

An aerial photograph of Elk Hart Lake, showing the lake's shoreline, surrounding greenery, and resort buildings. The water is a vibrant green, and the surrounding land is lush with trees and manicured lawns. Several buildings, including a large resort complex, are visible along the shore. The sky is blue with some light clouds.

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# FEATURES

## 14 THE GRASS IS GREENER OUTSIDE — MEETING IN THE SCENIC OUTDOORS

THESE WOW-WORTHY OUTDOOR SPACES NOT ONLY CHECK THE “OUTSIDE THE BOX” BOX, BUT ARE ALSO CONVENIENT, COMFORTABLE AND EVEN CLASSY.

## 20 DESTINATION: ELKHART LAKE

A VARIETY OF VENUES, FUN ADVENTURES AND A WARM, WELCOMING SPIRIT ARE WHAT MAKE ELKHART LAKE SO SPECIAL FOR MEETINGS AND EVENTS.

## 26 PLAY BALL AT SPORTS VENUES

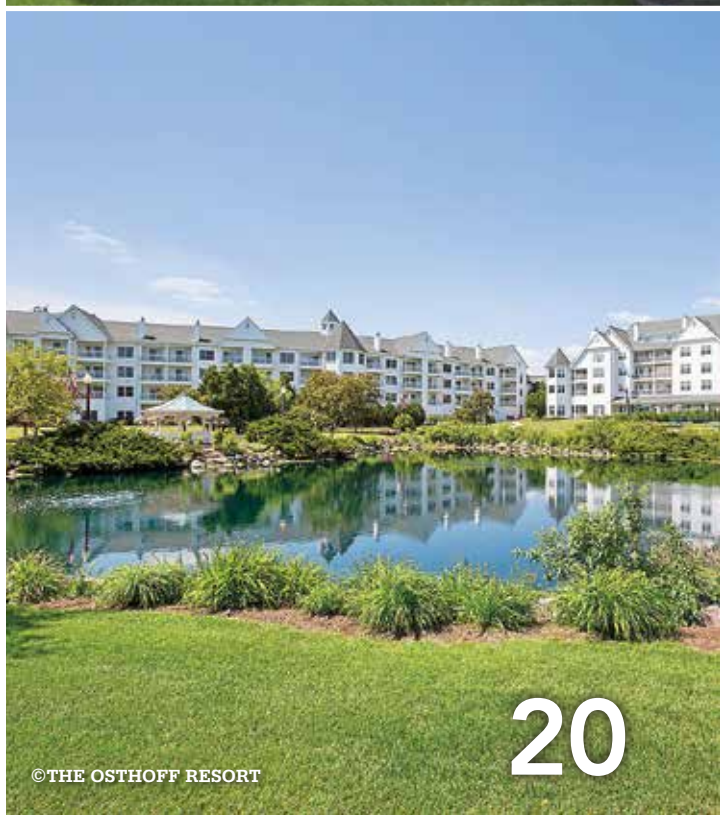
THESE UNIQUE SPACES CAN HELP YOU KNOCK YOUR NEXT MEETING OUT OF THE PARK.

## 30 WHEN PARTNERSHIPS PAY OFF

OUTSOURCING MEETING MANAGEMENT TASKS CAN SAVE TIME AND MONEY FOR IN-HOUSE PLANNING TEAMS.



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# DEPARTMENTS

## 6 IN THE NEWS

The latest happenings in the meetings and convention industry.

## 8 VENUE SPOTLIGHT

**The Inn at SentryWorld — You're Sure to Feel at Home**  
The new boutique hotel is a masterful blend of elegance and authentic Wisconsin charm.

## 10 PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

**How to Manufacture Time**  
If you want more hours in the day, create them.

## 33 ADVERTISER

## INDEX

## 34 PLANNER PROFILE

**Leading the Charge**  
New Meeting Professionals International-Wisconsin President Shannon Timmerman predicts a year of recovery and growth for meetings.



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## EDITOR'S LETTER

Last year, the biggest challenge for Meeting Professionals International-Wisconsin (MPI-Wisconsin) President Shannon Timmerman was having to personally lay off her staff, whom she considered family. Timmerman was the director of sales at the Wilderness Resort when it closed its doors for two months. After the layoffs, she then had to take up the reins of many of those vacated positions, working solo and handling every cancellation, date shift and whatever else came up on her own.

Thankfully, Timmerman stayed flexible during the transition period, using her wide-ranging set of skills to tackle anything thrown her way. Similarly, meeting and event venues and suppliers were thrust into the same situation with little to no staff during the pandemic, but needing to accommodate those planners requiring services. Today, flexibility remains paramount as the meetings and event industry gets back on its feet.

According to Timmerman, "The Wilderness has been flexible with groups on meeting food and beverage minimums, adjusting dates and any other changes that arise with so much unpredictability out there. In the last year, we have also put a large focus on what we can offer in the line of audiovisual since many events are adding hybrid components. Social distancing is starting to be of much less concern for groups, but we still get a few requests for setting rooms to accommodate social distancing, too."

That being said, now that many groups have proven in-person meetings and events can be held safely, Timmerman is ecstatic to get MPI back to its status quo, but with a laser focus on education and membership. (Read more about Timmerman's aspirations for MPI-Wisconsin on Page 34 in the Planner Profile.)

Last October, MPI-Wisconsin successfully pulled off its own in-person mega-event after resolving to roll two of its largest events into one. But the decision to hold that all-important first event wasn't made lightly. It came after months of cancellations and delays, yet MPI-Wisconsin knew it was time to gather its membership together. The team just had to figure out a way to do it safely. And they did.

MPI-Wisconsin's move to meet in person was not without scrutiny, however. Timmerman reports, "We had some negative kickback from a couple of members that we were meeting in person, but it was highly outweighed by members who were excited about it." As meeting-goers get back in action in person, MPI-Wisconsin is leading by example by proving that in-person meetings and events can be done both safely and successfully.

Although many restrictions have been lifted in the state, please note that some of the facilities highlighted in this issue may still be operating on limited hours or are temporarily closed due to COVID-19. Please contact each facility directly to confirm schedules and availability.

And as always, thanks for reading Wisconsin Meetings.

Carrie Mantey  
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VOLUME: 19 ISSUE: 3

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Wisconsin Meetings is a publication of Nei-Turner Media Group Inc. Gary E. Nei, Chairman; William Turner, President.

Wisconsin Meetings is distributed via direct mail, trade shows and conferences four times per year to: Regional Professional Meeting Planners; Wisconsin Corporate Executives; Social, Military, Educational, Religious and Fraternal Organizations; Corporate Travel Agents; Sales and Marketing Executives; and Association Executives by Nei-Turner Media Group Inc., 400 Broad St., Unit D, Lake Geneva, WI 53147. Vol. 19 Issue 3 is dated July 2021.

Nei-Turner Media Group Inc. publishes At The Lake magazine, Experience Wisconsin, and custom publications about Wisconsin and other Midwestern states.

