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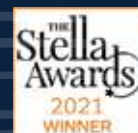
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EDITOR'S LETTER

Happy New Year! I'm happy to report that Wisconsin Meetings is kicking off its 20th year in publication with an issue packed with wisdom about holding a meeting or event in the Dairy State. Our Destination feature on Page 16 details the venues and perks of Janesville and Beloit, communities burgeoning with revitalization efforts and fresh opportunities. Then, our Planner Basics department on Page 12 alerts meeting and event planners on how they can protect themselves from short-staffed venues and vendors, a common problem as we dive into 2022.

As always, our aim is to help keep you informed, so you can confidently sail through another successful year. On that note, 2021 was erratic for the meetings and events industry, but I continue to bear witness to the ingenuity and resourcefulness of meeting and event planners all over the state to remain professional and graceful during often predictable times.

It's not just our readers that are weathering the storm, but the larger hospitality industry as well. Yet the best venues and vendors in Wisconsin are still wowing us with their resilience and dedication to customer service. I see it in industry news every day — hotels and convention centers investing in renovations, entertainment districts investing in expansion, venues investing in pavilions and patios for outdoor enjoyment — Wisconsin is building a better infrastructure for your meetings and events.

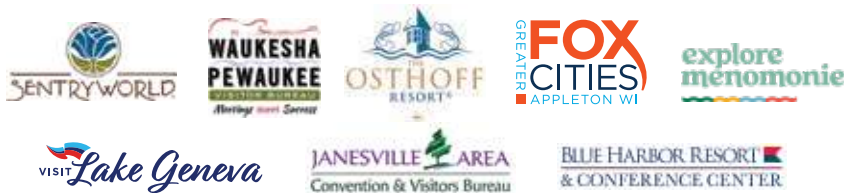
Every year, Wisconsin Meetings circulates an annual reader survey to determine the best the state has to offer its meeting and event planners. We decided to update a couple of the categories this year, adding "Best Destination in Wisconsin for Meetings & Events," "Best Venue for Meetings & Events" and "Best Supplier." We added Best Supplier to the categories because there's a lot more that goes into a meeting or event than its location. Without the services of critical suppliers — rental companies, audiovisual experts, software firms, entertainment providers and more — events as we know them wouldn't exist.

From enormous resorts to boutique hotels, cruise lines to event rental companies, we couldn't do our jobs without them. There's no better time than now to recognize some of the achievements of the venues and vendors helping meeting and event planners thrive. Check out some of our winners on Page 22.

As always, thanks for reading Wisconsin Meetings!

Carrie Mantey
Editor
editor@wisconsinmeetings.com

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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 temporarily closed due to COVID-19. Please contact each facility directly to confirm schedules and availability.

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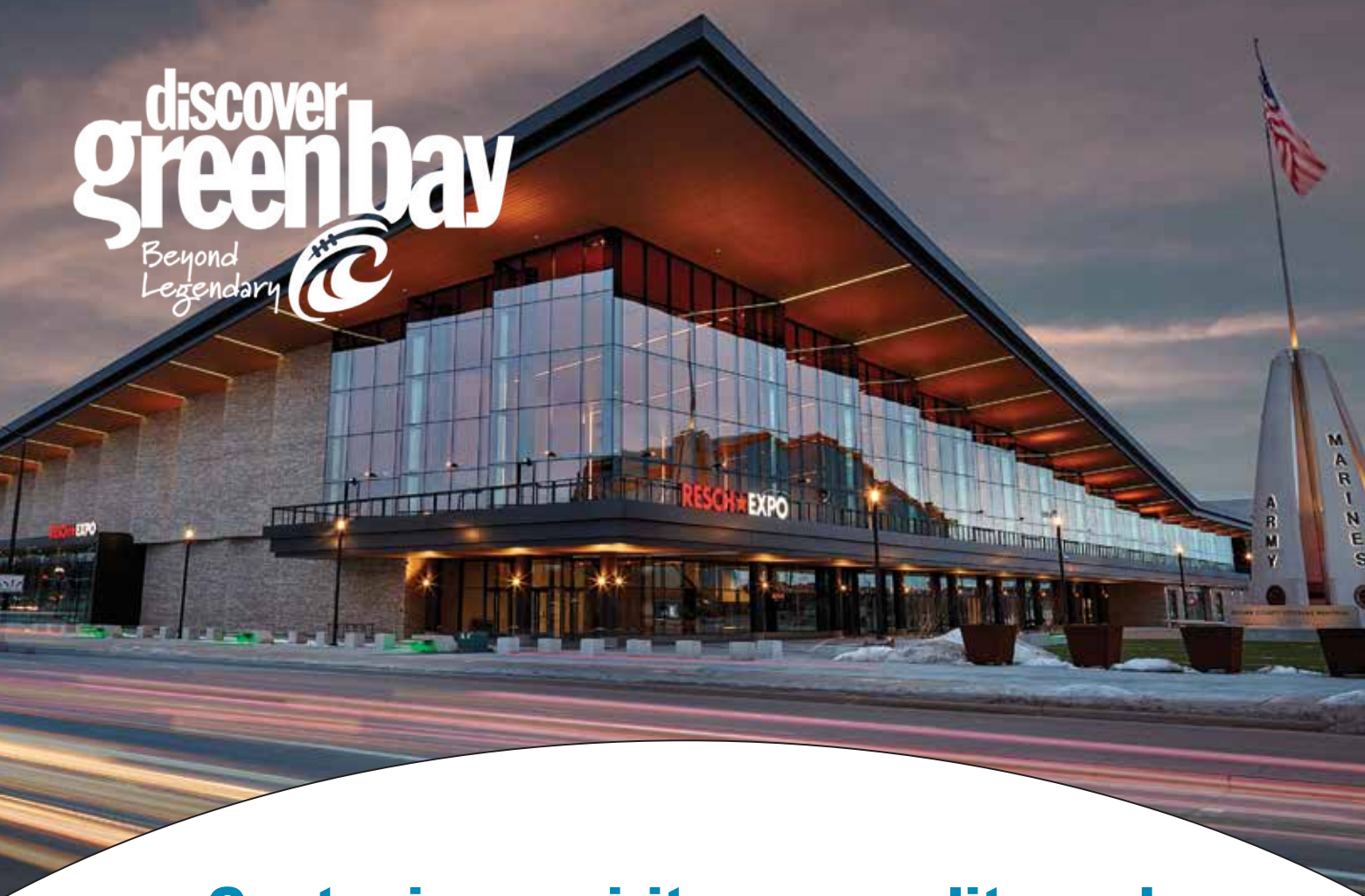
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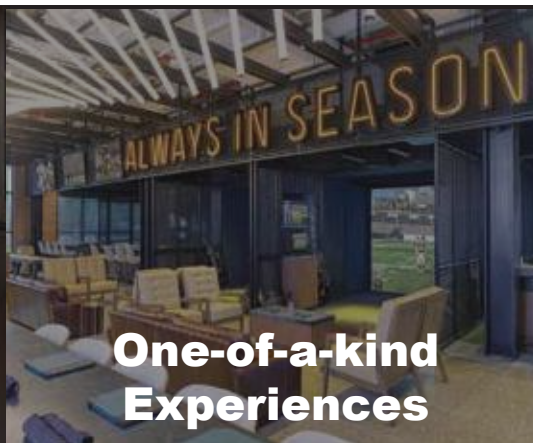
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VENUE SPOTLIGHT

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LA CROSSE CENTER GOES FROM GREAT TO GRAND

RECENT RENOVATIONS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR TRANSFORMING THE NEWLY EXPANDED CENTER.

