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ConventionSouth

The national planners' resource for Southern destinations

OUTDOOR ESCAPES

Scenic Venues for Inspired Meetings



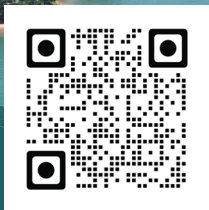
FRESH SPACES & NEW PLACES
Designed to Elevate Events

Plus: Industry Survey's Key Takeaways

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putting it in perspective

Inspired Places & Spaces

For most of us, when we need a new perspective or are seeking inspiration, a change of scenery helps us to recharge and refocus. The same approach applies to meetings as well. Planners who like to think outside the boardroom and ballroom might simply look outdoors to bring a breath of fresh air to their events. Whether it's a mountain retreat, a beachfront reception, or a team hike, natural settings and outdoor activities help attendees relax, connect, and collaborate on a different level than they would in a traditional meeting room. "Unlike traditional conference destinations, Primland blends meeting spaces with immersive mountain experiences," says Will Rentschler, general manager of The Lodge at Primland, Auberge Resorts Collection, located in Virginia's Blue Ridge Mountains. "Primland's secluded setting and expansive outdoor environment create memorable experiences that strengthen team connections and engagement." Read the cover story, beginning on page 6, to discover how The Lodge at Primland and other scenic venues are bringing an inspired backdrop to meetings.

Hotels continue to reimagine the meetings experience with new openings and newly renovated spaces. Established and new properties alike are designed with authenticity, connectivity, and productivity in mind—adding a sense of place and purpose to events. While some new designs bring a modern aesthetic, destination dining, and elevated amenities, other properties are enhancing spaces with updated guest rooms, expanded venues, and upgraded technology. Check out the hotels and resorts ready to welcome groups in our roundup on page 11.

On page 35, we examine the current industry trends revealed from our annual survey. Planners continue to choose the South for its affordability, extensive venue inventory, and rich cultural experiences—with 78.4% of respondents planning an average of 5.1 events in the South in the next 12 months. This is an increase from last year, when only 66% reported planning an average of 4 events in the South. Key areas of concern include budget restrictions, higher costs, international travel challenges, and security. In fact, 91.1% of planners indicated they are concerned about physical safety and security at their events, with 64.7% noting they are taking measures to increase physical security. Learn more about the current factors and creative solutions driving event trends in our 2026 State of the Industry Report.

Also, don't miss our 2026 Event Planners' Guides to Georgia, on page 40, and Kentucky, on page 53.

The *ConventionSouth* team will be at IMEX North America, October 13-15, at Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas. We look forward to connecting with industry professionals in person. Look for our IMEX North America coverage on **ConventionSouth.com!**



Making Meetings Matter More,

Michelle

Michelle Martin
Editor-in-Chief



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OUTDOOR ESCAPES 6

Scenic venues for inspired meetings

Courtesy The Lodge at Pimlico, Auberge Collection



Michael Kleinberg Photography

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On the cover: Groups can enjoy stargazing and outdoor adventures at Summit at Big Bend. Courtesy Summit at Big Bend

Create Lasting Connections with Iconic Experiences

A conversation with Calvin Stovall of ICONIC Presentations



Hospitality has always been the foundation of Calvin Stovall's career. He earned a master of professional studies degree from Cornell Nolan School of Hotel Administration, beginning as a front desk clerk at a Holiday Inn in downtown Chicago before moving to Hilton Worldwide as vice president of brand marketing for Homewood Suites by Hilton. As Stovall examined the industry

and explored why certain brands remain relevant while others fade away, the journey inspired him to branch out on his own as founder of ICONIC Presentations LLC.

Here, Stovall shares how his ICONIC Framework™ helps destinations and planners create iconic event experiences and lasting connections for attendees.

How does your hospitality background help you in collaborating with CVBs, tourism representatives, and meeting and event planners?

Hospitality teaches you to see an experience through the customer's eyes. That perspective is invaluable when working with CVBs, tourism professionals, and meeting planners because we're all ultimately trying to create experiences people value, remember, and share with their friends, family, and colleagues.

My background causes me to look beyond logistics and ask: "What does the visitor, guest, or attendee experience from arrival to departure? What makes this destination distinctive? Where can we create emotional connections? What story will attendees tell when they return home?"

People may not remember every detail of an event or destination, but they remember how an experience made them feel—that's where hospitality becomes incredibly powerful.

What are the four pillars of the ICONIC Framework, and how do they apply to the meetings industry?

Be Unique: Become inimitable, defining your purpose and amplifying your story. For destinations, this means understanding what you offer that can't be replicated elsewhere.

Be Authentic: Create emotional connections, immerse yourself in the customer experience, and maximize every interaction.

Be Passionate: "Own it. Live it. Love it." This involves engaging, empowering, and inspiring the people (including staff, board members, and volunteers) responsible for delivering the experience.

Be Consistent: Continually reinforce what matters most while remaining committed to innovation and curiosity. Staying relevant requires evolving without losing the essence of who or what you are.

Together, these principles can transform an event or meeting from something people simply attend into an experience they remember.

What makes a destination iconic, and what role do iconic destinations play in creating memorable meetings?

Being iconic isn't necessarily about being the biggest, most celebrated, or most luxurious destination. It's about being distinctive, relevant, and memorable.

Iconic destinations understand who they are. They know their story, embrace what makes them unique, and deliver that experience authentically and consistently. Their distinction might be history, music, food, architecture, culture, people, natural beauty, or a unique spirit of hospitality.

For meetings, the destination should become more than a backdrop—it should become part of the experience. Attendees then remember not only the conference but also where they were, what they discovered, how they felt, and the stories they took home.

What do destinations sometimes overlook that could create iconic appeal for planners and visitors alike?

Sometimes destinations overlook the very things that make them special because those things have become so familiar to the people who live there. It might be a neighborhood, local restaurant, cultural tradition, historic site, music legacy, an entrepreneur, an artist, or a compelling untold story.

I encourage destinations to ask one simple question: "What can someone experience here that they cannot experience anywhere else?" The answers often reveal opportunities hiding in plain sight. When destinations uncover distinctive assets, amplify their stories, and authentically incorporate them into the visitor experience, they create emotional connections that can become a powerful competitive advantage.

Why is it important for meeting planners to seek iconic destinations and incorporate a destination's iconic characteristics into their event programming?

Attendees want more than an agenda—they want an *experience*. Incorporating a destination's unique characteristics into event programming creates a stronger sense of place while offering opportunities for discovery and connection.

That could mean incorporating local cuisine, music, history, artists, entrepreneurs, cultural institutions, neighborhoods, or community voices. These experiences don't have to be elaborate; they need to be intentional and authentic.

Instead of attendees leaving saying, "I attended a conference in this city," imagine them saying, "I experienced this city."

Great meetings provide valuable content. Iconic meetings combine that content with uniqueness, authenticity, passion, consistency, and a genuine sense of place. When attendees leave with an emotional connection and stories they can't wait to share, you've created more than a successful meeting. You've created an iconic experience. 🍷

OUTDOOR ESCAPES

Discover some of the South's most scenic natural settings for meetings



SheHeWe Photography

By Paige Townley

The right venue sets the tone for every meeting, and few settings are more inspiring than the great outdoors. Whether overlooking sugar-white beaches, perched on the shores of a tranquil lake, nestled among mountain peaks, or surrounded by towering pines, natural venues offer a refreshing change of scenery and help attendees relax, reconnect, and engage. In nature, the best meeting experiences don't end with the last session; the real adventure is just beginning, as planners and attendees alike embrace the beauty, wonder, and inspiration of natural settings.

Along the shore

Beaches are always top of mind for meetings and events. Beyond the natural beauty and coastal atmosphere, beachfront venues offer a setting where attendees can easily enjoy an experience

beyond the meeting room. "For planners seeking a destination where nature enhances the meeting experience, Alabama's Beaches deliver something truly special," says Michelle Russ, vice president of sales for Gulf Shores & Orange Beach Tourism. "Our natural white-sand beaches and diverse coastal ecosystems create a setting that encourages both productivity and relaxation. The beach itself is a powerful attendance driver, but what keeps groups coming back is the opportunity to blend meaningful meeting time with outdoor experiences."