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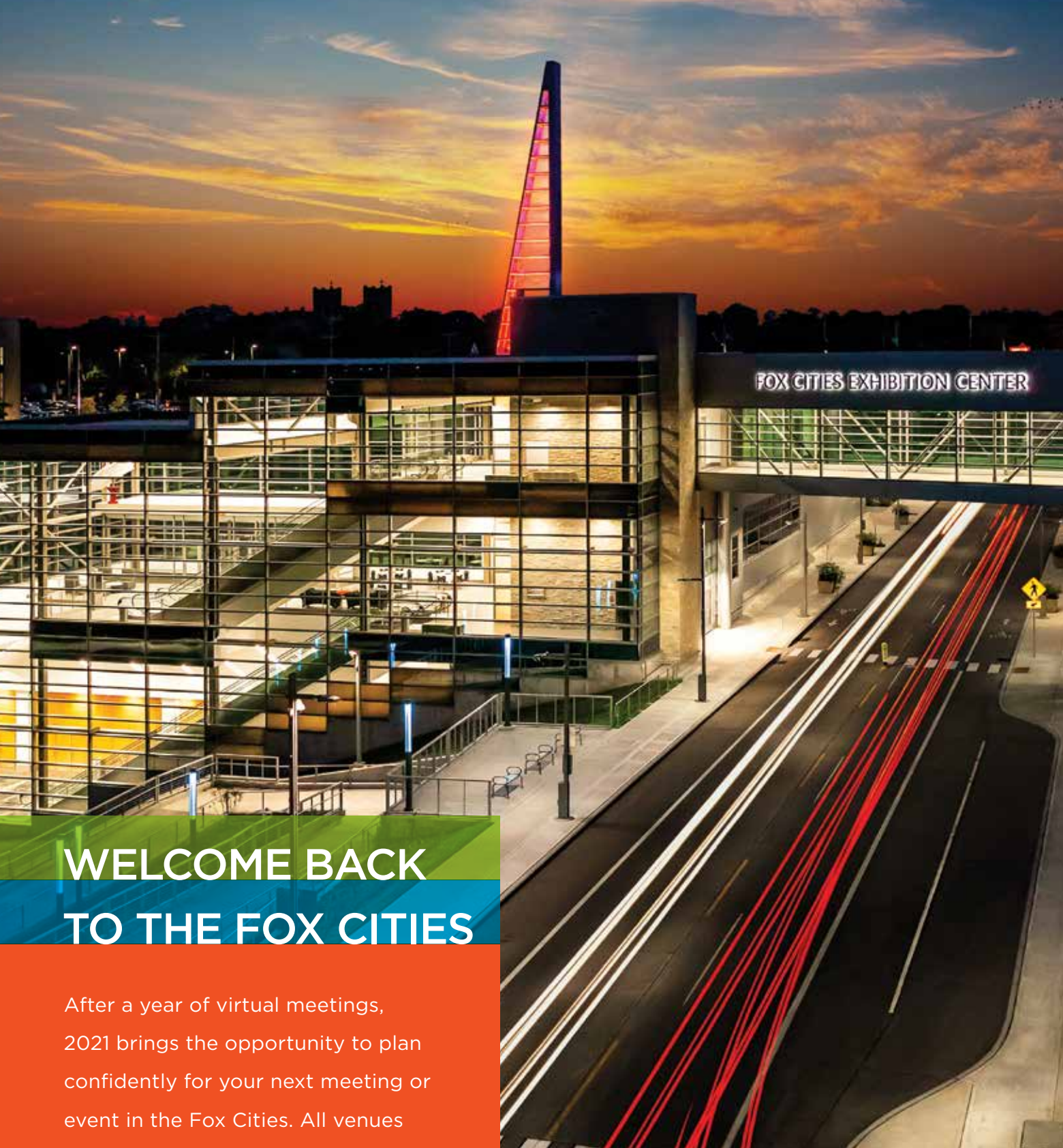
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## WELCOME BACK TO THE FOX CITIES

After a year of virtual meetings, 2021 brings the opportunity to plan confidently for your next meeting or event in the Fox Cities. All venues continue to follow appropriate health and hygiene protocols and a wide variety of spaces and places promise the perfect venue for any group to feel safe, comfortable, and ready to reconnect.

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## IN THE NEWS

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### VISIT MILWAUKEE LAUNCHES SPORTS MILWAUKEE DIVISION

VISIT Milwaukee officially launched Sports Milwaukee, a new division marketing Milwaukee as the ideal destination for sports events, to drive more economic impact to the region. Its vision is to be Milwaukee County's premier sports organization for events.

"Milwaukee has established itself as an amazing host destination for a wide variety of sports events and we believe there are ample opportunities to expand this market," says Marissa Werner, leader of the new division. In March and April alone this year, youth volleyball and basketball tournaments brought roughly 35,000 attendees to Milwaukee.

"As a home-team supporter, I've witnessed how sports attract fanatical support, promote community pride, and provide economic and social benefits," says Katina Shaw, vice president of community relations for the Milwaukee Brewers and member of the Sports Milwaukee committee. "It's a great asset to have Sports Milwaukee available to help promote sporting events to draw visitors to our flourishing city."



©THE TRADE MILWAUKEE

### THE TRADE MILWAUKEE TO CELEBRATE CITY HERITAGE

According to North Central Group and the Deer District, their newest property — The Trade Milwaukee, an Autograph Collection Hotel by Marriott — will provide

high-end accommodations in the heart of the city and celebrate the tradespeople who built it.

The hotel will have approximately 205 tech-enabled rooms featuring mobile check-in and checkout, keyless entry, motion sensor lighting, in-room internet TV, fast Wi-Fi, and abundant power and USB outlets. Groundbreaking is anticipated to begin this fall, so the hotel can open in early 2023.

With a rooftop restaurant and lounge, guests can enjoy beautiful city views, while its location next to Fiserv Forum gives visitors easy access to the entertainment block in the Deer District. The hotel will be equipped with a two-story VIP suite with private access, plus additional suites with high ceilings and California king beds, as well as a private elevator and hotel entrance.

### HARLEY-DAVIDSON TO OPEN THE GARAGE

The Harley-Davidson Museum will be adding the Garage to its lineup of event spaces on the 20-acre campus. When complete, the venue will boast more than 8,000 square feet of space, floor-to-ceiling views of the Menomonee Valley and modern audiovisual components. With construction starting this summer, the new space is expected to be complete in the spring of 2022.



©HARLEY-DAVIDSON MUSEUM

### TATTERSALL DISTILLING TO OPEN IN RIVER FALLS

This fall, Tattersall Distilling plans to open a destination distillery and second production facility in River Falls. The 75,000-square-foot facility will feature indoor and outdoor event spaces that include:

- An outdoor patio with fire pits and lawn games for up to 250 guests and access to an indoor/outdoor bar.
- A large amphitheater for outdoor events.
- A grand ballroom that can be divided into three distinct spaces or left whole for up to 420 guests.
- A boardroom for up to 16 seated guests.
- An enlarged barrel room for intimate events, tours and tastings.
- A tasting bar to sample craft spirits.
- An experience bar for tours, classes, training, and exclusive food and drink experiences. **WM**

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## VENUE SPOTLIGHT

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# THE INN AT SENTRYWORLD — YOU'RE SURE TO FEEL AT HOME

THE NEW BOUTIQUE HOTEL IS A MASTERFUL BLEND OF ELEGANCE AND AUTHENTIC WISCONSIN CHARM.

BY SUE SVEUM

Built in 1982 and renovated in 2014, SentryWorld has long been recognized as a premier parkland-style golf course. The sports complex and campus for Sentry Insurance, located in Stevens Point, provide myriad event spaces and amenities for event planners and attendees, as well as the local community. But it's the brand-new addition of The Inn at SentryWorld, scheduled to open this fall, that will finally complete the offering.

"A boutique hotel right here on the property fills that last important piece," says Tawnya Schilt, SentryWorld's director of sales and events. "It's a perfect complement to the campus — and great for both destination travelers and conference-goers." She describes the Inn as a charming, upscale hotel offering 64 spacious guest rooms, all with golf course views.

World-renowned, the SentryWorld Golf Course ranked 44 on Golf Digest's 2019 list of top 100 public golf courses, so interest in it comes as no surprise. Moreover, the golf course is gearing up to host the 43rd United States Golf Association Senior Open Championship in 2023 — and the Inn will be an important component of the event.

But there's more to SentryWorld than just golf, especially now with the addition of the Inn. "There are so many options that make it a great destination experience — both indoors and out," confirms Schilt. She mentions that the SentryWorld team is continually innovating ways to make use of the many rooms and spaces on the property for a variety of events and activities — from weddings to trade shows, arts and craft fairs to concerts and even the Badger State Games.

"The outdoor ball diamond has hosted kickball and lacrosse tournaments, and we've held tai chi and outdoor team-building activities on the lawn," says Schilt. "But, of course, in Wisconsin, we also need to be prepared to bring events indoors any time of the year."

The 51,000-square-foot Fieldhouse provides the space to do just that. There are tennis courts (also used for volleyball and pickleball), a golf simulator, and plenty of large spaces that come complete with state-of-the-art audiovisual technology for indoor meetings and gatherings in any season. And the new Inn provides additional event space that's perfect for smaller events like board meetings, breakout rooms and cocktail receptions, further strengthening the campus by offering it all in one spot.

The Inn was designed to bring the outdoors in, according to Schilt, with floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking the 18th green. "The feeling is cozy and welcoming, combining comfort with elegance," she explains. But it's about more than just the amenities. "We have to offer amazing service," she says. "Our goal is to provide an 'unexpected delighter' out of something ordinary. We want our guests to say, 'I didn't expect that!'"

Planning an event at SentryWorld comes with plenty of on-site staff support. "We pride ourselves on helping you create a full and memorable experience," explains Schilt. "We'll partner with you to make your event the best it can be."

After designing the golf course at SentryWorld — one of his first — Robert Trent Jones Jr. called it his Mona Lisa. Similarly, Schilt describes The Inn at SentryWorld as a masterful blend of elegance and authentic Wisconsin charm. No matter how you characterize it, it's clear that the Inn and the entire SentryWorld campus offer just about everything an event planner or attendee could want. **WM**



*Sue Sveum is a freelance writer based in the Madison area.*





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## PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

# HOW TO MANUFACTURE TIME

IF YOU WANT MORE HOURS IN THE DAY, CREATE THEM.