BY SUE SVEUM

From the time it was first built in 1980, the La Crosse Center has been known as one of the Midwest's premier convention and entertainment destinations. That's no surprise considering its downtown location, nestled along the banks of the scenic Mississippi River, within walking distance of restaurants and hotels, and a short 15-minute drive from the airport.

La Crosse's prime location has always appealed to event planners in the tri-state area of Wisconsin, Iowa and Minnesota. The historic downtown has a unique charm, and the Mississippi and Black rivers add to the scenic beauty of the area, while providing a great place for boating or watersports. But if you liked the La Crosse Center before, you're going to love it now.

While the convention center has always been both fashionable and functional, some recent changes and upgrades now allow it to accommodate even more events. "The discussion began seven years ago," says Art Fahey, director of the La Crosse Center, adding that community input and careful planning went into creating a final result that was well worth it.

Completed in December 2021, the \$42 million renovation and expansion has taken the convention center to new heights — both literally and figuratively. The La Crosse Center has expanded from 90,000 to

160,000 square feet — and the amount of meeting space has grown with it. Even though the space can handle large-scale events, it doesn't exclude smaller ones. Care has been taken to create a space that can be opened up, as well as adjusted to hold multiple smaller events side by side.

The arena has undergone a full-scale upgrade and facelift with a new sound system, seating, LED lighting, HVAC, concession stands, and remodeled dressing rooms and restrooms. "We also took this opportunity to build some multipurpose suites overlooking the arena that can be closed off and used as meeting rooms," adds Fahey.

Another major area of renovation was North Hall. The original 1980 structure was completely torn down and rebuilt with two levels and higher ceilings, radiating a more modern ambiance. The new structure expands west toward the Mississippi River, where a ballroom now overlooks both the river and the city's iconic Riverside Park.

And event planners and attendees can't help but be impressed with the new ballroom. According to Fahey, the room now has more of a ballroom feel — offering plenty of meeting space and a distinctive touch of elegance.

No matter how scenic the view may be, weather can still prove unpredictable in Wisconsin. Although a skywalk to the hotel was already in place, the center decided to take it a step further. "We added an interior corridor — a walkway that wraps around the entire downtown side of the arena, so people can go from one end to the other without going outside — making it much nicer!" explains Fahey.

In addition to the functional changes to the meeting and convention spaces, the renovation also included some substantial aesthetic changes. "It's a significant upgrade," confirms Fahey. "When guests walk into our atrium lobby with its 26-foot ceilings, they'll feel like they're walking into a much larger building."

Taking sustainability into account, the upgrade also included plans for a solar field to sit atop the former ballroom space, keeping utility costs down despite the expansion. The new renovation sets the La Crosse Center apart in many new ways — making it the perfect choice for any event and that is no surprise. [WM](#)



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



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PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

NATURE'S GIFT

THE GREAT OUTDOORS IS GOOD
FOR YOUR BODY AND SOUL —
AND FOR YOUR BRAIN.

BY MOLLY ROSE TEUKE

"One of the first conditions of happiness is that the link between man and nature shall not be broken."

— Leo Tolstoy, Russian writer

Deadlines, productivity demands, information overload, COVID-19 — the world can feel overwhelming. Yet there's a simple thing you can do to help you relax, give your brain a rest and reknit the frayed edges of your psyche: Get outside. Find a forest and take a walk, or even set your weary self on a park bench for a little while. The role of nature in your personal well-being has long been acknowledged if not well-understood.

Research in recent decades has increased our awareness of the myriad benefits of getting out into nature. The list of physical outcomes is impressive: lower blood pressure, improved immune response, increased energy and longer life, among others.

In 1984, a seminal study published by environmental researcher Roger Ulrich revealed that surgical patients healed more quickly and spent fewer days in the hospital if they got outside virtually — meaning if, outside their window, they had a view of nature vs. a brick wall.

Ulrich's continued research showed, in 1993, that just a picture of nature could reduce anxiety and lessen the need for pain medication in heart surgery

patients in an intensive care unit. According to the National Institutes of Health National Library of Medicine, patients with plants in their room show lower pain intensity and pain distress, less anxiety and lower levels of fatigue.

The benefits of nature to your cognitive function are becoming as widely supported by research as the physical benefits. In 2012, researchers at the University of Kansas concluded that spending more time outdoors (without electronic devices) improved problem-solving and creativity. Others found that immersion in nature results in generally improved performance, stronger vitality, better coping skills, and greater emotional balance and resilience.

Nature boosts your ability to focus, too. In a 2008 study of the benefits of walking, subjects who walked in nature did better on a memory test than those who walked in an urban setting. A 2009 study of children with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) also showed strengthened concentration after a walk in a park compared with a walk on a downtown or neighborhood street.

According to the authors of the study, "Twenty minutes in a park setting was sufficient to elevate attention performance relative to the same amount of time in other settings." These findings, they believe, apply to the general population as well as to children. Their conclusion: "'Doses of nature' might serve as a safe, inexpensive, widely accessible new tool in the toolkit for managing ADHD symptoms."

IT'S EASY

Step outside. As long as you feel safe, simply being outdoors provides many benefits. Just the fresh air and movement are likely to make you feel better. Some 2,500 years ago, Hippocrates, known as the father of modern medicine, offered this prescription for wellness: "If you are in a bad mood, go for a walk. If you are still in a bad mood, go for another walk." Face it, everything seems easier when you're in a good mood. Besides, Hippocrates lived to be close to 100, depending on the source.


Immerse yourself. Listen to birdsong, notice how the sun plays with shadow, luxuriate in the fragrance of a carpet of pine needles. In other words, practice "forest bathing," a rough translation of the Japanese practice of "shinrin-yoku." The Forestry Department of Japan coined the term in 1982 to describe the contribution of nature therapy to a healthful lifestyle. "There is something about the environment that helps our nervous systems unwind," says Katie Asmus, a licensed psychotherapist and wilderness guide in Boulder, Colo.



FOREST BATHING DOES HAVE A FEW RULES

- Keep it aimless; have no agenda other than immersion.
- Leave your electronic devices behind.
- Pause to notice the sights and smells.
- Experience the physical sensations of being in nature — the breeze on your skin, the cushion of a forest path beneath your feet.
- It's not about hiking; the distance covered in a half-hour of forest bathing might be little more than a few yards.
- Don't skimp.

Research published in 2019 suggests that the robust benefits of nature accrue only after at least 120 minutes of exposure weekly. The good news is that it doesn't have to be all at once. Multiple short forays into nature afford as much benefit as a single two-hour experience, so long as they add up to at least two hours. The old adage about "too much of a good thing" doesn't seem to apply here.

