIN DELLS VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU //

We've got what you need for your convention and we've got what they want for their trip. Plan everyone's favorite conference in "The Waterpark Capital of the World!®" and see how a lot of work can mean a lot of fun, too. In Wisconsin Dells, meetings make a splash!

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



// ALLIANT ENERGY CENTER //

Located at the gateway to downtown Madison, the Alliant Energy Center campus features four unique and innovative venues: Exhibition Hall, Veterans Memorial Coliseum, New Holland Pavilions, and Willow Island.

This versatility makes Alliant Energy Center a great home for groups of all sizes. Ample parking, collaborative event planning, dedicated staff, and creative catering by Centerplate brands Alliant Energy Center as a planner's premier location for their next event.

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



// MONONA TERRACE: WE ORCHESTRATE YOUR INCREDIBLE //

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a: 1 John Nolen Drive, Madison, WI 53703
t: 608/261 4000
w: mononaterace.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.)



// POTAWATOMI HOTEL & CASINO //

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a: 1611 W. Canal St., 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

[70,000] MEETING SPACE (SQ. FT.)
 [3,000] MEETING CAPACITY
 [9] # OF MEETING ROOMS

OTHER

[YES] HIGH-SPEED WIRELESS
 [YES] HOTEL





// BLUE HARBOR RESORT & CONVENTION CENTER //

Located in scenic Sheboygan, Wisconsin and nestled on the western shore of the always-majestic Lake Michigan, Blue Harbor is a picturesque, stately and stunning property. With 180 all-suite accommodations and 64 villas, Blue Harbor offers a wide variety of room styles, for one to 14 guests, all well-appointed for comfort and convenience. With our beautifully renovated 15,397 square feet of conference space, two full-service restaurants, our new and expanded award-winning Reflections Spa & Salon, and 43,000-square-foot Breaker Bay Waterpark this resort is perfect for family escapes, group events, memorable meetings, weddings, family reunions, romantic retreats, guys' golf outings, and girlfriends' getaways.

a: 725 Blue Harbor Dr., Sheboygan, WI 53081
tf: 866/701 2583 **f:** 920/452 2900
w: blueharborresort.com **e:** sales@blueharborresort.com

DINING

- [50] RECEPTION CAPACITY (Peninsula Room)
- [85] PRIVATE DINING CAPACITY
- [135] TOTAL DINING CAPACITY
- [YES] ON-SITE RESTAURANT
- [YES] LOUNGE / ENTERTAINMENT

MEETING SPACE

- [15,397] MEETING SPACE (SQ. FT.)
- [10] # OF MEETING ROOMS
- [544] MEETING CAPACITY
- [NO] OPEN CATERING
- [YES] ON-SITE CATERING

OTHER

- [YES] INDOOR WATERPARK
- [YES] FULL-SERVICE SPA
- [YES] TEAM-BUILDING ACTIVITIES
- [YES] WATER SPORTS
- [YES] GOLF PACKAGES AVAILABLE



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

Grand Geneva Resort & Spa is one of the most spacious layouts in the Midwest, with 355 guest rooms at the main lodge and 29 upscale villas. A four-season destination, Grand Geneva offers unique spaces — including the newly renovated Forum — as well as 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



// 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, check out all of Beloit's downtown dining options just footsteps from your guest room.

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

a: 500 Public Ave., Beloit, WI 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 Rd., 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



// 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. 76-foot two-level tour boat — the Lake Lawn Queen, 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 — we 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 12th floor private lounge overlooking the Capitol.

a: 1 W. 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 brings something bold and new to the meetings and travel industry with a top-to-bottom renovation. Offering over 60,000 square feet of flexible, modernized meeting space, 292 beautifully renovated guest rooms and suites, and full-service amenities including Marriott's exclusive new M-Club.

a: 1313 John Q. Hammons Dr., 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.

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 - 390 guest rooms
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- 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



PLANNER PROFILE

©FRONT ROOM PHOTOGRAPHY

STANDOUT STYLE

PLANNER DAVID CARUSO USES STORYTELLING AND SIGNATURE STATEMENTS TO CRAFT EXTRAORDINARY MEETINGS AND EVENTS.

BY RONNIE WENDT

David Caruso stands out from the crowd. He exudes confidence from head to toe, and embodies an enviable sense of style from his impeccably tailored suits to his vibrant neckties, statement lapel flowers and flashy polka-dot socks.

The president of Dynamic Events by David Caruso in Milwaukee plans every meeting and event with the same flair he puts into his own signature style. He injects creativity, elegance and style into each one, and relies on signature statements to transform them from mundane to magical and to tell an engaging story.

"Signature statements," he explains, "are the things you do to make an event unlike anything else."

Dynamic Events has organized luxury weddings, private galas, corporate events, incentive trips and fundraising events for 18 years. Because every event must be fresh and every event must be unique, Caruso must uncover its heart and soul to fashion its signature style.

"With the variety of events we do, it is important to discover the heart and soul of each one," he says. "Whether it's an event for a person, an organization or a company, it means learning about their overarching philosophies, what they care about, what's important to them and how they are infused in their communities."

Knowing their core values helps Caruso shape a special story for their events.

The tale further unfolds by hiring the right entertainment. Caruso says he favors hiring live artists to perform at events, which he says is "very on trend."

He adds, "Entertainment goes beyond booking a band or something obvious like that. I look at how I can use a cast of characters or other kinds of engaging entertainment to create a certain environment or setting."

Culinary experiences also help him build the storyboard.

"I focus on how to craft a culinary experience. I want to do something that's unexpected," Caruso says. "Doing so is easier than ever before. The culinary scene is so hyped up. It's become a spectacular way to make an event stand out. Planners can create organic, plant-based menus, provide foods from around the world, you name it. The days of the traditional sit-down dinner are over."

Caruso also shapes event stories by designing eclectic, out-of-the-ordinary décor, magical lighting, and billowy fabric ceilings and backdrops. He reports that these elements transform common spaces into extraordinary ones. He once combined vibrant-colored fabrics, uplighting and elegant décor pieces to transform a factory floor for a black-tie gala, and did the same to reimagine a third-floor storage area for an enchanting evening event.

"It's the places you don't expect to be, and the ones that present the greatest challenges, that allow the most creativity," he says. "They allow you to create an atmosphere that would never be expected there."

Because design and décor trends change quickly, Caruso advises planners to stay fresh. For instance, he reports the popular rustic, modern farmhouse design has evolved into an organic look that combines metal and natural materials for understated elegance.

But while tracking changing trends is essential, Caruso stresses planners must put their own spin on them.

"Continue to be somebody who stands out from the crowd and has their own signature style," he says. "For me, that's being very cognizant of what's happening in the fashion world, and following interior design trends and top interior designers. I also keep track of what's happening in the celebrity world and get tons of inspiration from social media."

It takes work to stay in vogue, but it's necessary. He adds, "You have to know what's popular and what people like, then you need to figure out how to do it with a twist. A planner's job is to create moments that surprise and delight guests." **WM**



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