BY MOLLY ROSE TEUKE

*"Time is a game played beautifully by children."*  
— Heraclitus, Greek philosopher

"All work and no play ..." We know how that old proverb ends, but it turns out that not taking time for yourself does a lot more than make you dull. It depletes your energy, drains your motivation, makes you more anxious, and generally leaves you unhappy and harder to get along with. It also makes you less productive at work.

Time poverty and its happier corollary, time affluence, have been a focus of research only since the end of the 20th century, but the explosion of research findings and corresponding advice is awe-inspiring, demonstrating conclusively that time poverty is at an all-time high in this country. Analysis of a Gallup survey of 2.5 million Americans showed that 80% of respondents didn't have time to do everything they wanted to each day. It may seem that modern life simply demands longer hours at work, yet the international Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development reports that U.S. income-earners work, on average, at least four hours a week less than they did in 1950.

"We're completely strapped for time because we don't know how to value it," wrote Ashley Whillans in the Harvard Business Review in 2019. We continue to value income as the gold standard of importance and devalue time. Research by Whillans, who's on

the faculty of Harvard Business School and an expert on how we perceive time, suggests that we devalue time today not only because it's not a valid measure of personal importance, but also because we're sure we'll have more of it in the future. We conveniently ignore the reality that counting on future time won't give back missed opportunities to savor connections with family and friends, or to reflect in meaningful ways on the direction life is taking.

## LEVERAGE THE CLOCK

It may be time to rethink your personal use of time. You can't actually stop the clock, but you can leverage your time more wisely. Laura Vanderkam, author of "168 Hours: You Have More Time Than You Think," likes to look at time in blocks of 168 hours (24 hours a day times seven days a week) because it allows more flexibility for finding time for things that matter even when one day in the week goes wrong. Her research with more than 100 successful men and women shows they ignore or minimize the little stuff, and instead pay attention to three big things: nurturing their careers, nurturing family and close friends, and nurturing themselves.

"Focusing on time is not selfish," says Whillans. "It's really in making enough time for ourselves that we're able to have the energy and attention to best serve those that we care about." In that vein, here are three ideas on how to tip your personal scales from time poverty to time affluence, which Whillans defines as a "feeling of having control and feeling like you have enough time on an everyday basis."

### 1. BUY TIME

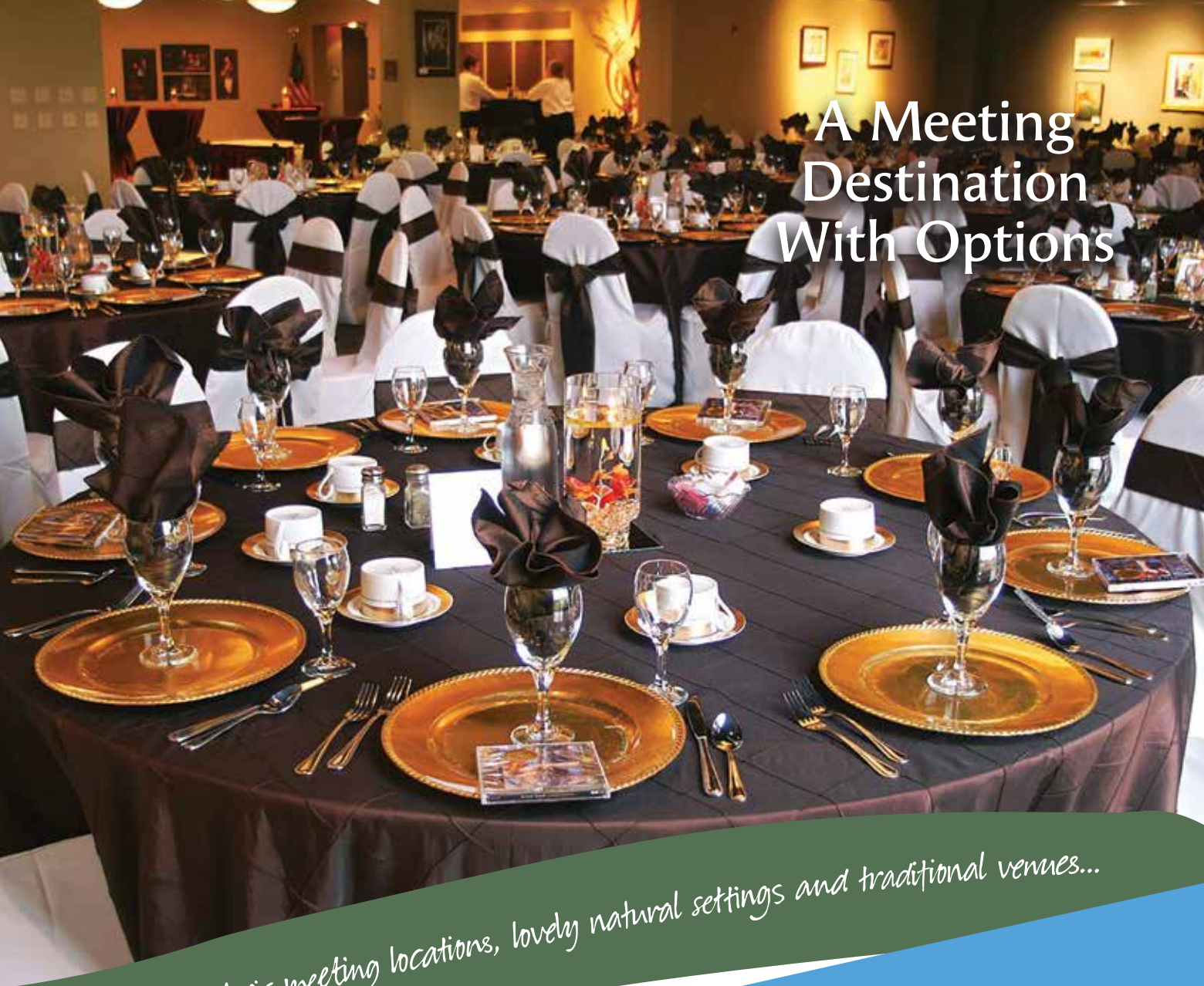
First, spend money on products that save you time, for instance, devices that automatically water your plants, or feed and water your pets. Or tools that streamline

*"Focusing on time is not selfish. It's really in making enough time for ourselves that we're able to have the energy and attention to best serve those that we care about."*

— Ashley Whillans,  
Harvard Business School



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*Wisconsin's Great Outside*





cleaning, like a robotic vacuum cleaner. In the kitchen, it could be a programmable slow cooker or pressure cooker.

Second, outsource. Hire a cleaning service. Find a neighborhood kid to mow your lawn or wash your car. Find a service to launder, dry and fold your clothes. Order carryout more often. Or if you love to cook, invest in a meal kit service that saves you the time and trouble of planning and shopping.

## 2. DON'T GIVE YOUR TIME AWAY

The U.S. Travel Association reports that nearly 50% of Americans who earn vacation time left more than half of it on the table in 2019. That amounts to 768 million unused vacation days. How many of those days were yours? The economics of our reluctance to claim earned vacation days is staggering — \$65.5 billion in lost benefits. To help combat this sorry state, the association designated the last Tuesday in January as “Plan for Vacation Day.” Mark your calendar as such for January 25, 2022. End the time giveaway to your employer.

## 3. MAKE A DECISION

Unless you get in the habit of making smart choices about time, it will slip away on little stuff that isn't making you happier. Planning to use vacation time is just one decisive step toward more time for you. Another, according to Vanderkam, is planning your weekends. When you plan your free time (even if it's just to plan a nap or a stroll in the park), you're less likely to fritter it away surfing social media or watching TV. When you plan and carry out a rewarding activity, you can look back on it as time well-spent and that can lead to a perception of time affluence.

If you find it difficult to plan your free time — or even acknowledge that you deserve free time — when other demands are staring you in the face, engage in something that takes in-the-moment decision-making out of it. Take a class in an activity that interests

you, whether it's physical (snowboarding), manual (pottery) or cerebral (learning a language or a musical instrument). Once you're signed up, you have to take the time to attend — it's the responsible thing to do, right? Or find a volunteer activity that brings you joy (at an animal shelter or a story hour at the library, for example). Once you're committed, you won't feel guilty about taking that time for yourself. Just make sure it's something you actually enjoy, which makes it you time and not other time.

On a day-to-day basis, follow the advice of Josh Davis from his book, “Two Awesome Hours: Science-Based Strategies to Harness Your Best Time and Get Your Most Important Work Done.” When you finish a chore or a task, don't automatically move on to the next. Take a moment to make a real decision: Would this be a good moment for a little me time? Those daily decisions can give you the small time chunks you need to feel like you control time and not the other way around. By the same token, pay attention when you do take a break for, say, an ice cream. Don't take it for granted — mentally chalk it up to me time.