Among the Alabama Gulf Coast's standout meeting destinations, The Lodge at Gulf State Park blends into its 6,000-acre natural surroundings, offering 350 guest rooms, more than 40,000 square feet of flexible meeting space, and Gulf views from its signature ballroom and outdoor Dunes Terrace. Just

down the coast, Perdido Beach Resort pairs more than 30,000 square feet of meeting space with beachfront event decks and a full-service resort experience.

Nearby, the 132-room SpringHill Suites by Marriott at The Wharf serves as an ideal home base for groups, with three light-filled meeting rooms overlooking the marina and convenient access to larger gatherings at The Wharf Event Center. Just minutes from the beach and steps from Gulf State Park's trail system, attendees can easily transition from meetings to dolphin cruises, catamaran rentals, bike rides, waterfront dining, or sunset excursions departing directly from the marina. "Being just minutes from the beach, we're miles from the stress," says Michelle Davis, general manager. "My favorite activities for groups are the sunset dolphin cruises, but we can also help

groups shuttle back and forth to the beach—just five miles down the road—to enjoy the beauty of the Gulf Coast."

At the beachfront Island House Hotel, each of the 161 Gulf-front guest rooms features a private balcony overlooking the water. Flexible meeting facilities can accommodate groups of up to 200, and an outdoor venue adjacent to the Gulf Room is ideal for receptions and networking events. According to Victoria Branch, director of sales, the boutique-style property makes it easy for attendees to park, stay, meet, dine, and unwind all in one place. "Private beach access makes it easy for guests to enjoy a walk along the shore, relax between sessions, or unwind after a productive day of meetings," she says. "The peaceful coastal setting creates a refreshing atmosphere that inspires creativity, encourages connection, and leaves attendees feeling rejuvenated."

Beyond Island House Hotel's meeting rooms, planners can round out the agenda with beach outings, kayaking, dolphin cruises, and fishing charters. "These outdoor experiences provide an excellent balance to a productive meeting schedule while giving attendees a true taste of the destination," Branch adds. "One of the most popular group activities is a dolphin cruise through the Intracoastal Waterway, offering guests a unique perspective of Orange Beach from the water."

Groups seeking a more residential-style experience will find plenty of flexibility at Caribe Resort, where spacious condominium accommodations, a 7,000-square-foot event venue, an onsite marina, and easy access to fishing charters, dolphin cruises, and other water excursions create a memorable backdrop.

For groups looking for a more resort-style escape, The Beach Club offers renovated meeting space alongside Gulf-front condominiums and cottages. Beach campfires, walking trails through the adjacent wildlife refuge, pickleball, tennis, and a full-service spa provide plenty of opportunities to unwind. "Groups can go offsite for water activities like offshore fishing and sailboat rides, but there's so much to do here as a full-service resort that guests don't have to leave the property during their entire stay," says Ashlee Lowry, director of marketing. "Attendees who bring their families can also take advantage of nightly kids' activities."

Kiva Dunes' 3,000 feet of private beach, championship golf course, and beach houses,

COVER STORY



Courtesy Caribe Resort

Caribe Resort's spacious condominium accommodations, 7,000 square feet of meeting space, onsite marina, and easy access to dolphin cruises and other water excursions offer a relaxing coastal setting for inspired meetings along Alabama's beaches.



Courtesy Natchez Trace Compact

Planners can incorporate the scenic beauty of the 444-mile Natchez Trace Parkway into their event agendas.

condominiums, and lodge accommodations make it a favorite for smaller gatherings, incentive trips, and golf-focused retreats. "For more than 25 years, Mississippi Farm Bureau has rewarded its top-performing agents with an incentive trip to Kiva Dunes, and it has become one of our most anticipated traditions," says Caleb Tillman, associate state sales manager for Mississippi Farm Bureau. "The experience has created lasting memories and become a reward our agents strive to earn each year."

By the bay

Not every waterfront meeting destination is defined by the beach. Along the Chesapeake Bay, expansive waterways, picturesque marinas, and centuries-old coastal towns provide a picturesque setting for meetings and events.

Nestled on 220-plus acres overlooking the Chesapeake Bay on Maryland's Eastern Shore, Kent Island Resort offers a natural setting where nature is woven into every part of the meeting experience. With 16,700 square feet of event space across nine venues,

Courtesy Kent Island Resort

Set on more than 220 acres overlooking the Chesapeake Bay, Kent Island Resort features 16,700 square feet of meeting space.



Courtesy The Lodge at Primland, Auberge Collection

The Lodge at Primland, Auberge Collection provides a retreat experience in Virginia's Blue Ridge Mountains.



the resort accommodates everything from executive retreats to gatherings of 250 in its open-air, climate-controlled pavilion. Attendees move between meeting rooms, patios, and waterfront spaces via scenic brick walkways that encourage a connection with nature. “You’re not stuck inside a convention hall looking out a window,” says Carlie DuLac, dual property director of business development. “You can enjoy the sunshine. It’s very much grounded in nature.”

The property’s waterfront setting makes it easy to build the outdoors into the agenda, whether through kayaking, paddleboarding,

sunrise yoga, paint-and-sip sessions by the bay, or a friendly round of Splash City Golf, where participants hit biodegradable golf balls from the dock toward floating targets. Even simple moments—an afternoon nature walk, s’mores around the firepit, or spotting deer grazing in the surrounding fields—become part of the experience. “You can go fishing off the dock, see deer, and then watch the fox run over the grounds at the end of the day,” DuLac adds. “It’s always so special to see groups enjoy it.”

Chesapeake Bay Beach Club provides the best of both worlds, with waterfront gathering spaces and garden-inspired accommodations

just steps apart. The full-service destination offers 109 guest rooms across its hotel properties, along with a collection of flexible meeting venues ranging from boardrooms and intimate event spaces to a waterfront ballroom accommodating up to 300 attendees. “Our planners and groups really love that they get to move around from one building to the other,” says Carrie Simmons, vice president of strategy and brand management. “They get to change the scenery and then the views.”

The waterfront setting naturally lends itself to memorable group experiences, with expansive lawns suitable for teambuilding activities, cocktail receptions, and breakout sessions overlooking the bay. Groups can take to the water for fishing charters, kayaking, and paddleboarding, or put their creativity to the test during the resort’s popular build-a-boat challenge, where teams use cardboard, pool noodles, duct tape, and other provided materials to construct a vessel capable of making it across the bay without sinking. “We really try to make it authentic to the area,” Simmons says, “so guests can experience the destination without ever leaving the property.”

With 400 guest rooms and more than 85,000 square feet of outdoor event space, Hyatt Regency Chesapeake Bay Golf Resort, Spa and Marina offers groups plenty of room to gather while embracing the region’s natural beauty. Set along the Choptank River, the resort combines waterfront meeting venues and event spaces with unique outdoor experiences. Groups can participate in oyster cage construction activities to support the local ecosystem or in the “Feed the Fishes” program; this fun approach to feeding allows participants to hit biodegradable fish-food balls into the water, much like hitting a golf ball. Attendees can also explore the resort’s 18-acre Blue Heron Rookery, a wildlife refuge that’s home to a variety of birds, paddle nearby waterways, or venture to the renowned Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge. “Our resort’s location in Cambridge is an incredible destination to explore the outdoors year-round,” says Cari Ruppert, director of sales. “Guests can easily experience the area by land or by boat.”

Into the mountains

For groups looking beyond shorelines, the scenic views, fresh air, and outdoor experiences of mountain destinations strike the perfect balance for inspired meetings.

Set on 12,000 private acres in Virginia’s Blue Ridge Mountains, The Lodge at Primland, Auberge Resorts Collection offers a secluded, luxurious retreat.



Kayaking is a fun teambuilding option that allows groups to enjoy Alabama's natural surroundings.