The point is to get outside. Reap the benefits. Live the good life in the great outdoors. And if you can't get outside, look out a window or surround yourself with plants. As architect Frank Lloyd Wright wrote, "Study nature, love nature, stay close to nature. It will never fail you." 



Molly Rose Teuke has an enduring curiosity about what makes our brains tick. She offers a program through Nicolet College called Getting Your Brain

on Your Side and is a certified brain-based coach in private practice. She also hosts a weekly classical music program on WXPB-FM — proof of the power of neuroplasticity. You can reach her at mollyrose@mollyrosecoaching.com.

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All vendors should be forthright in their answers, Rohlfling adds, noting, "If they seem cagey in their responses, trust your gut."

Conversely, be reasonable about your expectations. The pandemic injects challenges into meetings and events. Worker shortages can increase labor costs. Planners may need to make do with less. "Come in with realistic expectations for what you can achieve," Rohlfling says. "It goes a long way toward determining what a successful event looks like in today's world."

CONTRACT CLAUSES

Even if staffing and capabilities seem sufficient, it's crucial to include protections in contracts with venues and vendors. "Unless you put specifics into a contract, everything they told you may be meaningless," explains Rohlfling.

The contents of the contract should depend on what's important to you. "If you ask about something and the answer is really important to you, include it in the contract," Rohlfling suggests. "Let's say they tell you, 'We know we can handle an event of your size because we have 30 people who can work it.' Make sure your contract details how many people they will provide for your event."

Later, if a labor shortage causes problems, the contract provides protection. "If the [venue or vendor] agreed to 30 workers and only supplied 20, they are in breach of contract," she says.

Rohlfling recommends paying attention to the boilerplate contract terms that are included in every contract. These terms include limitation of liability, inability to perform, indemnification and hold harmless provisions. This fine print, she says, "is really meaningful when trying to protect yourself from things that may go awry at an event."

Limitation of Liability: This clause limits vendors' liability. It might limit their liability to your deposit or the amount you paid for the event, even when the losses you suffered are far greater.

Inability to Perform: This clause gives vendors an out if they cannot perform their duties. Most of the time, these clauses cover an act of God, a war or other major disaster. But sometimes, according to Rohlfling, "the contract includes things like 'if it's not commercially feasible,' which means they may be excused for nonperformance. If it's a vendor you've worked with before or a supplier you could replace at a moment's notice, maybe you're willing to take on that risk. But if it's a main venue, that's difficult to replace."

Indemnification: These clauses shift liability between parties. Indemnity is a contractual obligation of one

LOCKING IN LABOR

HERE'S HOW TO SAFEGUARD YOUR INTERESTS IN A MEETINGS AND EVENTS WORLD PLAGUED BY LABOR SHORTAGES.

BY RONNIE WENDT

The hospitality and restaurant labor shortage is real and sparking waves of concern among planners counting on vendors to deliver a full staff for their meetings and events. Fortunately, there are ways planners can protect themselves from short-staffed venues, restaurants, caterers and other vendors, according to Jordan Rohlfling, attorney for DeWitt LLP of Wisconsin.

She recommends beginning every potential partnership with a series of questions, then incorporating the answers into the contract. For instance, ask vendors if they handled a similarly sized event recently. "If they tell you they have only done smaller events, then you need to ask if they have all the materials or staff needed to execute an event of this size, or if they'll be relying on outside parties to help," she says. "If they are contracting with another vendor, who is that vendor?"

Directly inquire about staffing levels. "How many staff does the venue or vendor expect to need? Does that number jive with your past experience?" asks Rohlfling.

Pay attention to red flags. Many venues, she says, are scaling back services because of the labor shortage. If a venue is not cleaning hotel rooms as often or notes some dining rooms are closed, it's important to ask why. "They may be dealing with labor shortages," she says, "and the answers to these questions give insight into how the vendor will execute your event."

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THE OTHER PARTY RESPONSIBLE
IF THEY CANNOT HOLD UP THEIR
END OF THE BARGAIN."**

**— JORDAN ROHLFING,
DEWITT LLP**

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party to compensate for the harm or losses incurred by the other party. They indemnify, or do not hold accountable, a party for acts they might otherwise be held accountable for.

Hold Harmless: A hold harmless agreement states that one or both parties will not hold the other party responsible for any harm or losses incurred. A well-written indemnification or hold harmless clause includes a requirement that the party agreeing to indemnify holds liability insurance that will refund any damages for which it is liable.

"It's important to understand these provisions and make sure you're comfortable with the risk as allocated," Rohlfling explains. "The bottom line is you want to have some contractual ability to hold the other party responsible if they cannot hold up their end of the bargain."

Rohlfling also recommends considering an attorney's fees provision. If you get involved in a lawsuit over a breach

of contract, this provision, if written correctly, can shift attorney's fees to the vendor. "Often these clauses are mutual, meaning that, if there is a lawsuit, the prevailing party gets its attorney's fees paid," according to Rohlfling. "That means if a planner sues a vendor because the vendor messed up, and the planner loses in court, the planner must pay the vendor's attorney's fees."

As the Omicron COVID-19 variant sweeps the nation, Rohlfling also recommends asking about the venue's contingency plan if personnel get ill before an event. "If providing labor is critical to the success of your event, you should make sure the contract says the vendor will provide a specific number of people and details the contingency plan if people get sick," she says.

AFTER THE EVENT

During an event, it's too late to find extra labor, which makes it critical to check on event staffing periodically as the event gets closer. These check-ins help ensure vendors have the full amount of labor on hand. "On

the day of your event, it's going to be tricky to rectify the issue," Rohlfling warns.

But that doesn't mean you do nothing during the event. It's important to document issues that arise over short staffing and the harm it causes. Later, send information in writing regarding any documented issues to the vendor. This documentation should be thorough and fact-based: You agreed to do X and didn't do it. Here is the harm it cost us. You need to make good on the harm you caused.

"If it's black and white that the vendor did not do what it promised, it may agree to resolve the issues in prelitigation negotiations," Rohlfling says. However, consider filing a claim in a court if you cannot resolve things in prelitigation. "If you haven't already, engage the services of a lawyer to help," she says.

But be realistic about your demands. If a vendor promised 30 workers and one got COVID-19 on the day of the event, it would be difficult to prove harm. "You need to prove that the breach of contract caused some monetary harm," she confirms.

Asking the right questions and putting specific information into a contract goes a long way toward protecting your interests when the show must go on despite third-party staffing levels. **WM**



Ronnie Wendt is a freelance writer based in Waukesha, Wis.

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— DESTINATION —

Janesville & Beloit

THESE TWO REVITALIZED COMMUNITIES
OFFER BOUNDLESS OPTIONS FOR
LARGE AND SMALL EVENTS.

By Ronnie Wendt

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*“We’ve got
small-town charm
and Midwestern
hospitality with a
big-city feel.”*

— Maria Valentyne,
ABC Supply Stadium

Boom, bust and back again. The words tell the story of two Rock River communities — Janesville and Beloit — that reside within 15 miles of each other. Both cities thrived in the early 1900s, then declined in the ‘70s and ‘80s as businesses abandoned the downtowns. It wasn’t until the new millennium that downtown revivals renewed promise in the area.