We all get the same amount of time as everyone else: 24 hours in a day, 168 hours in a week. As J.R.R. Tolkien wrote in “The Fellowship of the Ring,” “All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us.” How you decide has the power to reduce stress and increase joy by giving you that feeling that you've got plenty of time after all. [WM](#)



*Molly Rose Teuke has an enduring curiosity about what makes our brains tick. Pre-COVID-19, she offered a program for Nicolet College called Getting Your Brain on Your Side and delivered brain-based leadership training for the NeuroLeadership Institute, a global leader in the performance arena. She also hosts a weekly classical music program on WXPR-FM. You can reach her at [mollyrosecoaching.com](http://mollyrosecoaching.com).*





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A vibrant outdoor event scene, likely a golf tournament, featuring food trucks, people, and green artificial turf. In the foreground, a man in a red shirt works at a food truck with a 'FORD' sign. A man in a grey shirt and cap stands at the counter. In the background, a yellow food truck with a 'INDIANA UNIVERSITY' sign is visible, along with other people and string lights hanging from trees.

# *The Grass Is Greener Outside*

## MEETING IN THE SCENIC OUTDOORS

By Kristine Hansen

THESE WOW-WORTHY OUTDOOR SPACES NOT ONLY CHECK THE “OUTSIDE THE BOX” BOX, BUT ARE ALSO CONVENIENT, COMFORTABLE AND EVEN CLASSY.





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Flowers are now in bloom and sunshine extends late into the evening. Who wants to be stuck inside?

Around Wisconsin are plenty of awe-inspiring outdoor venues for your group's meeting or event — everything from a botanical garden to a resort-town hotel's recent refresh with a focus on alfresco. Then there's the rooftop of a landmark building designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, Wisconsin's famous architect, overlooking downtown Madison and picturesque Lake Monona. And does it get any better than hosting an event with the best view of Lambeau Field that's not part of the stadium itself? Plus, all of these spaces flaunt rooftop (or elevated) lounges, bars or restaurants, or take full advantage of the kind of views attendees won't be able to stop talking about and sharing.

### Grand Geneva Resort & Spa, Lake Geneva

The June renovation of this 1,300-acre resort introduced an additional option for outdoor dining at the 900-square-foot Landing, which seats up to 60 and is entirely alfresco with a covered pergola, and overhead fans and heating. Glass half-walls create an unobstructed view of the property's rolling green hills and tree line, not to mention the private lake and golf course. The 355-room resort — which folds in five dining options — also has outdoor fire pits on Embers Terrace (just outside Geneva ChopHouse) for informal breakout sessions or post-meeting socializing.

Grand Geneva's 5,400-square-foot Outdoor Pavilion's open walls give you the best of both worlds, inside and out, should imminent weather occur. Groups can also incorporate fun activities on the property to further take in the resort's views. Some examples include guided horseback riding, classic-car rentals (including convertibles like a 1965 Shelby Cobra Tribute or a 1968 Pontiac GTO), mountain biking or hiking.





## Monona Terrace, Madison

Based on Frank Lloyd Wright's 1938 design — although not built until 1997, 38 years after his death — this convention center hugging Lake Monona in downtown Madison boasts a 68,000-square-foot rooftop garden. From here, you can see the downtown skyline, the State Capitol dome and, of course, glittering Lake Monona. Buffet-style dining, as well as bars for cocktail hour, can be brought in, along with audiovisual equipment for any presentations.

Four different configurations of the space are offered to groups: the West Circle, the Center Circle, the Center and West Circle, and Olin Terrace. On its own, the Center Circle is the largest (at 34,730 square feet), and can accommodate up to 3,000 for a reception or up to 1,300 with banquet-style seating. Olin Terrace's 5,000 square feet is a nice option for smaller functions, allowing for 96 in a banquet setting or 150 at a reception.

During the warmer months, Monona Terrace hosts many events for the community, including live music and Dane Dances, with performances and a dance floor. Architecture fans may also book a tour of the center. Two group-tour options (one that's up to 10 people and another that's up to 25 people) ensure your group has ample time to ask questions during a 45-minute tour or dig deeper into the story of one of America's most beloved architects who grew up in nearby Spring Green. Tacking on glasses of sparkling or still wine, and cheese or cupcakes, is another popular activity that can be arranged through the center.

## Lodge Kohler, Green Bay

A smaller, more intimate version of The American Club — also owned and managed by Kohler Company, but in the luxury plumber's town of Kohler — is this 144-room boutique hotel that sits across the street from Lambeau Field. In fact, it's only 100 yards away. Imagine sitting on the hotel's fifth-floor Sky Terrace, where the iconic Green Bay Packers stadium appears at arm's reach. The space accommodates up to 50 and catering can be coordinated through the hotel's Taverne in the Sky open-flame rotisserie restaurant. For an afternoon pick-me-up or cocktail hour,





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Leaps & Bounds Café's beverage menu of espresso drinks and cocktails can be enjoyed on the outdoor terrace at Lodge Kohler — facing Lambeau Field at the street level and featuring fire pits. Morning fare at the café includes beignets, avocado toast, eggs and bacon.

That Lodge Kohler is part of the 45-acre Titletown District (owned and managed by the Green Bay Packers) provides access to even more outdoor space, including a regulation-size football field, and a 10-acre park and plaza. Titletown features outdoor programming that includes a Night Market on Thursdays; acoustic music both day and night; and tai chi, Zumba and yoga classes during the summer months.

### **Hotel Goodwin, Beloit**

If you're looking for an edgy and eclectic venue, the 34-room Hotel Goodwin in downtown Beloit delivers. Its 1,000-square-foot Rooftop, which can comfortably accommodate up to 60, has the proud distinction of being Beloit's only rooftop bar with event space. Reserving The Rooftop means your group gets exclusive access, so they don't have to elbow their way around to share the view of downtown with other guests. That said, being at the hotel on certain days may

afford access to other activities, such as live music at The Rooftop on Sundays from 3 to 6 p.m. in the summer.

On the food and drink menu are wines by the glass, craft beers with local roots, refreshing seasonal cocktails (such as strawberry rhubarb punch or violet lemonade) and what's termed "all-day snacks" — from chipotle smoked shrimp cocktails to chimichurri beef tenderloin skewers. Should cool, windy or rainy weather barge in on your event, it's not a total washout as The Rooftop's indoor

spaces are also available to groups booking the space.

### **Rotary Botanical Gardens, Janesville**

There's a reason this 20-acre garden is a popular spot for weddings — with the abundant plants and flowers, there's no need to bring in additional floral displays or other décor. The same is true for meetings and corporate functions where guests can be treated to breathtaking views while conducting business. Four different rooms, approximately 600 square







feet each, can be rented separately or combined to create a larger space, with options to include an LCD projector, projection screen and sound system, as well as food and beverage catering.

Attendees can also easily squeeze in a nice stroll during their free time without leaving the venue. An estimated 4,000 varieties of plants are grown here, representing 24 different garden styles. Those in the group who have green thumbs may want to take advantage of events, such as guided walks, that are hosted for the public. A group tour for up to 55 people (and as few as 15 people) can be booked in advance as well. During this two-hour tour on foot (although golf carts can be arranged for the mobility-impaired), a guide discusses the gardens' history and gives an overview of the plants grown here. [WM](#)



*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 also published "Wisconsin Cheese Cookbook," which is available on Amazon.com.*