Set on 12,000 private acres in Virginia’s Blue Ridge Mountains, The Lodge at Primland, Auberge Resorts Collection offers a secluded, luxurious retreat. The resort’s 54 accommodations and flexible indoor and outdoor gathering spaces are surrounded by beautiful mountains. Outdoor venues are among the property’s most popular gathering spaces, according to Will Rentschler, general manager, with terraces and scenic overlooks providing dramatic settings for welcome receptions, networking events, cocktail hours, private dinners, and fireside gatherings. “Unlike traditional conference destinations, Primland blends meeting spaces with immersive mountain experiences,” Rentschler says. “Primland’s secluded setting and expansive outdoor environment create memorable experiences that strengthen team connections and engagement.”

Primland also makes it easy for groups to build adventure into their agendas, with golf, horseback riding, RTV adventures, sporting clays, fly fishing, and stargazing at the property’s observatory. “The combination of luxury accommodations, elevated dining, outdoor adventure, and flexible meeting venues allows organizations to create programs that feel both productive and memorable,” Rentschler adds.

Out on the range

Ranch retreats offer an alternative to traditional meeting destinations for groups seeking wide-open spaces. These scenic settings, surrounded by rolling landscapes and outdoor recreation, encourage attendees to disconnect from daily distractions and experience the destination’s natural beauty.

Situated on 1,000 private acres between Big Bend National Park and Big Bend Ranch State Park, Summit at Big Bend offers 42 stargazing and deluxe domes, cave accommodations, and flexible gathering areas where meetings can unfold against a backdrop of West Texas mountains. “We want to get people in nature but have them still be comfortable,” says Brent Pickette, co-owner.

The property offers many options for groups to build adventure into the agenda. Guided hikes, Rio Grande rafting trips, ATV excursions, horseback riding, mountain biking, and nearby golf at Lajitas Golf Resort give attendees the opportunity to experience one of Texas’ most dramatic landscapes firsthand.

Tucked away on 9,000 acres in the Texas Hill Country is Rough Creek Lodge, Resort & Ranch, located 75 minutes from downtown Fort Worth and 90 minutes southwest of downtown Dallas. The property has 52 guest rooms, four cabins, and approximately 15

private residences. Its flexible meeting spaces, including the 3,600-square-foot Pavilion, accommodate everything from executive retreats to corporate gatherings. Floor-to-ceiling windows in the main meeting rooms frame the surrounding landscape, ensuring attendees remain connected to the ranch’s natural beauty even while indoors.

Beyond the meeting agenda, Rough Creek Lodge, Resort & Ranch offers more than 80 activities. The signature Rough Creek Challenge leads teams through a series of friendly competitions—including archery, sporting clays, tomahawk throwing, pickleball, and more—while horseback riding, fishing, ziplining, hiking, and shooting sports provide additional ways to enjoy the outdoors. “People choose us because there’s so much to do here,” says Christy Lemons, director of sales. “You’re away from the hustle and bustle of the city, surrounded by nature, with incredible food and activities that keep everyone together.”

Set on 300 acres of a historic Texas ranch, the 522-room Hyatt Regency Hill Country Resort & Spa combines the charm of the Hill Country with the convenience of a full-service meetings destination. Following a \$100 million-plus renovation, the resort now offers more than 100,000 square feet of flexible meeting space, including the

Courtesy Gulf Shores & Orange Beach Tourism



Set on 300 acres, the 522-room Hyatt Regency Hill Country Resort & Spa combines the charm of a Texas ranch with the modern convenience of more than 100,000 square feet of meeting space and resort amenities.



Chesapeake Bay Beach Club's waterfront venues and expansive lawns are ideal for receptions, breakout sessions, and teambuilding activities.

new Rancher Hall overlooking its 2.2-acre recreation lagoon, The Big Spring, where glass windows and doors bring the outdoors into every gathering. Groups can also set up in the 20,200-square-foot Independence Ballroom or the 13,590-square-foot Hill Country Ballroom before taking advantage of the resort's championship golf, kayaking and paddleboarding on the lagoon, Toptracer driving range, bicycle rentals, and a five-acre waterpark with a Texas-style lazy river. "Guests can also join Ranger Sean, our onsite naturalist, to learn more about the unique black rock squirrels, Egyptian geese, and other animals that are regularly seen around the resort," adds Laura Ashley Hardaway, director of events.

Along the trails

Unlike a traditional meeting destination centered around a single resort or convention center, the Natchez Trace Parkway invites groups to experience an entire region. Stretching 444 miles through Mississippi, Alabama, and Tennessee, the nationally

designated scenic byway connects a collection of welcoming gateway communities, allowing planners to craft itineraries that blend productive meetings with scenic beauty, outdoor recreation, and rich history. "The Parkway itself is the experience," says Kim Foster, executive director of the Natchez Trace Compact. "It provides an incredible backdrop for meetings and retreats, and the surrounding communities offer the accommodations, dining, attractions, and venues that round out a memorable itinerary."

At the Parkway's southern gateway, Mississippi River bluff views, a walkable downtown, historic charm, and flexible meeting facilities encourage attendees to explore Natchez Trace between sessions. Groups can gather for sunset receptions overlooking the river, begin the day with yoga or guided bike rides along the bluffs, or venture onto the Trace itself before returning downtown for dining and entertainment.

Farther north, Tupelo—home to the Natchez Trace Parkway Visitor Center headquarters—offers another ideal base for groups, with more

than 61,000 square feet of meeting space at Huntington Bank Arena & Conference Center, more than 2,200 hotel rooms, and easy access to one of the Parkway's most-visited gateways. Along the way, planners can incorporate a wide range of offerings, such as ranger-led programs, guided hikes, cycling excursions, birdwatching, fishing, stargazing, or simply a leisurely drive along one of America's most-celebrated scenic roads.

"One thing that resonates with meeting planners is that the Natchez Trace allows attendees to step away from the traditional conference setting and genuinely connect with one another," Foster adds. "Rather than serving as the meeting venue itself, the Natchez Trace becomes the experience, transforming a traditional meeting into something attendees will remember long after they return home."

A landscape like no other

Nature takes on an entirely different look at Graystone Quarry, just south of Franklin, Tenn. Once an abandoned limestone quarry, the 150-acre property in Williamson County now pairs dramatic cliffs, waterfalls, forests, and a quarry lake with flexible event spaces designed for everything from executive retreats to large-scale gatherings.

The 10,000-square-foot Gathering Hall is a lodge-inspired venue featuring a patio overlooking the waterfall, while the adjacent FirstBank Amphitheater is ideal for large-scale programs. For smaller meetings or breakouts, flexible event spaces throughout the property create a unique setting for workshops and daytime meetings.

According to Sarah Erickson, content marketing manager for Visit Franklin, Williamson County offers more than 70 hotels and approximately 6,500 guest rooms. Graystone Quarry is conveniently located just minutes from Interstate 65, Interstate 840, Nashville International Airport (BNA), and downtown attractions.

"Franklin also offers plenty of opportunities for groups to extend their experience, such as exploring Williamson County's agritourism scene and outdoor adventures like horseback riding, kayaking, mountain biking, and hot-air balloon rides," Erickson adds. "Graystone Quarry offers an experience that's hard to replicate at a traditional hotel or convention center. While the scenery feels secluded, the venue is equipped with everything planners need." 🌿

FRESH SPACES & NEW PLACES

Discover the latest hotel openings and renovations ready to welcome meetings and events across the South



The Compton Bentonville

By Helen Jacob

Across the South, meetings are getting a fresh set of addresses—some brand-new, others thoughtfully reimagined. From waterfront resorts and urban boutiques to historic inns and mountain retreats, this year's openings and renovations give planners more ways to match a program with its destination. New hotels are bringing flexible ballrooms, rooftop gathering spaces, destination dining, and wellness amenities. Meanwhile, landmark properties are pairing preserved architecture with updated guest rooms, event venues, and technology, proving that a sense of history can still meet the needs of today's groups.

Whether the agenda calls for a citywide convention, an executive retreat, an incentive escape, or an intimate board meeting, these properties offer settings designed to make the experience memorable long after the session ends. Read on for a look at some of the region's newest and refreshed hotels and resorts, each ready to welcome groups with its distinct take on Southern hospitality. Visit [ConventionSouth.com](https://www.conventionsouth.com) for our expanded coverage of new and renovated properties.