Beautification efforts lured businesses, developers and commerce back to these cities’ streets and buildings. The work ushered in a flourishing foodie scene,

boutique hotels, distinctive venues and scores of stores encouraging visitors to gather, shop, dine and stay.

Today, the cities’ offerings include a new sports venue, 1,738 hotel rooms and a roster of venues able to accommodate meetings up to 800 guests. A proposed \$405 million casino in Beloit, near the Wisconsin-Illinois border, could become the crown jewel in the revitalization, pushing the area’s meeting scene to even more impressive heights, with more hotel rooms, flexible meeting space and an entertainment venue.



While many planners opt for larger cities, Maria Valentyn, vice president of marketing and strategy for Beloit's ABC Supply Stadium, questions the logic behind it. "It's a little been there, done that," she says. "We've got small-town charm and Midwestern hospitality with a big-city feel."

BELOIT'S BEST

Beloit's revitalization began with a single person: Diane Hendricks, president of ABC Supply Company and a billionaire businessperson with a passion for civic responsibility. With her financial support

and vision, the community of 36,836 added award-winning amenities for residents, visitors and meeting-goers.

The feather in Beloit's cap is ABC Supply Stadium, the home field of the Beloit Sky Carp, the High-A Central affiliate of the Miami Marlins. The \$35 million stadium officially replaced Harry C. Pohlman Field on Aug. 3, 2021. The stadium, 20 years in the making, helped Beloit keep the baseball team in its hometown when professional baseball planned to pull it. "Pohlman was just not up to snuff," Valentyn says.

But what the old stadium lacked, the new stadium knocks out of the park. The downtown venue offers a game-day capacity of 3,500, and features a 360-degree walkable concourse, high-definition video board, right-field party deck and outfield group areas, playground and game areas for children, and a host of food and beverage offerings from Geronimo Hospitality Group.

"But this isn't just about baseball; it's about so much more," Valentyn points out. "We are an event center, available for



The Ironworks Hotel delivers upscale hotel rooms and customizable spaces for events. Planners can host a business meeting for 10 coworkers or a 200-person event in the hotel's 4,100 square feet of flexible event space and six private event rooms.

In total, Beloit offers 11 hotel properties, representing flagships like Hilton, Marriot and Best Western, in addition to unique boutique properties. "We have economy properties, mid-level hotels and upscale boutique offerings," confirms Bliss.

The Beloit Club, for example, features a large banquet room in a building brimming with character and charm, as well as three smaller spaces for groups from four to 200 attendees. Meanwhile, the Eclipse Center can host groups of 25 to 1,000. Bliss says the revitalized former mall is ideal for conferences, expos, banquets, trade shows, receptions and annual meetings.



The Powerhouse, a renovated power plant at Beloit College, is a 120,000-square-foot, multiuse facility that offers multiple meeting and event spaces, including a room with theater-style seating, a banquet hall and outdoor decks overlooking the Rock River. "The Powerhouse's workout facilities, recreational spaces and indoor field houses also can be used for events," adds Matthew Bosen, director of sales and servicing at Visit Beloit.

Beloit is also making noise with an eclectic mix of shops and restaurants. Event-goers looking for the best burgers will want to taste Lucy's #7 Burger Bar's stuffed burgers and 20 craft beers, or visit G5 Brewing Company for more traditional fare. Merrill and Houston's Steak Joint plates top-quality steaks and seafood, while truk't dishes up street tacos, tequila and whiskey. For a traditional supper club meal, visit The 615 Club, adds Bliss, noting it is "also a nice space to host a wine hour or reception."

As the downtown experienced a renaissance, Visit Beloit decided to settle in the heart of the action, transforming the former St. Paul's Catholic Church and Angel Museum building into its new home. "We are in the lower level and are now renovating the upper level," says Bliss. "When that's complete, we will have our own meeting and events space upstairs."

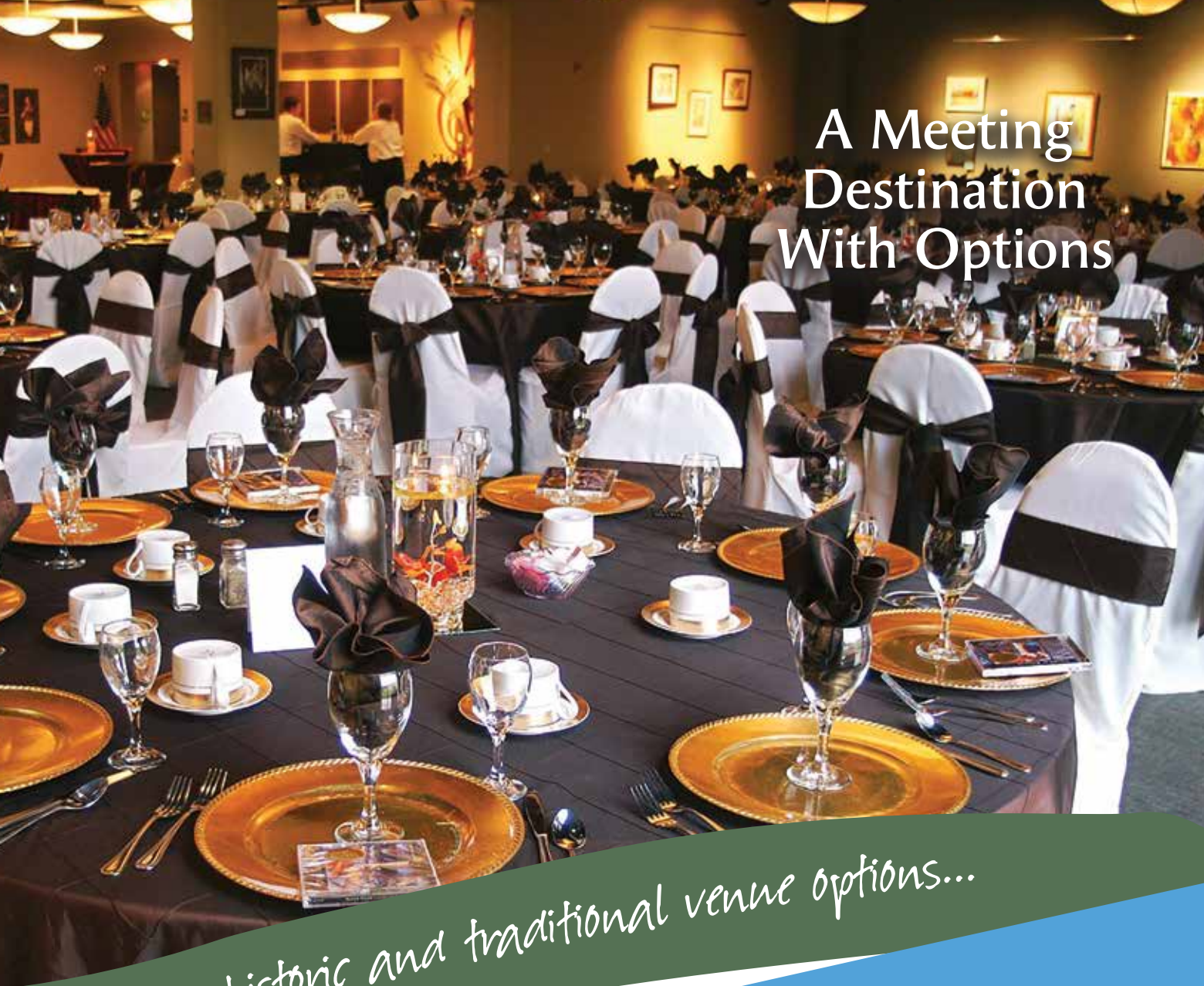
outdoor events in the summer and with beautiful indoor facilities in the winter." The indoor options for year-round events include the Beloit Health System Club for up to 250 guests, and the First National Bank and Trust group suites that can accommodate up to 100 people. Planners can also rent out the clubhouses and other rooms. In nice weather, planners can host events on the field, concourse and parking lots, too. "We can accommodate up to 3,000 people if a group wants to hold a company picnic on the field," she adds.