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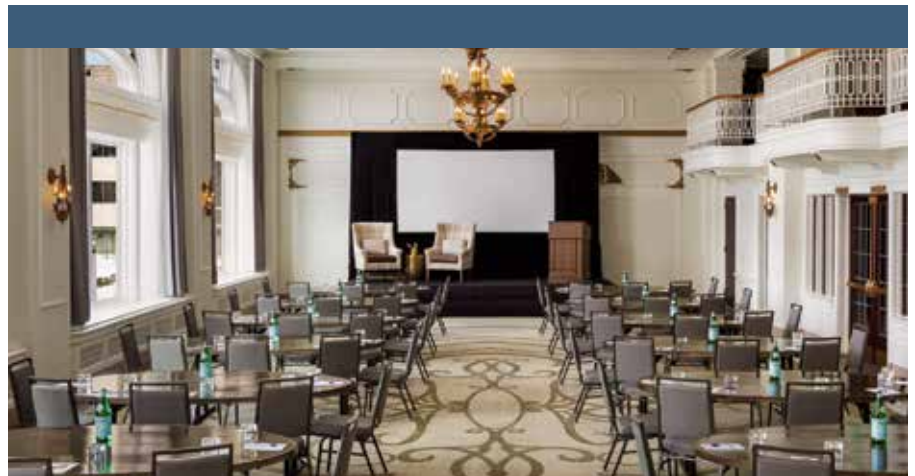
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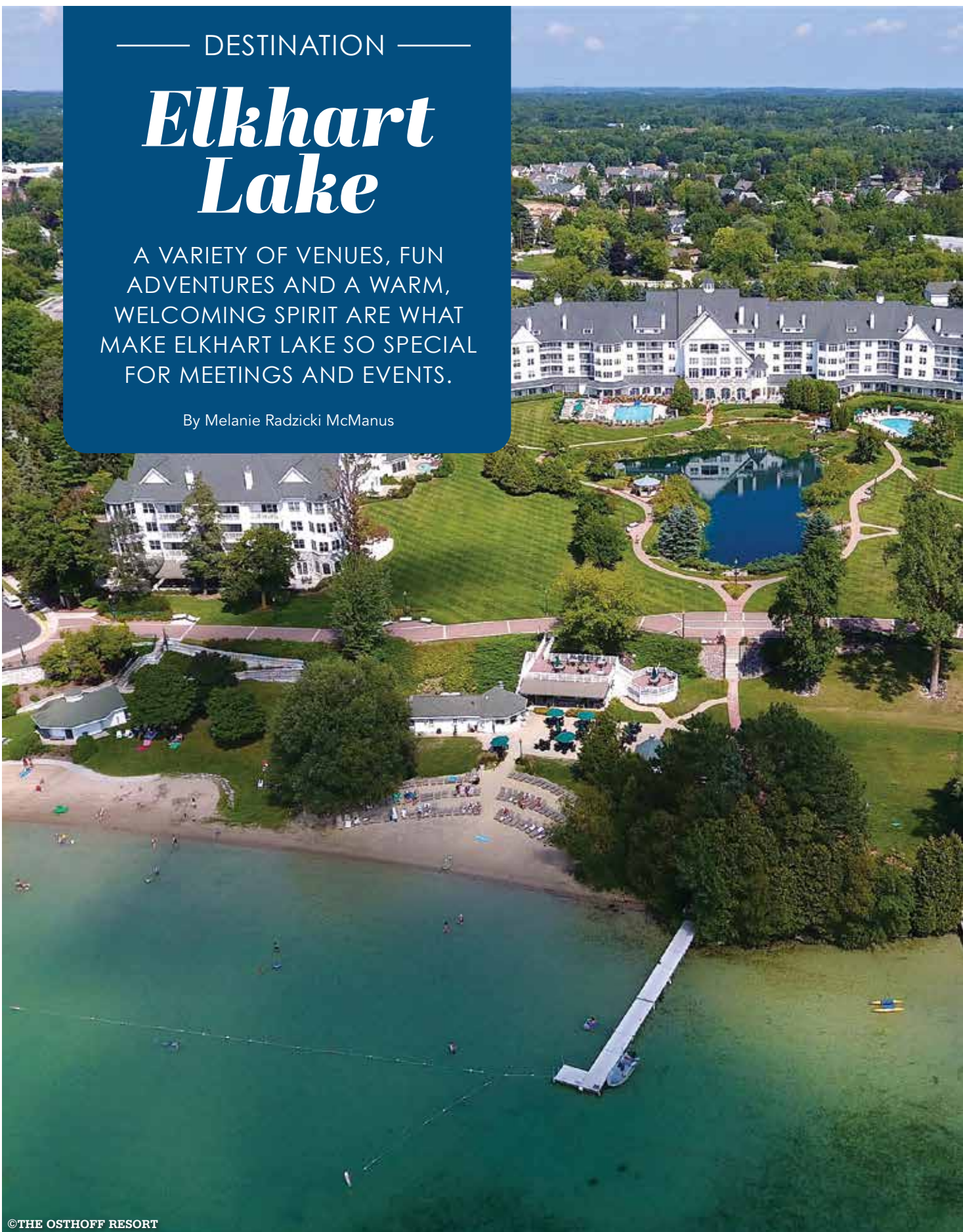


— DESTINATION —

# *Elkhart Lake*

A VARIETY OF VENUES, FUN  
ADVENTURES AND A WARM,  
WELCOMING SPIRIT ARE WHAT  
MAKE ELKHART LAKE SO SPECIAL  
FOR MEETINGS AND EVENTS.

By Melanie Radzicki McManus



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At first glance, Elkhart Lake might seem like a curious spot to hold a conference or meeting. The village is small, with approximately 1,100 residents. About 60 miles from Milwaukee and 100 miles from Madison, it's not on an interstate highway. And it has a casual, flip-flop vibe. But once you set foot in this charming town snuggled against Elkhart Lake's eastern shore, you quickly see its appeal.

First, there's the lake — a crystal-clear body of water that's perfect for swimming, boating or simply relaxing. Then there's the downtown — a quaint space filled with unique restaurants and boutiques. Then there are three sprawling resorts: the Shore Club and Siebkens Resort, both of which date back more than a century, and The Osthoff Resort, a stunning, white facility with hints of Victorian-era grandeur. Finally, there's Road America, one of the world's most challenging road-racing courses, which lies 2.5 miles south of town.

Kathleen Eickhoff, executive director of Elkhart Lake Tourism, says groups that choose to meet here walk away wowed. She says they love the lake, they love the town's walkability, and they quickly notice that virtually all of the businesses are locally owned and run. "There's just one franchise, a Subway, so you're almost always welcomed by the owner," she says. "Our visitors love to engage with the owners of our businesses. It makes them feel welcome, comfortable and like an extended part of our community."

### ***A Variety of Meeting Venues***

The village's three resorts offer a complementary selection of meeting spaces. The Osthoff is the most traditional venue, with 38,000 square feet of meeting space that can serve up to 1,500. Its largest ballroom is the 10,000-square-foot Grand Libelle, while the Palm Garden Ballroom offers another 7,500 square feet of space. Guests can stay in one of 240 rooms or





©THE SHORE CLUB

If team building is on tap, The Osthoff offers everything from scavenger hunts and Family Feud-type competitions to more novel activities, such as cocktail making, beer and cheese tasting, and an etiquette dinner in which participants learn proper business dinner decorum. Then there's Toth's favorite: a cooking competition. During one such event, teams had to shop at a market The Osthoff set up, then create a meal from the available ingredients. But there was one catch. After teams decided upon their meal, The Osthoff introduced a mystery ingredient — bologna — that all the teams suddenly had to add.

"Imagine that!" Toth laughs. "The teams created all of these fancy meals and then they had to incorporate bologna."



©THE SHORE CLUB

While there are no ballrooms or bologna-based competitions available at the nearby Shore Club, you can find 40 guest rooms that were recently renovated and, for meeting space, a 4,400-square-foot theater that was built around 1900 and offers great lake views. The theater has a stage fronted by a dance floor, where staff can create a variety of seating arrangements. "Our theater has really taken off," says Tanya Curtin, director of sales. "People like its old-school vibe."

The Shore Club sits on about 5 acres of land, so outdoor events are also popular here. When meetings are over, guests can enjoy the resort's 600 feet of private beach, live entertainment or a plethora of lake activities, as Elkhart Lake Watersports rents a variety of watercraft from The Shore Club's beach.

"If you're looking for something unique and historical, that's us," Curtin says, adding the property's niche is groups looking for a casual atmosphere.

A few paces away, Seibkens Resort — favored by the racing crowds that flood the village when Road America is holding an event — is a beloved spot for groups to hold dinner meetings. Its main dining room can hold up to 200, while smaller groups can dine on its sun porch or outdoor deck, or in its historic saloon or gazebo yard.

suites and, in their free time, relax in the resort's Aspira Spa.

Tracie Toth, director of sales, says The Osthoff serves a diverse array of groups and needs — from Fortune 250 companies to state associations and religious retreats. Many of these events are groups of 400 or less, and many are repeat customers. "They love our tenured staff. Our team of people truly care about their event's success, first and foremost," according to Toth. She adds that meeting planners also appreciate the resort's well-appointed meeting rooms and sumptuous suites, which spoil

attendees with luxuries such as fireplaces and private balconies.

As the cherry on top, there's the resort's professional audiovisual team, which provides hands-on service. "Audiovisual can make or break an event," Toth says. "You won't have any worries here."

When it's time to relax, guests can head to the resort's private beach, golf at nearby Quit Qui Oc Golf Club, hit the spa or perhaps take in a wine tasting at Vintage Elkhart Lake. Owner and sommelier Jaclyn Stuart offers numerous events, plus she creates wine tastings for business groups.