ALABAMA

The Fairhope Hotel | Fairhope

Originally built in 1925, The Fairhope Hotel opened in July 2026 following an extensive historic renovation. The two-story boutique property preserves defining details, including original heart-pine floors, transom windows, and its signature wraparound porch. Intimate in scale,

The Fairhope Hotel features six thoughtfully designed guest rooms, welcoming common spaces, restored outdoor areas, and onsite guest parking. Each room features a private bath, while custom cypress beds and locally inspired details add a distinctive Fairhope touch.

Located in Fairhope's Bayfront Historic District, the hotel is within walking distance of downtown boutiques, galleries, restaurants, and the Mobile Bay waterfront.

ARKANSAS

The Compton Bentonville

Opened in December 2025, The Compton Bentonville is a 142-room independent boutique hotel on the city's historic square, named for conservationist Dr. Neil Compton. The six-story property combines nature-inspired design with an artful, community-focused atmosphere and 14,735 square feet of event space, giving groups plenty of room to gather, connect, and celebrate.

Meeting options include the Dogwood Ballroom, a divisible space with floor-to-ceiling windows, and The Gallery, an art-forward event space with a private entrance. Additional pre-function and smaller gathering spaces round out the meeting portfolio, with catering, audiovisual support, and room blocks available for groups.

For dining, Field Notes is an all-day café with patio seating, Sestina serves Tuscan-inspired steakhouse fare, and The Eddy is a cocktail bar overlooking downtown.



Guest amenities include a 24-hour fitness center, bike valet and secure storage, water stations on every floor, and in-room wellness touches, such as yoga mats and foam rollers.

FLORIDA
Hilton Key West Resort & Marina

Hilton Key West Resort & Marina made its debut in July 2026, on 20 waterfront acres on Stock Island, following the conversion of the former Ocean’s Edge Resort & Marina. The 175-room resort features 86 suites, each with a private furnished balcony overlooking the marina or Atlantic Ocean, along with direct marina access for boating and fishing. Guests can enjoy six saltwater pools, paddleboards, kayaks, bicycles, yoga classes, and complimentary shuttle service to Old Town Key West. Dining options include Yellowfin Bar & Kitchen and Ocean’s Edge Café. For meetings and events, the resort offers flexible indoor and outdoor space, including a 570-square-foot boardroom and a 1,140-square-foot outdoor patio.

The brand conversion includes enhancements to guest rooms, resort amenities, and the addition of a new Tiki Event Pavilion. The resort combines a relaxed coastal aesthetic with waterfront amenities and convenient access to Key West attractions.

Delano Miami Beach
Delano Miami Beach reopened in South Beach in May 2026, following a comprehensive reimagining that restores its Art Deco character while adding new dining, wellness, and social experiences. The hotel offers 171 guest rooms and suites, including two-story poolside bungalows and two 14th-floor penthouses. Each penthouse has three king beds, a private terrace, a kitchen, and a dining area; together, the two penthouses create a seven-bedroom, full-floor option suited to intimate, high-profile events.

The hotel hosts celebrations, meetings, and private events in its distinct indoor and outdoor venues, including its two restaurants, bar, and café. Gigi Rigolatto spans the first floor to the beach, with indoor dining, terrace seating, poolside tables, and beach cabanas. Mimi Kakushi, a 1920s Osaka-inspired Japanese restaurant, is available to hotel guests and Delano Members Club members. Other highlights include the restored Delano Pool, Rose Bar, Café Delano, and beach club. The Source by Delano wellness concept is expected to open soon.



Royal Palm South Beach | Miami
Royal Palm South Beach reopened in July 2026 following a \$100 million-plus, 15-month transformation of the historic 1939 hotel. The comprehensive project renovated all 393 existing guest rooms and suites, added 11 new guest rooms, and refreshed the three oceanfront towers—East, West, and Lanai—along with the lobby and arrival experience, public spaces, pool, and beachfront amenities. Four new F&B concepts were also introduced.

For meeting planners, the renovation modernized and expanded the property’s event offerings to approximately 20,000 square feet of indoor and outdoor space. The property includes seven meeting rooms, the 2,882-square-foot Flagler Ballroom, and two outdoor venues. The ballroom accommodates up to 300 guests for receptions and can be divided for concurrent sessions or breakouts. Outdoor options include the 2,800-square-foot Ocean Breezeway, accommodating up to 500 reception guests, and newly activated terraces that extend events outdoors. The property also offers an in-house audiovisual team, direct beach access, a private pool, and four new dining concepts.

Naples Beach Club, A Four Seasons Resort
Naples Beach Club, A Four Seasons Resort opened in November 2025 on 125 acres along the Gulf. The new resort pairs Four Seasons service with a relaxed coastal aesthetic, 220 accommodations, and a wide-ranging collection of amenities.

Meeting planners have 35,231 square feet of event space to work with, including the 4,390-square-foot Poinciana Ballroom, which accommodates up to 400 guests for receptions. The divisible ballroom can be paired with the Poinciana Terrace, while additional indoor and outdoor venues provide options for smaller meetings, receptions, and private events.

The resort’s new Market Square serves as a lively hub for casual dining and activities, while five restaurants and bars offer everything from beachfront fare at HB’s to polished dining at The Merchant Room. Guests can also enjoy two resort pools, a 13-treatment-room spa, a 24-hour fitness center, six Har-Tru tennis courts, a kids’ club, and a 1,000-foot stretch of white-sand beach.

GEORGIA
The Lawrence Hotel | Lawrenceville

The Lawrence Hotel opened in August 2026 as the first upscale, boutique, full-service hotel in downtown Lawrenceville and Gwinnett County.



A Hilton Tapestry property developed and managed by NorthPointe Hospitality Management & Development, the four-story hotel features 120 guest rooms and suites and is designed to anchor the community’s growing arts, culture, dining, and entertainment scene. For meetings and events, The Lawrence offers more than 6,000 square feet of indoor and outdoor space, accommodating groups of up to 260 guests. Onsite meeting planners, curated menus, and elevated culinary and bar experiences support corporate and social gatherings. The property also features two dining concepts, a fitness center, and an outdoor courtyard with firepits and intimate seating areas.

The hotel’s design mixes contemporary style with industrial character, incorporating brick, wrought-iron accents, wood, stone, and leather. Its location, less than a block from the Aurora Theatre and steps from downtown restaurants and attractions, gives groups easy access to Lawrenceville’s vibrant community.

KENTUCKY
Hotel Thoroughbred | Paris

Hotel Thoroughbred is a boutique hotel rooted in the region’s horse-country heritage. The 19-room property opened in March 2026, and is part of a downtown redevelopment effort that transforms historic structures into lodging, dining, and gathering destinations. Hotel Thoroughbred is positioned for intimate meetings, retreats, private dinners, and social events. The hotel’s event center provides a dedicated setting for groups, while the hotel’s smaller scale makes it particularly well-suited to buyouts and gatherings where attendees can stay close together.

The property’s location in downtown Paris also gives groups access to Bourbon Trail experiences, horse farms, local restaurants, and historic attractions. Guest accommodations are complemented by hospitality and gathering spaces designed to encourage guests to linger rather than simply pass through.

LOUISIANA
Coushatta Casino Resort | Kinder
Coushatta Casino Resort has expanded its lodging options with the opening of Legacy Tower, adding 204 guest rooms and suites to Louisiana’s largest casino resort. The new tower, which opened in May 2026, includes 100 luxury suites and brings the resort’s total room inventory to more than 1,000.



The Legacy Tower is directly connected to the resort’s gaming floor, creating an easy flow between the new accommodations and the existing resort complex. Guests can also take advantage of the resort’s restaurants, golf course, entertainment, spa, pool, and other recreational amenities. Coushatta’s meeting infrastructure includes flexible function space, banquet facilities, entertainment venues, dining, and casino amenities, allowing groups to combine business with recreation without leaving the property.