Planners seeking group activities need to look no further than the stadium itself. ABC Supply Stadium uses the field for outdoor concerts and movie nights in the summer, and converts it into a community ice-skating rink in the winter. For groups

looking for a novel activity, the facility offers batting practice, stadium tours and — of course — baseball games.

As Hendrick's dream for the community took shape, so did other award-winning projects, including the Ironworks Hotel and Hotel Goodwin, both of which offer meeting space. Besides 34 luxury hotel rooms, Hotel Goodwin's event spaces include The Rooftop, which accommodates gatherings up to 60 people, and The State Room, with a capacity of 14. "The Rooftop is a very popular meeting place," according to Tracy Bliss, director of marketing and public relations for Visit Beloit. "It has three glass walls with magnificent views overlooking the city and an open-air patio on one end."

A Meeting Destination With Options



Unique, historic and traditional venue options...

Pictured: Janesville Performing Arts Center

Janesville, Wisconsin's Great Outside is the ideal destination to hold your next meeting, convention or retreat. In addition to a selection of venues, Janesville also offers a variety of hotels, restaurants and attractions, including many affordable options that provide you with great value. Janesville is easily accessible - right off of I-39/90.

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JANESVILLE

Wisconsin's Great Outside



JANESVILLE'S JEWELS

Many of Janesville's treasures sit in the reimagined downtown where several redevelopment projects — the centerpiece of which being the new Town Square — revitalized the city. The Town Square features an expanded river walk, new pedestrian bridge, walking and biking enhancements, and gathering spaces for events.

Among the newest event spaces near the Town Square is The Venue. "The Venue is one of the key cornerstone redesigns of a building in our downtown," says Christine Rebout, executive director of the Janesville Area Convention & Visitors Bureau. Britten Langfoss, its general manager, is part of the family who purchased the old church in 2015 to renovate it into an events venue.

The Venue offers three distinctive rooms for events. The 2,000-square-foot Bower City Ballroom, which can hold up to 300, boasts beautifully restored wood arches, ceiling and trim to provide a lush event space. The third-floor 1870s Room features a built-in bar, original wood floors and an elaborate tin ceiling for receptions,

seminars or parties. The Second Empire Room works well for intimate gatherings or board meetings. "Pictures do not do this building justice. You walk into this space and you just say 'wow,'" says Langfoss. "It's a really unique venue."

Planners may also appreciate The Venue's spacious catering kitchen and built-in bar, state-of-the-art sound system and dance floor for rent. "We have someone on site during events to troubleshoot and coordinate everything," Langfoss adds.

Planners seeking a new experience may want to check out the Tallman Carriage House on the Lincoln-Tallman House property. The Rock County Historical Society, which owns the property, recently remodeled the three-story carriage house into a striking meeting space with modern amenities, including an elevator and audiovisual technology. "It also has a large side door that opens to host an event that uses the beautiful building and spills out onto the grounds," says Rebout.

Another standout venue is The Celtic House, offering 12,000 square feet of event space and spectacular views of Glen Erin Golf Club. This venue hosts up to 500 guests for a seated banquet and 600 for theater-style presentations. "It is a really beautiful space with side decks that open," sums up Rebout.

A distinctive, well-known event space, Rotary Botanical Gardens sits just a mile from I-90/39 and offers four individual meeting rooms (each under 600 square feet) that can be combined to host larger events. A spacious atrium treats guests to spectacular garden views.

The Janesville Conference Center in the 124-room Holiday Inn Express offers 15,000 square feet of combined, flexible meeting, exhibit, event and banquet space on one main level. The AmericInn by Wyndham Janesville also offers 6,472 square feet of event space that can accommodate up to 550 people.

The renewal of Beloit and Janesville isn't over. Both cities are working on new offerings that will continue to solidify their spots as places to gather, shop, dine and stay for years to come. **WM**



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THE BEST OF *Wisconsin* MEETINGS

Our readers have spoken: Here are your selections for the venues and vendors that exceed expectations every time.

By Carrie Mantey



*W*isconsin Meetings closes every year by recounting how the industry has changed and grown over the last 12 months. Then we start counting and tallying the results of our annual Best of Wisconsin Meetings readers' poll. Discovering our readers' choices for the best the state has to offer never disappoints and observing how sentiments shift from year to year is incredibly illuminating as priorities change.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, travel uncertainty has catapulted the importance of flexibility and the labor shortage has escalated the value of customer satisfaction. Today's suppliers must be ever more vigilant to provide fresh ideas, products, services and amenities, while offering top-of-the-line customer support. The names that follow are your selections for venues and vendors that exceed customer expectations every time. They have proven their dedication to their customers and the industry in 2021.

BEST DESTINATION IN WISCONSIN FOR MEETINGS & EVENTS

Lake Geneva, VISIT Lake Geneva

If you're looking for big-city selection and amenities for your meeting or event, but also crave small-town hospitality, look no further than Lake Geneva. The city boasts a diverse range of event spaces — hotels, resorts, mansions, museums and entertainment venues — for every situation and size. With so many choices, VISIT Lake Geneva, the area's convention and visitors bureau, will help you determine what you need for your event to create the best experience for attendees. visitlakegeneva.com





BEST LARGE CONVENTION CENTER

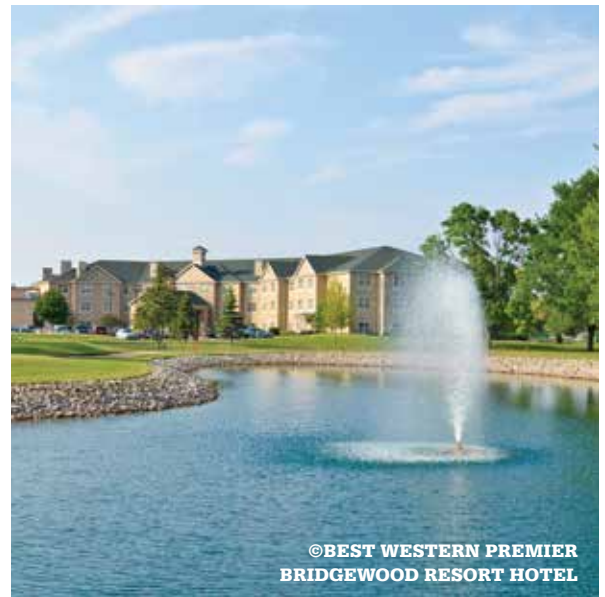
KI Convention Center, Green Bay

Owned by the city of Green Bay, and managed and operated by the Hyatt Regency Green Bay, the KI Convention Center is the largest meeting facility in northeastern Wisconsin, with nearly 80,000 square feet of stylish and flexible meeting space. Spacious enough to accommodate nearly any size group, the venue offers 35,264 square feet of exhibit space and 19 breakout rooms that can seat from 15 to 1,800 people. Its second-story windows boast waterfront and cityscape views. Connected to Hyatt Regency Green Bay, the facility is within walking distance to the downtown entertainment district and a few miles from plenty of overflow hotel rooms. kiconventioncenter.org