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## Golfing and Racing

Across the road from the lakeside resorts, Quit Qui Oc Golf Club has been in business nearly a century. The business offers 27 holes of golf, a driving range, chipping and putting areas, and also a bar and restaurant. Todd Montaba, who owns the business with his wife, Rachel, says they work closely with customers to offer seamless events. "We'll set everything up and have names on the carts so guests can just get in the carts and start playing."

Quit Qui Oc's course is very playable, making it great for beginners. Yet there are challenges for veteran players, too, part of which come due to its age. Montaba says Quit Qui Oc was established in 1923, when there were no bulldozers to create a highly sculpted course, "so they shaped the land with horses and plows and by hand, and left a lot of the land as it was." In this part of the state, that means a lot of rolling hills.

But Quit Qui Oc is not just about golf. In addition to hosting golf outings, the business organizes scavenger hunts,

campfires, snowshoeing and moonlight strolls.

While golfing might be a common pastime during meetings and conferences, road racing is decidedly not. That is why Road America is such a bonus for groups meeting in Elkhart Lake. The 640-acre venue can host groups topping 2,000 via its Tufts Center, Road America Center, VIP Tower, outdoor tents or even Victory Lane. Limited lodging is available in 12 cabins and an off-site chalet.

And lest you think a road-racing venue is all concrete and steel, think again. John Ewert, Road America's communications director, says the property maintains its natural topography and original features, so you can find hills, barns, old farm trails and even rock walls that once separated pastureland. "When there aren't cars on the track, you feel like you're in a national park," he notes.

Guests can explore this "national park" through many activities, such as all-terrain vehicle (ATV) off-roading, disc



ROAD AMERICA ©LES TENSION PHOTO



©ROAD AMERICA

golf, geocaching and go-carting. Other entertainment options for free time include outdoor movies, pace car driving and, of course, road racing. Ewert says the Road America team loves to get creative with groups, too. To that end, the team once created a mini Olympics in which teams earned points according to how well they did at disc golf, cornhole, geocaching and more.

This kind of fun, coupled with a warm, welcoming spirit, is what makes Elkhart Lake so special, Montaba says. "All of us business owners work in our businesses every day, and we want guests to come here and love Elkhart Lake as much as we do." WM



ROAD AMERICA ©LES TENSION PHOTO



Melanie Radzicki McManus often writes about Wisconsin from her home in Sun Prairie. In 2015, she received the Lowell Thomas Grand award as an honorable mention Travel Writer of the Year. Lowell Thomas awards are considered the most prestigious travel writing awards in North America.



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# PLAY BALL AT SPORTS VENUES

These unique spaces can help you knock your next meeting out of the park.

By Ronnie Wendt

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The American Saddlebred Association of Wisconsin draws up to 400 best-of-breed horses and riders to its annual Summerfun Horse Show. Show organizer Vicky Holston says she always turns to Wisconsin State Fair Park for the event. Though a horse show is a sporting event that requires special amenities, such as stalls, and riding and practice arenas, Holston stresses she has other options for those things in Wisconsin for the event.

She chooses State Fair Park every year because of its helpful staff and comfortable facilities. Holston hosts three events during the horse show: a move-in lunch, a United Professional Horseman's Association event and an exhibitors' party. Trainers, riders and their families have high expectations for these events, and Holston never wants to disappoint.

"The staff helps us with setup and caterers, and the facility is beautiful," she says. "Because we host the event so close to the State Fair, every flower is in bloom. The barns being so close to

the show arena and the new hotel nearby add to its appeal."

Holston's story is a common theme that plays out at the state's sports arenas, which host everything from fairs to football, baseball and soccer games. These facilities offer "truly unique experiences in flexible spaces," says Kim Chonos, director of catering and events for the Wisconsin Timber Rattlers of Grand Chute. "They allow planners to think outside the box and use different areas around the stadium that are not otherwise being used."

Vern Stenman, president of Big Top Sports & Entertainment, oversees events at Madison's Breese Stevens Field, where Forward Madison plays soccer, and Warner Park, where the Mallards play baseball. He says sports venues provide unparalleled novelty. "There is a unique look and feel in these settings. It's an entirely different atmosphere than a traditional venue. The spaces are cool and interesting, and add a unique flair to events," he says.

*"There is a unique look and feel in these settings. It's an entirely different atmosphere than a traditional venue."*

— Vern Stenman,  
Big Top Sports &  
Entertainment





Plus, most sports venues offer adaptable indoor and outdoor areas that accommodate large and small meetings. And audiovisual needs are never an issue. "These facilities have incredible audiovisual capabilities," says Chonos. "We have a video board to show presentations, display photos or broadcast company logos. We can use stadium speakers and microphones for on-field events."

Typically, the sites are conveniently located off highways, and near hotels, shopping, restaurants and other entertainment. Moreover, parking is a breeze because sports venues generally offer hundreds to thousands of spaces.

### LAMBEAU FIELD, GREEN BAY

Lambeau Field has long been a fan favorite for meetings and events. Its five-story atrium accommodates groups of up to 1,000 people for events that range from cocktail receptions to corporate meetings.

Private stadium tours of 20 to 35 people, or a stroll through the hallowed Hall of Fame

inject added flavor for the football lovers on your team. Guests can slip on curator gloves and handle precious archives, view private art collections inside executive-level boxes and even take part in a scavenger hunt. Private alumni tours led by a former Packer player also are available.

### FISERV FORUM, MILWAUKEE

The Milwaukee Bucks have seized the spotlight as the team skyrockets to national prominence, but behind the scenes, Fiserv Forum, the Bucks' new sports and entertainment arena, is racking up its share of wins. This new arena can host up to 200 sporting and entertainment events a year, but the 730,000-square-foot space also can host hundreds of meetings in a smorgasbord of exceptional and dedicated meeting spaces.

"We created the building to be as flexible as we could make it," reports Mallory Brigman, director of event sales at Fiserv Forum. "While it has an open design concept, there are rooms or pockets we can scale down for a smaller meeting or event."

She highlights a few popular meeting and event spaces. The arena floor, the building's "most flexible meeting space," accommodates receptions of up to 2,000 people or transforms into a space fit for a 2,000-person dinner. The Panorama Club sits at the top of the arena and offers extraordinary views into the bowl, whereas an expansive outdoor patio provides a panoramic view of the city. This space works well for meetings of up to 84 people, but also can accommodate 450 guests for a reception. Like Lambeau Field, the facility's atrium doubles as a meeting space for up to 280 guests, while an outdoor, open-air plaza connects to the entertainment deck.

A group can additionally take in a VIP tour or game as part of its after-hours activities.

### NEUROSCIENCE GROUP FIELD AT FOX CITIES STADIUM, GRAND CHUTE

Neuroscience Group Field at Fox Cities Stadium is home to the Timber Rattlers. Another engaging and entertaining venue for an event, the facility's Fox Club is a private indoor space for upscale or casual corporate events, meetings, holiday parties and receptions. It accommodates up to 250 people with modern finishes and customizable room setups. Glass windows overlook the field and guests can sit outside on the balcony to savor the view. The space includes a full-service bar and professional



kitchen where on-site executive chefs can concoct the perfect menu for your event.

The stadium's six temperature-controlled luxury suites deliver a fully furnished indoor experience with couches, tables and chairs, a refrigerator and cable television. These areas accommodate 14 to 20 people and







© WISCONSIN STATE FAIR PARK

provide an outstanding view of the field. In contrast, smaller professional meetings might prefer a standard conference room designed to accommodate 14 to 20 people. If a casual bar setting is more to your liking, however, the Leinie's Lodge can hold events of up to 50 people on non-game days.

For a special experience, host your event on the field. Staging is set up at the pitcher's mound for speakers to present, and a large video board is used to display presentations, videos, sponsors or slide shows. Guests enjoy the meeting from the seating bowl.

For those looking to infuse a little fun into the day, include tickets to a game, a stadium tour, a mascot appearance or a fireworks display. "You don't have to be a baseball fan to enjoy at day at the ballpark," says Chonos.

### WISCONSIN STATE FAIR PARK, WEST ALLIS

As home of the Wisconsin State Fair, most people know Wisconsin State Fair Park as a place where memories are made. And they know it as home to the iconic Original Cream Puff. But they may not realize this facility also offers a treasure trove of spaces for events, among them the Milwaukee Mile.

The Milwaukee Mile is a one-mile-long oval racetrack. Its grandstand and bleachers seat 37,000 spectators. The sky is the limit here. Planners can use the site for bike races, charity walks and more. The Wisconsin Exposition Center, which is just shy of 200,000 square feet, provides flexible meeting space and a blank canvas

to create an event uniquely your own. Then there are the Wisconsin Products Pavilion, which offers 32,000 square feet, and a coliseum that hosts sporting events and other activities.