MARYLAND
Four Seasons Hotel Baltimore

Four Seasons Hotel Baltimore completed the first phase of a multi-phase renovation earlier this year, giving meeting planners refreshed spaces for gatherings in Baltimore’s Harbor East. The transformation includes the hotel’s Grand Ballroom, Cobalt Ballroom, eight meeting rooms, boardroom, and public areas, all reimaged by Boston-based Parker-Torres Design Inc. Inspired by Baltimore’s Inner Harbor, the new design features navy blues, warm camel and brown tones, crisp ivory, water-inspired patterns, custom chandeliers, and artwork by local artists. The hotel remains fully operational as additional phases continue across its 256 guest rooms, including 45 suites.

The property offers more than 20,000 square feet of meeting and event space, along with waterfront gathering areas, a spa, a fitness center, restaurants, and in-room dining. Its Harbor East location puts groups within walking distance of the National Aquarium, dining, and entertainment, providing a convenient setting that combines refreshed event spaces, waterfront views, and access to Baltimore attractions.

MISSISSIPPI
IP Casino Resort Spa | Biloxi

IP Casino Resort Spa in Biloxi unveiled its newly renovated 963 standard hotel rooms earlier this year. Inspired by the timeless beauty of the Gulf Coast, the redesigned 330-square-foot guest rooms and corridors feature an elegant yet relaxed coastal aesthetic. Guest-room corridors incorporate a dramatic ribbon of sand and foamy surf woven through the center of the carpet, while guest rooms feature upscale custom artwork, pale wood furnishings with stone tops, and refreshed bathrooms with spacious showers, granite-topped vanities, and illuminated mirrors.

Courtesy The Cooper



The Cooper

accommodate up to 70 and can be configured for smaller meetings, trainings, or breakout sessions. For added convenience, the hotel also offers onsite catering and a business center.

Guest amenities include an onsite restaurant and bar, an indoor pool, a hot tub, a fitness center, and outdoor patio areas.

The hotel is within 10 miles of downtown Kansas City, CPKC Stadium, and River Market.

NORTH CAROLINA

The Balladeer Hotel, a Tribute Portfolio Hotel | Mount Airy

Mount Airy’s new Balladeer Hotel, which opened in August 2026, brings 65 rooms and a music-inspired personality to the city’s evolving downtown district. The Tribute Portfolio property is part of a larger redevelopment around Spencer’s Mill, with the hotel designed to connect visitors with Mount Airy’s local culture, music heritage, and downtown attractions.

The hotel offers boutique-style accommodations and social spaces, while its downtown setting gives groups easy access to restaurants, shops, and attractions.

The Balladeer Hotel offers flexible event spaces designed for gatherings ranging from intimate meetings to larger corporate events and celebrations. The 1,300-square-foot Balladeer Ballroom, the hotel’s largest event space, provides a warm, expansive setting for receptions, special events, and corporate functions. For smaller gatherings, the 300-square-foot Lyric Hall offers a cozy setting for meetings and special events. The Courtyard expands the options outdoors with 2,100 square feet of flexible space, public art installations, and views of Mount Airy’s surroundings.

With spaces that can accommodate different group sizes and event styles, The Balladeer gives meeting planners options for creating memorable gatherings in a distinctive Southern setting.

OKLAHOMA
Harrah’s Oklahoma | Chandler

Harrah’s Oklahoma, which opened in April 2026, marks Caesars Entertainment’s first managed property in the state, creating a new entertainment destination along the Route 66 corridor.

Developed in partnership with the Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma, the property features more than 1,000 slot machines, 12 table games, and a high-limit gaming area. Guests can also earn and redeem points through Caesars Rewards. Dining options include Arrow & Ember, serving contemporary American fare, and Dash Café, offering quick-service favorites, including burgers, pizza, and breakfast burritos.

Positioned to attract visitors from across Oklahoma and neighboring states, Harrah’s Oklahoma is expected to serve as a regional tourism anchor. The new property combines gaming, dining, and entertainment while supporting economic growth and creating new opportunities for the Chandler community and the Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma.

SOUTH CAROLINA

The Cooper | Charleston

Charleston’s waterfront has gained a major new group destination with The Cooper, a 191-room luxury hotel that opened in March 2026. Set along the Cooper River, the property combines a private marina, expansive outdoor areas, and a resort-style atmosphere.

Courtesy The Driskill



The Driskill

With more than 20,000 square feet of indoor and outdoor event space, The Cooper gives planners room for everything from executive gatherings to large receptions, while the waterfront setting provides a natural backdrop for social functions.

The property also features a 7,000-square-foot spa, an infinity pool, multiple dining concepts, and marina access, allowing incentive and corporate groups to build programs around the hotel. The design draws on Charleston’s coastal character while delivering contemporary luxury.

With its combination of meeting space, waterfront amenities, dining, and wellness offerings, The Cooper brings a resort-style option to Charleston, supporting both business and leisure components of a group itinerary.

TENNESSEE
The Untitled Nashville Hotel at Bankers Alley, Tapestry Collection by Hilton

The Untitled Nashville Hotel at Bankers Alley, Tapestry Collection by Hilton debuted June 2026, following a multimillion-dollar transformation and rebrand of the historic Gray & Dudley Hardware Co. building.

The renovation blends preserved historic architecture with mid-century-inspired furnishings, local artwork, and contemporary amenities. The 124-room hotel features redesigned guest rooms and suites, updated public spaces, new meeting and event venues, rotating art galleries, and a reimagined Gray & Dudley restaurant.

For meeting planners, the property offers more than 10,000 square feet of event space across seven art-filled settings, including gallery-style meeting spaces, private dining areas, a boardroom, and a rooftop terrace. The largest venue accommodates up to 120 guests for a seated dinner or 200 for a reception. The hotel also features a Listening Lounge created in partnership with Third Man Records, which is available for private buyouts and specialty programming.

Located in Nashville’s Bankers Alley District, the hotel puts groups within walking distance of Ryman Auditorium, Bridgestone Arena, Schermerhorn Symphony Center, and other downtown attractions.

TEXAS
The Driskill | Austin

The Driskill has completed a comprehensive, multi-phase renovation ahead of the historic hotel’s upcoming 140th anniversary in December.

Jason Ringer



The Faust Hotel

Completed in June 2026, the transformation refreshed all 189 guest rooms and suites, restoring the property’s historic character while introducing tailored, modern details. Tower guest rooms feature blue-gray walls, deep navy and slate carpeting, burnished brass hardware, blackened bronze lighting, red velvet drapery, sculptural wood furnishings, and custom headboards with embroidered Texas flora and fauna. Historic guest rooms take a softer approach, featuring cream and bone tones, ornamental woodwork, and vintage-inspired lighting. Public areas, including the lobby, grand staircase, and common spaces, were also restored.

For meeting planners, the renovation expands the hotel’s event offerings to more than 18,000 square feet of meeting and social space. The new 2,800-square-foot Citadel Ballroom, created from a former Prohibition-era private club, accommodates up to 200 guests. The renovation also enhanced the Driskill Ballroom, Maximillian Room, Crystal Room, Jim Hogg Parlor, and Austin Room. Its refreshed culinary program includes The Driskill Grill & Bar, The Victorian, and the 1886 Café & Bakery, providing additional options for group dining and receptions.

The Faust Hotel | New Braunfels

The Faust Hotel has reopened following a \$10 million renovation of the historic 1929 property. Closed since November 2023, the 45-room hotel reopened May 2026, blending preserved Spanish Colonial Revival details with updated accommodations, public spaces, and amenities. Guest rooms feature king beds, walk-in showers, 55-inch streaming televisions, Nespresso coffee makers, and retro-style mini fridges. Six corner suites can be expanded to three bedrooms with separate living areas, while nine junior suites provide additional options for groups.

For meeting planners, the 2,000-square-foot Grand Ballroom accommodates up to 110 guests for executive meetings, retreats, weddings, and social events. Additional gathering options include the Magnolia Patio, which accommodates up to 60 seated or 120 reception guests, and Walter’s Speakeasy, which can host 20 seated or 30 standing. New F&B venues include Wilhelm & Werner (a Texas brasserie with European influences), Prince Solms Lobby Bar, and Walter’s Speakeasy.