BEST CONFERENCE CENTER

Best Western Premier Bridgewood Resort Hotel, Neenah

According to Wisconsin Meetings readers, personalized service, white-glove clean facilities and resort amenities make the Best Western Premier Bridgewood Resort Hotel & Conference Center the ideal venue to host your next meeting or event. The Marquette Ballroom seats up to 500, the Garden Terrace up to 110, the Ballroom Patio up to 110, the Wisconsin Room up to 100, the Lewis/Clark Room up to 50, the LaSalle Room up to 40, the Nicolet or Joliet Room up to 25 and the Champlain Boardroom up to 12. Once you arrive, enjoy a dip at the Aquatic Fun Center, home to four pools, including an outdoor hot tub, or hit up the fitness center, game area, sand volleyball court, mini golf course, playground, pickleball or platform tennis courts, attached bar and grill with an expansive fire pit patio, or the complimentary bikes. bridgewoodresorthotel.com



BEST VENUE FOR MEETINGS & EVENTS

Cambria Hotel Milwaukee Downtown, Milwaukee

Cambria is a modern, chic hotel offering more than 1,800 square feet of meeting space in the heart of downtown Milwaukee. Its convenient location makes it easy for guests to network and mingle at popular nearby destinations like the Marcus Performing Arts Center, Fiserv Forum, Harley-Davidson Museum, Wisconsin Center, Miller Park, Milwaukee Art Museum and the Riverside Theater. With a customizable design, Cambria's meeting room can be used for large events of up to 205 people or divided into two 923-square-foot rooms for smaller events. Wisconsin Meetings readers say the Cambria Hotel Milwaukee Downtown prioritizes its customers above all else. choicehotels.com



BEST BOUTIQUE HOTEL PROPERTY WITH MEETING SPACE

CopperLeaf Boutique Hotel & Spa, Appleton

From the moment you step into the CopperLeaf Boutique Hotel & Spa, you recognize it is not an ordinary hotel. Modeled after small, family-owned and operated European hotels, CopperLeaf prioritizes attention to detail and personalized service in a warm, inviting and unique atmosphere. Events for small groups, ranging from four to 84 guests, are its specialty. With an executive-style table with up to 10 chairs, the Globe Boardroom is ideal for a meeting or strategic planning session. In contrast, the Autumn Room can accommodate 84 guests or be divided into two smaller rooms accommodating 42 guests each. The open floor plan allows for setup in a theater, classroom, boardroom, u-shape or banquet style. copperleafhotel.com



©COPPERLEAF BOUTIQUE HOTEL & SPA

VENUE WITH THE BEST OUTDOOR RECEPTION SPACE

Beloit Club, Beloit

Wisconsin Meetings readers say the Beloit Club is the perfect location to have an outdoor reception. The property grabs attention with its beautifully manicured grounds, towering brick manor house facade, elegant stone chimneys and acres of rolling hills. If you need to head indoors, the 24,000-square-foot clubhouse is filled with modern conveniences among centuries-old charm with four unique room options for groups ranging in size from 4 to 200 attendees. While you're here, be sure to use all of the amenities to ensure your guests maximize their meeting time, while also allowing for a fun team-building and leisure experience. beloitclub.com



©BELOIT CLUB

BEST LAKESHORE RESORT

The Osthoff Resort, Elkhart Lake

The Osthoff Resort's motto, "Your place on the lake," says it all. If a stunning lakeshore view is what you seek, this resort has one of the best, winning the same category in 2019 and 2018. Hugging 500 feet of pristine shoreline on Elkhart Lake, the Osthoff features first-class meeting and event space for groups from 10 to 1,500. It also offers 38,000 square feet of elegant function space, group and team-building activities, the restorative Aspira Spa, bicycle and watersports rentals, two outdoor swimming pools, one indoor swimming pool, two indoor whirlpools, a fitness center and all the technology required to make your meeting a success. osthoff.com



©THE OSTHOFF RESORT

BEST PROPERTY FOR A CORPORATE RETREAT

Ironworks Hotel, Beloit

Ironworks Hotel is the place for people who work hard and play hard to come together. In this industrial boutique hotel, cool iron and exposed brick are warmed by comfortable, natural finishes and expansive river views. Customizable spaces can accommodate events of all sizes — a business meeting for 10 or a 200-person banquet. For fun, guests can experience the nearby Beloit Club or head to Ironworks Golf Lab, an indoor golf entertainment facility. Come summer, head off site to truk't for street tacos and local music. Jesse Seykora, vice president of marketing, Geronimo Hospitality Group, observes, "Over the past few years, Beloit has really seen a resurgence, and has quickly become a Wisconsin destination for meetings and corporate travel." ironworkshotelbeloit.com



©IRONWORKS HOTEL



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MENOMONIE, WISCONSIN



Relax & Unwind



Located 70 miles from the Twin Cities, Menomonie has venues in varying sizes to accommodate all needs, including 9 hotels, inns, and suite lodging options. Hosting your event in Menomonie offers more than a variety of venues. It offers a unique experience for outdoor recreation and modern accommodations. From a thriving historic downtown, to the beautiful vistas from hiking spots, Menomonie offers something for everyone. Don't just plan for your event, plan a memory-making experience.

FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO EXPLOREMENOMONIE.COM

BEST CASINO WITH MEETING SPACE

Potawatomi Hotel & Casino, Milwaukee

Wisconsin Meeting readers say that Potawatomi Hotel & Casino is a win-win for holding your event or meeting at a casino. In fact, it's the sixth consecutive win for Potawatomi due, in part, to its built-in night scene with delicious dining options, gaming action and world-class entertainment. The casino offers over 60,000 square feet of meeting space. Its Events Center is the largest option, providing more than 27,000 square feet of space, whereas its Innovation boardroom is ideal for business meetings of 14 people or less with just over 600 square feet. paysbig.com



BEST GOLF COURSE/RESORT FOR AN OUTING

Thornberry Creek at Oneida, Hobart

As the official golf course of the Green Bay Packers, Thornberry Creek at Oneida offers 27 holes of championship golf at its finest just outside of Tittletown. Known for its sloping hills and graceful scenery, the course provides fun and challenging layouts. Thornberry Creek also houses a variety of event spaces that can be tailored to your group's every need — from rooms that seat 30 to a ballroom that can seat over 300. golft Thornberry.com