"Anything is possible in our spaces," says Andrea Rowe, director of event services at State Fair Park. "We've hosted boat shows, volleyball events, horse shows and more. If you have something that demands a lot of parking and a fresh look, we can help. We can work some magic and inject energy into your event. And our location is unbeatable. It's just off the freeway, and easy to get to from the North, South, East and West."

### WARNER PARK AND BREESE STEVENS FIELD, MADISON

Just eight blocks northeast of the Wisconsin State Capitol lies Breese Stevens Municipal Athletic Field. This multi-purpose stadium is the oldest masonry grandstand in Wisconsin. Meanwhile, the Mallards baseball team plays at a field not far away in Warner Park, on the

it year-round," according to Stenman.

Summit Credit Union has hosted a major shareholder event right on the field for 3,000 people, for example. The family-focused event takes place before the season begins. "They bring in food, kids' games and credit union leadership who present from the field to people in the stands," adds Stenman.

Planners also can use the field at Breese Stevens for their events. Often, they incorporate a soccer, baseball or kickball game. They can even host a party on the rooftop with great views of the field. And Breese Stevens staff collaborate with planners to host the perfect get-together, networking event, keynote speaker or team-building event. Like many other sports venues in the state, for after-hours entertainment, planners can include tickets to a game or a facility tour.

Get into the theme with baseball concession-type food, or go high end and let Breese



©WARNER PARK

city's north side. Both venues offer unique settings for planners wanting to knock an event out of the park.

"The baseball field offers a nice meeting setting. We've hosted everything from drive-in movies during the pandemic to weddings," Stenman says. "We also offer the Great Dane Duck Blind Club, which is a large party deck with indoor space on the right field corner of the stadium."

The Duck Blind building features three levels with 12 individual suites in a climate-controlled space. "We put on events for 200+ people in this building and we can do

Stevens' top chefs whip up a menu that delivers steak, scallops and even lobster.

"People in the community already associate our venues with fun," Stenman says. "We can add that to your events, too. When people come here for a meeting, they're looking for something different and a little unexpected. They are looking for fun." **WM**



Ronnie Wendt is a freelance writer based in Waukesha.

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# When Partnerships Pay Off

Outsourcing meeting management tasks can save time and money for in-house planning teams.

By Ronnie Wendt

Melissa Falendysz, CMP, is a meeting and event planner for the National Association of Tax Professionals (NATP). She plans around 130 nationwide events a year for accounting professionals, which means the events must occur between August and December to avoid disrupting tax season.

Until five years ago, Falendysz handled every detail of these meetings, from smaller decisions about the look and feel to the larger ones pertaining to food and beverage (F&B) and venue selection. But as the number of meetings and events soared, she knew she needed help.

"One person cannot handle all of the planning for 130 events a year. And I had to complete planning in three to five months," she explains. "It was a lot."

She encouraged the NATP to outsource some planning to ConferenceDirect. The full-service meetings solution company can assist with site selection, conference management, housing, registration and more. The NATP contracted with ConferenceDirect for venue sourcing specifically.

It turned out to be a good move. Falendysz reports that outsourcing to the third party

saved both time and money. "Since 2017, ConferenceDirect has saved us \$1 million and countless hours of my time," she says. "I was working over 50 hours a week and I spent a good portion of that time sourcing venues."

As Falendysz discovered, outsourcing not only saves time and money, but it can also add specialized services and talent to an events team. Third parties can help planners establish and meet a realistic budget, and negotiate better rates and discounts as well. Because they do this work every day, third-party planners know the concessions vendors may include, such as complimentary Wi-Fi, F&B discounts and audiovisual support.

Outsourcing firms are also intimately familiar with contract legalities, a benefit many planners observed during the pandemic. "Our provider took care of all the cancellations. ConferenceDirect broke down the clauses in our contracts, and helped us move events to 2021, 2022 and 2023."

But before outsourcing, it's important for planners to identify their needs, what makes a good third-party planner and how to make these partnerships work for everyone.

## Is It Time?

Maybe you are experiencing challenges that have you eyeing outsourced providers. Perhaps the pandemic cut your budget and personnel, or your company plans to add more meetings without expanding your team. Maybe you need additional support to launch an app, develop a hybrid platform or revamp registration.

Whatever the reason, the first step is to identify your needs, then pick some to outsource, reports Terri Yanke, founder and CEO of Eventful Advantage LLC, an event planning and management business in Madison. "You can outsource almost everything," she says. "I'm working on two events right now — one where I'm working on site as part of the team and another where I'm only providing specific support."

The meetings and events industry offers two approaches for outsourcing: full meeting management or à la carte services. Most third-party providers present a menu of services that range from event marketing and trade show sales to venue selection and contracts. Thus, it's critical to hone in on the challenges you hope to address, then outsource accordingly. Identify what challenges you most. Is it sourcing a venue? Contract

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## *“Planners always want to be in control ... Allowing a third party to take over these duties can be hard.”*

— Melissa Falendysz, National Association of Tax Professionals

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negotiations? Picking and contracting with a caterer? Do you need technology support for a virtual or hybrid meeting? Make a list of internal needs and separate them as “nice to haves” and “must haves.”

For Falendysz, for example, sourcing venues consumed considerable time. The situation worsened during the pandemic. “It became challenging to get in contact with hotels; they were short-staffed and often had just one person working all departments. Our third-party provider helped with that,” she says. “There is so much back and forth when sourcing hotels. Sometimes all your work ends in a dead-end and you must start all over.” Now when one venue becomes a dead-end, the NATP’s planning partner renews the search.

Falendysz’s story is not unique. Many in-house planning teams contract with third parties for venue sourcing. Smaller organizations often lack the in-house bandwidth necessary to compare every venue proposal and negotiate contract terms.

### **Get Buy-In from the Top**

In-house teams must get buy-in from the C-suite or association board before proceeding. Yanke says in-house planners should share how outsourcing can benefit the organization using concrete terms, such as cost or time savings, freeing the team for other tasks and expanding skill sets.

“Do a cost-benefit analysis that shows how your team’s time is better spent doing their jobs,” Yanke says. “Often meeting and event planning is secondary to what they do, and they rely on volunteer efforts. Sometimes the benefit is having someone new bring in fresh ideas. Or having help that can take stress and worry from the team.”

Explain the benefits of a partner that looks over contract language, adds Falendysz. “Contracting is ever-changing because of COVID-19. Outsourced providers must stay up to date with these changes and have legal departments that review contracts,” she says. “Having an extra set of eyes reviewing your contracts is a true benefit. I’m just one person here at the NATP. I cannot keep up with every legal trend.”

Perhaps the best-selling point for stakeholders is budget impacts, Yanke reports. Third-party providers have relationships with vendors that can result in better prices. “The vendors I work with will pull out all the stops for me, even if it’s behind the timeline,” she says. “Vendors know I’m going to bring in repeat business, so they give me deals. I can get suites vs. rooms, rooms with better views, welcome packages, complimentary wine nights and things like that. When you work with a third party, you can turn a beer budget into champagne.”

### **Pick a Partner**

Next, pick a partner who can meet your identified objectives. Before handing over the

keys to a major event, it’s essential to find a partner with relevant experience in the services you need. The best partner is one that does corporate and association-type meetings and events. “These events differ greatly from a wedding,” says Yanke. She’s careful to note that some wedding planners also do corporate events, but a planner who specializes in weddings may not do well with a corporate event as they are quite different.

Yanke recommends picking a partner that fits well with your company culture as well. “You will work together very closely; they are an adjunct to your team,” she advises. “You need someone who fits with your personality, works within your vision and makes suggestions for improvement.”

Falendysz suggests considering third-party planners’ responsiveness to your initial query. If they do not respond quickly to your request for proposal (RFP), chances are they will respond slowly once they have your business. “We looked at three or four different sourcing agencies. The one we picked always responded promptly and thoroughly,” she says. Initial queries should

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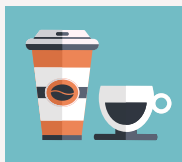
## BUDGET BUSTING

Experienced partners cannot only help set a realistic budget that covers all aspects of an event, but also negotiate the most favorable terms for your contracts, get better rates and secure discounts. They may even be able to entice vendors to throw in a few extras, like complimentary Wi-Fi and audiovisual support, room upgrades and more.



## INNOVATIVE IDEAS

A third-party planner can breathe fresh life into a tired event. An outsider who handles hundreds of events a year can bring new perspective to the team. These planners have access to the latest trends and themes, top vendors, innovative event ideas and more.