Located in downtown New Braunfels, the hotel puts groups near the city’s restaurants, shops, rivers, and entertainment.



The Monarch San Antonio

The Monarch San Antonio

The Monarch San Antonio opened in April 2026, bringing a new luxury meetings and events destination to downtown's Hemisfair District, steps from the Henry B. González Convention Center, River Walk, and Alamo.

The property offers 15,000 square feet of event space across eight venues, all located on a single floor for streamlined flow. The 5,000-square-foot Meridian Ballroom anchors the portfolio, complemented by Solana (1,000 square feet), Maverick (800 square feet), Ember (400 square feet), and Zephyr (800 square feet). Each space features floor-to-ceiling windows, advanced conference and presentation technology, and connected pre-function areas. Outdoor options include the 3,000-square-foot Kaleidoscope Terrace, overlooking Hemisfair Civic Park, and the 3,000-square-foot La Mariposa Pavilion, a \$2 million public art installation.

The hotel's 200 guest rooms and suites continue the design-forward aesthetic, with upscale furnishings, contemporary finishes, and views of downtown San Antonio and Hemisfair. Guest amenities include a full-service spa, a fitness studio, a pool deck, and multiple dining options. Chef Jae H. Lee leads the culinary program at Oak & Amber, Aleteo, and The Nectarie Café, which offer private-event dining, receptions, and customized menus.

Located approximately 15 minutes from San Antonio International Airport, The Monarch also places groups within walking distance of La Villita, Southtown, and the Historic King William District.

VIRGINIA

The Sitio | Virginia Beach

The Sitio opened in March 2026 as a 20-room boutique hotel within Virginia Beach's new Atlantic Park mixed-use district, bringing a surf-inspired stay to the oceanfront. Designed around minimalism, art, music, and curated programming, the hotel sits beside Atlantic Park Surf, home to North America's first Wavegarden Cove surf lagoon, which generates more than 20 types of waves ranging from one to seven feet.

Guest rooms feature custom surfboard racks, Belgian Libeco linens, Lavazza coffee makers, locally sourced minibar snacks, and, in select rooms, private balconies overlooking the lagoon. Additional amenities include a lagoon-view infinity pool and sun deck, along with a private bar and restaurant serving coastal-inspired cuisine and cocktails.

The property's art collection includes works by French artist JR and Virginia Beach native Schuyler Beecroft, while music programming is



InterContinental Washington DC - The Wharf

curated in collaboration with Pharrell Williams. Guests are also within walking distance of the Atlantic Ocean and The Dome, a Live Nation-operated performance venue.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

InterContinental Washington DC | The Wharf

InterContinental Washington DC - The Wharf, a contemporary, luxury hotel overlooking the Potomac River, unveiled a property-wide refresh, including all 278 guest rooms and suites, in July 2026. The completion of the rooms builds on a series of enhancements unveiled in 2025.

Guest rooms feature a color palette of beige and blue in a variety of understated patterns and marble, and include state-of-the-art touch-panel technology and spa-inspired showers with herringbone marble design.

The hotel offers more than 17,000 square feet of event, meeting, conference, and banquet space, including 11 unique meeting rooms and multiple elegant ballrooms designed to showcase natural light and waterfront views.

Guests can enjoy three culinary venues, a rooftop bar and pool, a full-service spa, and other amenities.

WEST VIRGINIA

Hill Hall Hotel | Fayetteville

Hill Hall Hotel, a member of Design Hotels, opened in August 2026 near New River Gorge National Park and Preserve, following the transformation of a former school campus dating to 1923. The 40-room hotel preserves the property's original architectural details, including tall ceilings, wide corridors, oversized windows, exposed wood ceilings, and wainscoting, while adding warm, contemporary interiors. Hill Hall offers an intimate setting for meetings, retreats, and gatherings, with communal spaces designed to foster connection. Another gathering space, Patsy's lobby restaurant, serves family recipes and Southern-inspired fare and includes a wood-burning fireplace, bar, and seasonal patio.

Guest rooms range from 240-square-foot queens to 660-square-foot double suites, with mini-fridges, Bluetooth speakers, and custom furnishings. Amenities include firepits, an honor pantry and bar, a communal lounge, books and board games, and complimentary parking. With its historic renovation, Appalachian setting, and residential feel, Hill Hall offers groups a distinctive base for exploring the New River Gorge. 🍷

World Equestrian Center – Ocala: A World-Class Destination Beyond the Conventional



World Equestrian Center – Ocala offers elevated events in a world-class setting.

Set in the heart of Florida's horse country, World Equestrian Center – Ocala (WEC) brings world-class standards to meetings and events. Within convenient reach of both Orlando and Tampa, the 2,000-acre resort combines purpose-built event venues, luxury accommodations, and distinctive experiences.

Regarded as one of Florida's best resorts, WEC offers planners a streamlined approach designed to deliver exceptional events at every scale.

Elevated purpose-built spaces

Newly opened in 2026, The Equestrian Manor combines sophisticated design with more than 300,000 square feet of versatile event space across four stories. Able to accommodate everything from executive leadership meetings to large-scale, multi-day conferences, the venue features grand and junior ballrooms, intimate meeting rooms, and elegant pre-function areas. An expansive terrace and covered pavilion extend events outdoors, overlooking Ocala's rolling horse country.

With customized catering, professional audiovisual services, and four distinct dining concepts housed within The Equestrian Manor, planners can bring every part of the agenda together with exceptional quality and ease.

Designed for memorable stays

Luxury accommodations, premium amenities, and distinctive experiences extend the event well beyond the meeting rooms. The Equestrian Hotel features 248 luxury rooms and suites, providing an elegant retreat for executives, speakers, and VIP guests. For larger groups and extended stays, The Riding Academy Hotel offers 390 pet-friendly studios and suites.

Beyond the agenda, guests can explore world-class equestrian sport, specialty boutiques, and relaxing treatments at Calluna Spa. Adjacent to The Equestrian Manor and The Riding Academy Hotel, The Shoppes Off 80th will complete the guest experience, with 32 storefronts featuring luxury brands and unique retailers set to open at the end of 2026.

An emerging culinary destination

With 13 distinctive dining concepts led by internationally trained and James Beard Award-recognized chefs, World Equestrian Center – Ocala has quickly emerged as one of Central Florida's most exciting culinary destinations. Planners can select from a range of experiences across the resort, from handcrafted pastries at Emma's Patisserie to the acclaimed Southern-inspired steakhouse, Stirrups Restaurant.

Just steps from The Equestrian Manor's event spaces, four distinct dining concepts offer convenient options before, during, and after the day's program, including elevated American tavern fare at The Polo Pony, authentic Italian cuisine at Genievue's, pan-Asian dining at The White Willow, and gourmet French pastries and desserts at Emma's Patisserie.

World-class experience

At World Equestrian Center – Ocala, every element of an event comes together within one fully integrated destination. From accommodations and culinary options to distinctive amenities and unique experiences, every element is supported by an event team that provides personalized service from planning through execution.

Behind it all is the same commitment to excellence that defines world-class equestrian sport. The result is an event that feels effortless to plan and exceptional to attend. 🍷

World Equestrian Center – Ocala



WORLD
EQUESTRIAN CENTER®

Connect with Sales & Events

The Sales & Events team at World Equestrian Center – Ocala is passionate about building meaningful relationships and creating exceptional experiences. Located in the heart of horse country, this dedicated group works hand in hand with clients and industry partners to plan memorable events, foster lasting connections, and support the continued growth of our world-class destination.

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New Era of Excellence at Rosen Shingle Creek



Rosen Shingle Creek, Orlando's premier convention hotel, has announced a sweeping reimagination of its 1,501 guest rooms, suites, corridors, and event spaces, further reinforcing this AAA Four Diamond hotel's commitment to exceptional guest experiences and hospitality. This \$150 million corporate commitment only strengthens Rosen Shingle Creek's ability to provide the ideal blend of business, pleasure, and relaxation. Meticulously planned, each room blends Mediterranean Revival influences with modern design, while prioritizing guest comfort. Versatile event venues, exceptional cuisine, championship golf, and the ability to bring an event planner's vision to life underscore why Rosen Shingle Creek remains Orlando's meetings leader.