BEST SUPPLIER

Event Essentials, Windsor

Whether planning a modest meeting or big corporate event, Event Essentials will walk you through the rental experience to help you plan and execute an unforgettable event. Madison's premier event rental and design company rents tents, flooring, tables, seating, linen, chair covers, tableware, furniture, food service items, draping, décor, lighting and other essentials. General manager Greg Goke says, "Our staff strives daily to make every event memorable. This recognition is a testament to our hard work and dedication, and those customers and venues whom put their trust in us." eventessentials.com



BEST GROUP OUTING

Lake Geneva Cruise Line, Lake Geneva

It looks like Lake Geneva Cruise Line is in the same boat as last year with Wisconsin Meetings readers, taking the category of Best Group Outing five years in a row. If you're looking for a unique atmosphere to rejuvenate staff and impress clients, the cruise line's range of boats can offer your group a memorable lake experience on Geneva Lake. Groups can also enjoy a meal or sip cocktails while on board. Clare Mulcahy, charter sales manager, says, "We thrive on providing a rejuvenating outing that corporate families need, whether it's a simple cocktail cruise or team-building event." cruiselakegeneva.com

DESTINATION SHOWCASE: LA CROSSE

THE LA CROSSE CENTER GETS A MAJOR RENOVATION

The La Crosse Convention Center is pleased to announce the completion of its renovation and expansion project in La Crosse, Wisconsin. With 70% more functional space, new features and enhancements, it's an impressive accomplishment! Overall, the Center now offers 165,000 square feet of functional event and meeting space. With a new lobby and grand staircase, the facility greets event-goers and meeting participants with the promise to experience the magnificent.

The most notable addition to the La Crosse Center is the Riverside Ballroom with epic 21-foot ceilings and floor-to-

ceiling windows. Wrapped in glass, the Ballroom features stunning views of the Mississippi River, Black River, La Crosse River, and famous Riverside Park. The Riverside Ballroom is approximately 12,000 square feet and offers as many as seven breakout rooms. Another expansion highlight is the outdoor terrace with additional views of the renowned, 21-acre park, confluence of rivers, and Historic Downtown La Crosse below.

Of course, the La Crosse Center is most distinguished for its setting, nestled between the Mississippi River and famed, towering bluffs. Not only is the facility located in the Driftless Region, bursting with this natural topography, it resides within the heart of Downtown La Crosse as well. The site offers unparalleled access to restaurants, culture, live music, Riverside Park, and after-hour fun.

Whether planning for a convention, tradeshow, festival, meeting, or other memorable event, Explore La Crosse, alongside the La Crosse Center sales staff, are ready to assist in making the attendee experience as enjoyable as possible. From gift baskets and name badges, to hotel accommodations and scheduling regional tours, Explore La Crosse, the La Crosse County Convention and Visitors Bureau, is excited to help and welcome events back to the La Crosse Region.

For more information, visit explorelacrosse.com/meetings or lacrossecenter.com.



WELCOME TO THE LA CROSSE REGION - [EXPLORELACROSSE.COM/MEETINGS](http://explorelacrosse.com/meetings)

RESOURCE GUIDE 2022

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



©BELOIT CLUB



©LAKE GENEVA



©HOTEL GOODWIN

ACCOMMODATIONS



BLUE HARBOR RESORT & CONFERENCE CENTER

Located on the shoreline of Lake Michigan in the Harbor Centre District of Sheboygan, Blue Harbor Resort & Conference Center is the perfect spot for meeting spaces. It is also a great place to refresh your perspective for a few days! Blue Harbor Resort provides beautiful and unique indoor and outdoor meeting spaces that are customizable to your needs. The resort boasts more than 16,800 square feet of convention space, an 81' x 127' Grand Ballroom that may be partitioned into seven different style meeting spaces and has 16' ceilings and a 4,025 sq. ft. pre-function area that overlooks Lake Michigan.

725 Blue Harbor Dr., Sheboygan, WI 53081
866-701-2583 | 920-452-2900
blueharborresort.com | sales@blueharborresort.com

DINING

RECEPTION CAPACITY	[350]
PRIVATE DINING CAPACITY	[125]
TOTAL DINING CAPACITY	[544]
ON-SITE RESTAURANT	[YES]
LOUNGE / ENTERTAINMENT	[YES]

MEETING SPACE

MEETING SPACE (SQ. FT.)	[16,800]
# OF MEETING ROOMS	[10]
MEETING CAPACITY	[432]
OPEN CATERING	[NO]
ON-SITE CATERING	[YES]

OTHER

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



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800-247-6640
theinglesidehotel.com

DINING

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

MEETING SPACE

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

OTHER

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



IRONWORKS HOTEL

Featuring industrial charm and modern amenities on the banks of the Rock River, this luxury boutique hotel boasts a 19th century industrial aesthetic, reimagined with modern accents to create a unique urban lodging experience. Home to one of the area's most popular restaurants, Merrill & Houston's Steak Joint, and within walking distance of many area attractions, Ironworks Hotel Beloit is a luxury traveler's dream.

Whether it's a business meeting or special social event for 20 people, a cocktail party for 80 or a banquet for 200 people, Ironworks Hotel is a place where you can work hard, play hard and come together.

500 Pleasant St., Beloit, WI 53511
608-362-5500
ironworkshotelbeloit.com

DINING

RECEPTION CAPACITY	[200]
PRIVATE DINING CAPACITY	[200]
TOTAL DINING CAPACITY	[380]
ON-SITE RESTAURANT	[YES]
LOUNGE / ENTERTAINMENT	[YES]

MEETING SPACE

MEETING SPACE (SQ. FT.)	[4,100]
# OF MEETING ROOMS	[6]
MEETING CAPACITY	[200]
ON-SITE CATERING	[YES]

OTHER

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



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kalaharimeetings.com

DINING

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

MEETING SPACE

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

OTHER

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



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, and within 60 minutes of Milwaukee, Madison, and Rockford. Enjoy our 76' 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. 2021 Stella Award Bronze Medal Winner for Best Hotel/Resort Event Space, Midwest Region.

2400 E. Geneva St., Delavan, WI 53115
262-728-7950 | 262-728-7976
lakelawnresort.com | sales@lakelawnresort.com

DINING

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

MEETING SPACE

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

OTHER

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



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This renowned largest convention hotel in downtown Madison offers 373 guest rooms and 27,000 square feet 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. The hotel features complimentary wireless internet, underground parking and the exclusive 100-room Governor's Club with a 12th floor private lounge overlooking the Capitol.

1 W. Dayton St., Madison, WI 53703
800-356-8293
concoursehotel.com

DINING

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

MEETING SPACE

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

OTHER

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



BELOIT, WHERE BUSINESS BEGINS

Easily located at the I-39/90/43 interchange with five nearby airports, Beloit offers more than 35 unique venues to accommodate banquets, trade shows, expos, and meetings. A robust community with a memorable foodie scene, seasonal outdoor adventures, vibrant entertainment, and culturally unique arts make Beloit the perfect location for your event.

For planning assistance and information about Beloit, contact Matthew Bosen at matt@visitbeloit.com.

656 Pleasant St., Beloit, WI 53511
608-313-1366
visitbeloit.com | matt@visitbeloit.com



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Bring your team to Elkhart Lake and spread out with 38,000 square feet of beautifully designed state-of-the-art meeting spaces. Holding hybrid socially distanced meetings with Osthoff Resort's cutting-edge technology team provides the utmost in flexibility for your next meeting or group outing. The lakeside views and walkable village give your hardworking team a place to relax and recharge. Explore the great dining, shopping and outdoor recreation spaces just blocks from the conference center. Build a stronger team and a better business.