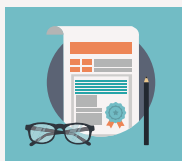
## FIGURING OUT THE FOOD

One challenge of F&B management is ordering the correct amounts to prevent waste. An experienced meeting manager bases F&B estimates on best practices to prevent ordering too much or too little.



## CORRECT CONNECTIVITY

A knowledgeable third party can help smooth the transition from physical to hybrid meetings when called for. Though they are not information technology (IT) experts, third-party planners maintain relationships with those who are. They can work with IT teams to ensure Wi-Fi connectivity is sufficient, audiovisual needs are met and appropriate hybrid technologies are in place.



## CONTRACT CLAUSES

Third-party providers stay current with contract legalities, ensuring force majeure clauses and contract language are up to date.

include how long the third-party planner has been in business, a list of references, a service menu and prices. Transparency is key. The NATP received all documentation up front from its supplier. "Expect full transparency from the very beginning," Falendysz advises.

Yanke says that she prepares a thorough estimate of services, then details what the partnership covers in the contract. She also leaves room to grow. "The contract lists covered services and includes a statement that they can contract with me for additional services at an additional cost," she says. "With my contract, they know their budget up front and have time to figure out how to cover it. Maybe they can sell event sponsorships to offset their planning costs."

## Conquer Your Fears

"Planners always want to be in control of their event," says Falendysz. "Allowing a third party to take over these duties can be hard." But overcoming that fear is necessary to drive maximum value from these partnerships. "It's nice having a third party take on the extra work," she admits. "It frees me up to focus on enhancing our larger events, and handling onsite logistics and other details."

Once hired, incorporate outsourced planners into the team, adds Yanke. A third-party planner can reduce workload, drive strategy, negotiate contracts and more, but only if the team gives permission. Outsourcing works best when the third-party planner collaborates with the in-house team and has a full understanding of event objectives. Introduce the new partner to your team, much like you'd introduce a new employee. Set up a "get to know you" strategy session in which everyone shares their expectations. Answer questions like:

- What will we do in house? What will our partner do? Define roles early and be specific. Perhaps, like Falendysz, all you need is venue sourcing and contract negotiations. Or maybe you'd like to outsource everything.
- Who controls the financial decision-making? Sometimes organizations allow third parties to act on financial decisions after setting the budget. Other times, they leave this to the in-house team. Regardless, share the budget with your new partner.
- How will we communicate? And how often? Establish communication protocols in advance. Perhaps virtual calls are all that's required after the initial meeting. Maybe you want regular email communications. Perhaps you prefer regular in-person meetings. "Every company operates a little differently," Yanke says. "It's important to set those parameters early."
- How long will the partnership last? Will the third-party planner stay with you until the end or will they step out after fulfilling certain tasks? Falendysz takes over once the NATP signs the venue contract, for instance. "At that point, I become the main contact for the hotel, and handle all on-site logistics and post-season billing," she says.

Event planning is a time-consuming process. So is putting a communications structure and strategy in place to contract with a third party. But the rewards are worth the effort. **WM**



Ronnie Wendt is a freelance writer based in Waukesha.

## ADVERTISER INDEX

BLUE HARBOR RESORT &  
CONFERENCE CENTER.....31  
[blueharborresort.com](http://blueharborresort.com)

ELKHART LAKE TOURISM.....35  
[elkhartlake.com](http://elkhartlake.com)

F STREET HOSPITALITY .....19  
[fstreethospitality.com](http://fstreethospitality.com)

FOX CITIES CONVENTION  
& VISITORS BUREAU .....5  
[foxcities.org/originals](http://foxcities.org/originals)

FOX CITIES EXHIBITION CENTER..... 13  
[fcexhibitioncenter.com](http://fcexhibitioncenter.com)

GERONIMO HOSPITALITY  
GROUP .....36  
[geronimohospitalitygroup.com](http://geronimohospitalitygroup.com)

GREATER GREEN BAY CONVENTION  
& VISITORS BUREAU .....7  
[meetinggreenbay.com](http://meetinggreenbay.com)

HOTEL NORTHLAND GREEN BAY.... 19  
[thehotelnorthland.com](http://thehotelnorthland.com)

THE INGLESIDE HOTEL .....9  
[theinglesidehotel.com](http://theinglesidehotel.com)

JANESVILLE AREA CONVENTION  
& VISITORS BUREAU .....11  
[janesvillecvb.com](http://janesvillecvb.com)

THE MADISON CONCOURSE HOTEL  
AND GOVERNOR'S CLUB.....9  
[concoursehotel.com](http://concoursehotel.com)

MIDDLETON TOURISM  
COMMISSION.....33  
[meetinmiddleton.com](http://meetinmiddleton.com)

MILFORD HILLS .....17  
[milfordhills.com](http://milfordhills.com)

MONONA TERRACE .....2  
[mononaterace.com](http://mononaterace.com)

THE OSTHOFF RESORT .....35  
[osthoffmeetings.com](http://osthoffmeetings.com)

RED LION HOTEL PAPER VALLEY .... 13  
[redlion.com/red-lion-hotels/wi/  
appleton/red-lion-hotel-paper-valley](http://redlion.com/red-lion-hotels/wi/appleton/red-lion-hotel-paper-valley)

ROAD AMERICA .....23  
[roadamerica.com](http://roadamerica.com)

VISIT BROOKFIELD .....13  
[visitbrookfield.com](http://visitbrookfield.com)

WAUKESHA PEWAUKEE CONVENTION  
AND VISITOR BUREAU..... 17  
[visitwaukesha.org/meetmore](http://visitwaukesha.org/meetmore)

WISCONSIN RAPIDS AREA  
CONVENTION &  
VISITORS BUREAU .....33  
[visitwisrapids.com](http://visitwisrapids.com)




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## PLANNER PROFILE

# LEADING THE CHARGE

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SHANNON TIMMERMAN PREDICTS  
A YEAR OF RECOVERY AND GROWTH  
FOR MEETINGS.

BY CARRIE MANTEY

Shannon Timmerman, director of sales at the Wilderness Resort in Wisconsin Dells, began her term as president of the Wisconsin chapter of Meeting Professionals International (MPI) on July 1. Her parents owned a small resort, and from an early age, she knew she wanted to work in hospitality.

"I was raised in the world of hospitality, but I think my parents were surprised when I chose hospitality and tourism management as my major at the University of Wisconsin-Stout. They thought I was crazy to get into something that they worked so hard at every day. But I loved it and I knew that, in one facet of the industry or another, this is what I was going to do."

As the meeting planning industry begins to recover after being dealt a heavy blow from COVID-19, Timmerman views her mission for the next year as enticing new and former members back to the association with a focus on education and special rates for those members who may still be unemployed and struggling. She says, "We want them to be involved and benefit not only from our education, but also from our networking."

Timmerman is also excited about holding in-person events this year. "I believe that 2021-2022 will be a year of recovery and growth," she predicts. "We are coming into this year with a calendar of primarily in-person events, which we have already successfully pulled off."

Our membership is eager to come together and bring back some sense of normalcy to our organization. Our goal is to get back on track and move forward into a successful year. A focus on membership will hopefully get back some of our members who may have lapsed during this pandemic due to lost or changed jobs."

Last year, Timmerman says one of the biggest challenges MPI-Wisconsin faced was deciding when to have the association's first in-person event. After months of cancellations and postponements, the association settled on merging two of its largest events together for its first in-person event in the last quarter. "It was a success and emotional all in one," she remembers.

Be that as it may, one of the main obstacles the meetings industry faces now is the fact that many companies and associations are still restricting travel, according to Timmerman. "But I know meetings will come back and they are going to come back in a big way," she says confidently. "Zoom fatigue has set in for so many and people are anxious to get back to face-to-face meetings. While hybrid will be a component for many groups in the beginning [of this recovery], MPI learned that offering a hybrid component was not as popular as we thought it was going to be. People who wanted education wanted to be in person, so the cost and effort of the hybrid offering was well beyond the few who actually registered."

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*"I know meetings will come back and they are going to come back in a big way. Zoom fatigue has set in for so many and people are anxious to get back to face-to-face meetings."*

— Shannon Timmerman, Wilderness Resort

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That's why MPI does not currently have plans for hybrid meetings moving forward. Besides, says Timmerman, "MPI is such a respected organization and seeing that we have, and will be, holding safe and successful in-person meetings is a positive influence on the Wisconsin meetings industry."

When Timmerman reflects on how she would like her presidency perceived, she says, "I would like to be remembered as the one leading the charge as our industry, and our MPI-Wisconsin chapter, recovers. I am very passionate about our industry, and about MPI, so I plan to give everything I have to getting us back to a sense of normalcy. We have a lot to do out of the gate, but our board is eager to get started." **WM**





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