Poised along Shingle Creek, the headwaters of the Florida Everglades, this luxury hotel's guest rooms are meticulously tailored to deliver a rejuvenated blend of comfort and innovation. The hotel's extensive renovation

introduces guest rooms featuring custom-designed furnishings, crafted millwork, fluted details, polished stone finishes, and hammered brass accents. Plush bedding with individual pocketed coils reflects Rosen's commitment to quality and comfort. The new spa-inspired bathrooms include spacious vanities, bespoke amenities, glass-enclosed walk-in showers, oil-rubbed bronze fixtures, Italian travertine, and multifunctional shower systems. A soothing, nature-inspired palette creates a restorative atmosphere, complemented by biophilic design elements that promote well-being. Next-generation Wi-Fi and integrated smart-room technology provide a seamless, intuitive experience for business and leisure travelers alike. Each room balances sophisticated design with modern functionality, while expansive windows frame views of preserved natural landscapes, championship golf, and Orlando's newest attractions. Thoughtfully reimagined with wellness and beauty in mind, every element is crafted to feel elevated, functional,

and authentically connected to Rosen Shingle Creek's storied setting.

Recognized as a top U.S. meeting hotel by Cvent, Rosen Shingle Creek's impressive ballrooms highlight the hotel's 524,000 square feet of high-tech meeting space with 31-foot acoustically engineered ceilings designed to support creative event production. The Gatlin Ballroom alone boasts 95,000 square feet of cutting-edge space, modern design and unlimited potential. With nearly 100 upscale meeting rooms, fine dining, and indulgent spa services, Rosen Shingle Creek creates an unparalleled conference experience. The hotel offers scenic nature views surrounded by lakes, wildlife, and an 18-hole championship golf course. With 136,000 square feet of outdoor space, Rosen Shingle Creek knows how to take advantage of Florida's natural beauty and those cool, breezy evenings to make any event shine. Spanning 255 acres, this is where business meets pleasure.

The dining experience at Rosen Shingle Creek is equally impressive. Renowned chefs customize menus for groups of thousands or even those smaller, more intimate conferences. Emma's Creekside Farm is the hotel's onsite source for true farm-to-table fresh produce and doubles as an outdoor event venue sure to please. Surrounded by fresh herbs, vegetables, and fruit, Emma's offers a unique, natural setting for smaller events and receptions. In addition to its beauty, Emma's produce is hand-picked and delivered directly to the hotel's two AAA Four Diamond restaurants, A Land Remembered and Cala Bella. 🌿

Rosen Shingle Creek

Katie Bellas
Director of Sales & Marketing

With more than 35 years of experience in hotel sales, marketing, and strategic revenue generation, Katie Bellas is proud to lead the award-winning team at Rosen Shingle Creek, one of Orlando's most iconic meeting destinations.



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RosenShingleCreek.com



MORE BREATHING ROOM AT THE REIMAGINED ROSEN SHINGLE CREEK

Rosen Shingle Creek's meticulously reimagined guestrooms blend Mediterranean Revival with modern design, taking cues from the lush landscape that defines its 255-acre oasis. Warm natural tones, rich walnut, rattan accents and crafted millwork elevate the rooms, while plush bedding, intuitive lighting and spa-inspired bathrooms make it easy to settle in. Beyond the accommodations, vibrant, nature-inspired carpeting stretches across meeting spaces, creating a look unlike any other Shingle Creek has ever had. Welcome to a new era.



For more information, visit
RosenShingleCreek.com/Meetings or call 407.996.4890.

ROSEN
SHINGLE CREEK®
ORLANDO

Greenville, NC: Be in the Moment and the Mix

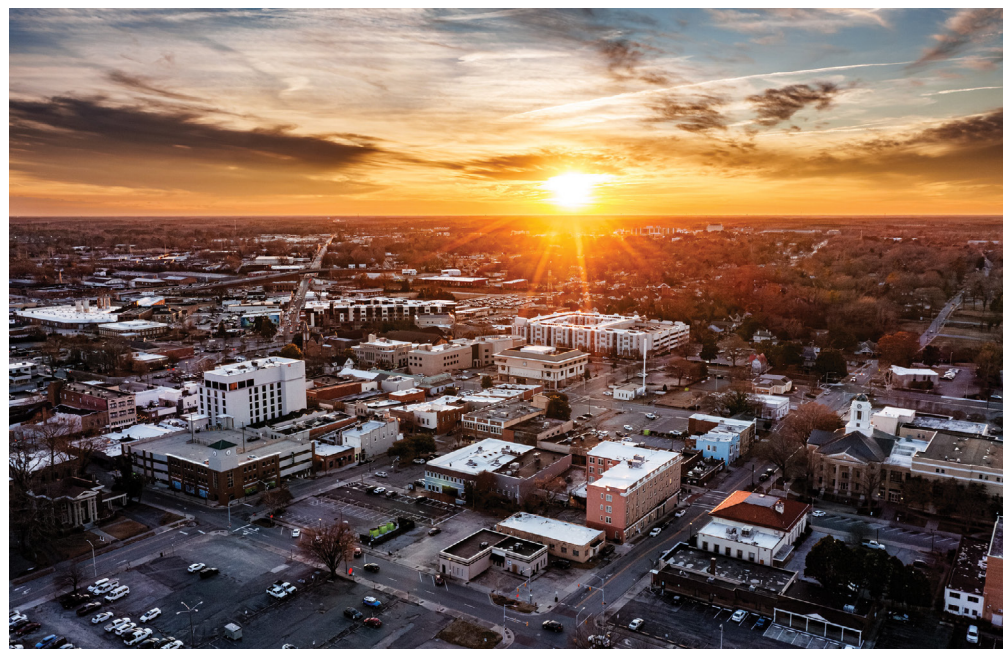
Greenville is North Carolina's Emerald City—a vibrant destination in eastern North Carolina that blends Southern hospitality with modern amenities to create the perfect backdrop for your next event. From our expansive and convenient Greenville Convention Center campus to our East Carolina University Student Center, and from our new Downtown Greenville and Medical District hotels, we have the perfect venue and hotel for you.

The Greenville Convention Center campus boasts more than 91,000 square feet of flexible meeting space and more than 400 comfortable sleeping rooms, ensuring a seamless experience for all attendees. Beyond just space, the campus is designed to cater to all your needs, featuring two onsite restaurants and bars for networking and relaxation, three sparkling pools, fully equipped fitness rooms for unwinding, lush outdoor spaces perfect for social gatherings, and added conveniences like complimentary parking and Wi-Fi throughout the campus.

As the proud home of the East Carolina University (ECU) Pirates and the heart of "Pirate Nation," we also offer unique venues on ECU's campuses, including a 14,000-square-foot ballroom at the new ECU Student Center, diverse breakout rooms, and athletic facilities overlooking ECU's Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium that can accommodate gatherings of 500 or more. We can also guarantee lots of Pirate entertainment and adventures!

The newly opened, eight-story Hilton Garden Inn features 101 rooms and 1717: The Rooftop Restaurant & Bar, providing breathtaking views and a taste of local cuisine. The hotel's location in the heart of downtown Greenville allows attendees to easily explore our array of shops, dining options, breweries, art galleries, and lively city events and festivals. For a quick escape into nature, the Greenville Town Common and Greenville Greenway System along the Tar River are just a couple of walkable blocks away.

Our hospitality community understands the importance of visitors and will work to ensure that your stay with us is both memorable and successful. Our comprehensive, complimentary Convention Services program is designed to



Aaron Hines/City of Greenville, NC



Joshua Meeks/Courtesy Visit Greenville, NC

save meeting planners both time and money—making your life and lift easier.