41 E. Rhine St., P.O. Box 425, Elkhart Lake, WI 53020
920-876-2385 | 877-355-4278
elkhartlake.com/meetings | kathleen@elkhartlake.com



FOX CITIES CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

Plan confidently for your next meeting or event in the Fox Cities – a place where the spirit of originality and authenticity run deep. With a wide variety of spaces and places, we have the perfect venue for any group to feel safe, comfortable, and ready to reconnect. For state-of-the-art modern and flexible event space, consider touring the Fox Cities Exhibition Center. Thoughtfully designed to highlight our region's storied history, the Center's 38,000-square foot interior is complemented by a 17,000-square foot outdoor plaza.

To learn more about special rates for 2022 and 2023 Fox Cities bookings, contact Amy Rivera at arivera@foxcities.org.

213 S. Nicolet Rd., Appleton, WI 54914
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foxcities.org | arivera@foxcities.org



GREEN BAY IS BEYOND LEGENDARY

Why take your event to just any city? Choose a location that's beyond legendary. Green Bay may be known as the smallest city to be home to a professional football team, but you'll find it's full of big-city amenities and Midwest hospitality. Your guests will be dazzled by the culture, cuisine and opportunities to explore all while hosting your event in state-of-the-art facilities that meet your every need. Your event isn't just legendary – it's beyond legendary. Choose a destination to match.

789 Armed Forces Dr., Green Bay, WI 54304
920-494-9507
greenbay.com | visitorinfo@greenbay.com



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15805 US Hwy. 63, Hayward, WI 54843
715-634-4801
haywardlakes.com | info@haywardlakes.com



JANESVILLE, WISCONSIN'S GREAT OUTSIDE — WISCONSIN'S GREAT MEETING PLACE

Our team will work with you every step of the way to ensure the best experience for you and your group, and our services are complimentary.

Janesville, Wisconsin's Great Outside features a variety of options including historic meeting locations, unique settings, and traditional venues that are sure to make your meeting distinctive and unforgettable. Conveniently located directly off I-39/90.

20 S. Main St., Ste. 11, Janesville, WI 53545
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Stay in the Know with Our Weekly E-Newsletter

Make sure you are receiving industry updates each week via email from Wisconsin Meetings to learn more about wow-worthy events, team-building opportunities, new ideas for group outings, as well as other tips and tricks for planning effective meetings and events.

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715-235-9087
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Pictured: Bullseye Golf Club overlooking the Wisconsin River.

131 Second St. N, Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494
715-422-4650 | 800-554-4484
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W5670 French Rd., Johnson Creek, WI 53038
920-699-2249
milfordhills.com

MEETING SPACE

MEETING SPACE (SQ. FT.)	[7,961]
MEETING CAPACITY	[382]
# OF MEETING ROOMS	[5]

DINING

BANQUET CAPACITY	[225]
ON-SITE CATERING	[YES]

TRADE SHOWS

FUNCTIONAL SPACE (SQ. FT.)	[7,961]
EXHIBIT SPACE (SQ. FT.)	[7,961]



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MEETING SPACE

MEETING SPACE (SQ. FT.)	[120,000]
MEETING CAPACITY	[6,000]
# OF MEETING ROOMS	[44]

DINING

BANQUET CAPACITY	[2,300]
ON-SITE CATERING	[YES]

TRADE SHOWS

FUNCTIONAL SPACE (SQ. FT.)	[75,000]
EXHIBIT SPACE (SQ. FT.)	[50,000]

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PLANNER PROFILE

EXPERIENCE LEADS TO BETTER PARTNERSHIPS

ALISON HUBER TACKLES NEW EVENT PLANNING CHALLENGES WITH A GRACE THAT CAN ONLY BE GAINED BY VARIED EXPERIENCE.

BY CARRIE MANTHEY

Acting on a suggestion from a friend, Alison Huber, current manager of travel and events at public accounting and consulting firm Baker Tilly, embarked on an event management program at Madison Area Technical College (now Madison College). She graduated in 2006. In 2009, she earned her Certified Meeting Professional designation and has since served in many roles for Meeting Professionals International, both internationally and for the Wisconsin Chapter, with seven years of board service, including as president.

"My career has actually come full circle, as I started at Virchow Krause (now Baker Tilly) in April 2006 as a training coordinator. Between leaving Virchow Krause and joining the Baker Tilly team in May 2021, I held various planning positions for Wisconsin-based associations, served as a sales manager for the Wisconsin Dells Visitor & Convention Bureau, spent time in association management and most recently worked for Fox World Travel as a program manager. In my current role, I oversee the corporate travel program and team, and am working to build our events team."

"The variety of roles has been incredibly beneficial to my career," acknowledges Huber. "They each made me a more well-rounded professional, being able to understand what it is like to work as both a supplier and planner, and more empathetic in working with clients and vendors."

Because Huber's role of travel and events manager is new to the firm, she has been working to determine how the events team will operate, while also staying busy planning various Baker Tilly events, including two large virtual events, some board meetings and a 550-person hybrid event (scheduled for early January) that flipped to virtual 12 hours before her flight departed for Las Vegas.

COVID-19 COMPLICATIONS

One of the biggest obstacles that planners, most with a few years of experience coexisting with COVID-19 now, are dealing with is uncertainty. Not only are they having to keep a pulse on pandemic sentiment and restrictions, but they're also having to worry about whether they have enough support for their events during the labor shortage. Due to compression in the event market (from so many postponed events in 2020 and 2021), securing venue space and the appropriate staffing can be onerous.

"The fear of the unknown is the biggest piece," Huber admits. "Just when we think we are turning the corner, a new variant knocks us back. Planners want to give more space for social distancing in their meeting rooms, but venues want to fill the space to previous capacities. Planners want to have meals served, but that affects the number of staff needed. You can get space and guestrooms, but will there be restaurants open for your attendees? The labor situation is something that needs to be considered. I work hard to be compassionate with my venue partners, and also ensure that my internal clients understand that it is a different climate and we need to be realistic."

To help combat uncertainty, Huber says meeting and event planners are also diversifying their skills to get more done in different ways: "From COVID officers to virtual and hybrid meeting experts, planners have had to add many skills. This year was a challenge in making last-minute adjustments to attendance protocols, ensuring the safety and comfort of our attendees, and working to understand and produce engaging and successful virtual, in-person and hybrid events."

Huber says that, when it comes to putting on a hybrid event, stakeholders need to be educated on "how virtual platforms and mobile apps can help achieve our goals, and on the nuances of hybrid and virtual events, getting them to understand we need to adjust our presentations to engage both virtual and in-person audiences."

Although digital and hybrid formats are high on the priority list now, Huber concludes, "Attendees are mostly ready to get back to in-person meetings. Planners and suppliers alike need to continue to have grace with one another as mandates, attendance counts, social distancing, etc. continue to adjust. We must remember that we need to continue to build strong partnerships and support each other to move forward." **WM**



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