Planner Testimonial:

"Beyond the responsiveness, enthusiasm, and knowledge of the Greenville team, we were most appreciative of their desire to collaborate and reflect the character of the city. They met our specific needs for the Visit North Carolina Tourism Conference in ways that made us feel welcome and infused our conference with the spirit of Greenville." —*Kelly Dawson, director of partnerships and events, Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina*

Visit Greenville NC

Rachel Whitten, CMP, STS President & CEO

Rachel believes great hospitality is about anticipating needs, building relationships, and making life easier. A proud Pirate, she has called Greenville and its tourism community home for 26 years.



252-329-4244
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VisitGreenvilleNC.com/Meetings



Here, when the workday ends, the conversations continue. On rooftops. In lively bars, coffee shops and across our vibrant downtown. Greenville offers flexible meeting spaces, a walkable city, and Eastern NC hospitality that makes planners look and feel good.

This is Greenville, North Carolina.



Rachel Whitten, CMP, STS
President & CEO at Visit Greenville, NC
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VisitGreenvilleNC.com/Meetings



Austin Sets the Stage for the Future of Meetings

Austin is building a \$1.6 billion convention destination that reshapes the future of meetings and events. Currently closed for redevelopment until spring 2029, Austin Convention Center will reopen with expanded space, new energy, and stronger capabilities designed to elevate every gathering. Meeting planners can secure dates now and position their events at the forefront of Austin's next convention era.

A zero-carbon leader that redefines modern venues

The transformed Austin Convention Center welcomes attendees to a modern, inviting, and fully sustainable environment. The five-story facility spans six walkable city blocks and is designed to achieve ILFI Zero-Carbon certification. Smart, eco-focused design features align with Austin's Climate Equity Plan and create a seamless, enjoyable guest experience.

This district links directly to Waterloo Greenway and Waller Creek, giving attendees easy access to shaded paths, outdoor seating, and fresh air between sessions. Every element supports comfort, efficiency, and sustainability.

Flexible, inspiring spaces spark big ideas

When the convention center opens ahead of the 2029 Spring Festivals, it will offer 620,000 square feet of rentable space, including 75,000 square feet outdoors for bold activations. Expansive exhibit halls, next-generation meeting rooms, a dramatic ballroom, and vibrant pre-function spaces set the stage for standout experiences. A record investment of \$17.7 million in public art adds immersive installations and creative storytelling throughout the building.

A historic landmark returns

As part of the redevelopment, the Trask House returns to its original site. Built in 1855, it stands as one of downtown Austin's few surviving 19th-century homes. It will host events, cultural programs, and community activities.

A strategic downtown location designed for growth

The convention center sits between Lady Bird Lake and historic Sixth Street. More than 15,000 hotel rooms within a one-mile radius support it. Planners gain walkability, energy, and momentum for conventions of every size.

Bookings for 2029 and beyond are open. Reserve early to secure prime dates and give your attendees the first look at Austin's next chapter. 🌱

Austin Convention Center

Amy Harris, CMP Director of Sales

Amy Harris fuels growth, builds strategic partnerships, and leads a powerhouse sales team. Her deep passion for Austin drives her mission to bring premier events to the city.



512-404-4200
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The new Austin Convention Center features green spaces and outdoor areas that seamlessly combine history, nature, and community in downtown Austin.



The redesigned Austin Convention Center features a lively \$17.7 million public art collection, offering visitors bold, interactive installations.



AUSTIN CONVENTION CENTER



A New Convention Center Built for Big Impact

Opening in spring 2029, the \$1.6 billion Austin Convention Center is designed to redefine sustainable events with expanded capacity, modern design, and smart functionality. Secure preferred dates early.

Zero Carbon, Zero Compromise

Set to become the world's first convention center to achieve ILFI Zero Carbon certification, the center spans six walkable downtown blocks. It features energy-efficient systems, intuitive circulation, and direct access to the Waterloo Greenway and Waller Creek for a seamless eco-forward experience.

Space That Inspires

With 620,000 square feet of rentable space and 75,000 square feet of outdoor areas, the reimagined center supports high-impact exhibitions, fresh-air programming, and a signature ballroom. Art-driven pre-function spaces and a \$17.7 million public art program bring Austin's creative spirit to every level.

Trask House Returns

The 1855 Trask House returns to its original site, offering a unique historic venue for cultural and special events.



At the Heart of Downtown

Steps from Lady Bird Lake, Sixth Street, and 15,000-plus hotel rooms within a one-mile radius, the center sits at Austin's most connected meeting location. Bookings for 2029 and beyond are open.

Stunning Redesign Elevates Rosen Plaza Experience



Rosen Plaza is proud to announce a sweeping, unprecedented guest-room reimagination rooted in comfort, functionality, and modern style. Thoughtfully designed, nearly 800 rooms in this award-winning convention hotel are now brimming with character, featuring intuitive layouts and rich textures that create spaces that feel both polished and personal. This is more than a room renovation. This redesign reflects a broader reimagining of the guest experience. Custom-designed furnishings, substantial next-generation technology updates, modern spa-inspired bathrooms, bespoke artwork, and flexible, multi-use spaces support work, rest, and relaxation, catering to the modern-day traveler.

Conveniently located in the heart of Orlando's convention district, Rosen Plaza features more than 60,000 square feet of versatile space with cutting-edge technology. Whether hosting large conventions or intimate

business meetings, Rosen Plaza delivers award-winning, unmatched guest service to every event, ensuring a memorable, inspiring, and flawlessly executed experience from concept to execution. In fact, the hotel has recently been recognized as having one of the best onsite teams throughout the Southeast. The hotel's 22 meeting spaces include the 26,000-square-foot Grand Ballroom and the 12,500-square-foot Ballroom Foyer, perfect for any occasion. For a unique touch, consider hosting an event at 3NINE, Rosen Plaza's exclusive entertainment venue. This indoor-outdoor space includes two full-service bars, a poolside patio, and state-of-the-art sound, lighting, and visual effects, creating a modern, spacious, and private setting.

Decidedly fresh and refined, Rosen Plaza's reimagined guest rooms enhance comfort, offering a moment of pause and a connection to the heart of Orlando. Each room displays a calming neutral palette, tailored furnishings,

plush bedding, and enhanced technology to underscore Rosen Plaza's commitment to an elevated stay. The Executive King suites, the Plaza suites, and the two Presidential suites each elevate your stay with expansive living areas, wet bars, dedicated workspaces, dining areas, and additional sleeping accommodations, offering the serenity and versatility of a sophisticated retreat. Integrated smart controls and industry-leading Wi-Fi connectivity provide effortless convenience, while oversized windows showcase sunlit panoramic views. Curated commissioned artwork infuses each room with character, personality, and pops of vibrant color. Contemporary bathrooms feel sleek and refreshed, with walk-in showers, custom amenities, speckled terrazzo flooring, and Zellige-inspired wall tiles. Convenience is paramount as guests enjoy direct access to one of the world's premier convention centers via a covered skybridge, putting major events just steps from your door.

Rosen Plaza's award-winning chefs take great pride in their culinary creativity and their ability to cater grand events for 1,800 guests, intimate dinners for two, and everything in between. Or, savor aged prime steaks and fresh seafood at Jack's Place, recognized as one of the best steakhouses along International Drive. Take advantage of Florida's tropical ambiance at '39 Poolside Bar & Grill with its open-air dining, featuring contemporary American favorites, like gourmet burgers, fresh salads, and seasonal local favorites with a Mediterranean flair. The culinary team also crafts personalized group menus, ensuring dining experiences will be fresh and flavorful. 🍴

Rosen Plaza

Suzanne Kennedy Director of Sales & Marketing

Suzanne is an award-winning hospitality executive with more than 35 years of industry experience. She is known for driving revenue, managing multimillion-dollar sales pipelines, and developing relationships that fuel long-term success.



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Discover Statesville, N.C., for Your Next Event

Planning a small to medium-sized event? Statesville, N.C., offers more than just conventional meeting space; it offers an extraordinary experience. At the Statesville Event Center, intimate gatherings receive the personalized attention they deserve.

A venue that fits your needs

The Statesville Event Center is designed for corporate events with up to 600 attendees, featuring flexible spaces tailored to your specific requirements. The Great Hall includes five ballrooms with removable air walls for convenient configurations, providing state-of-the-art facilities for seamless events.

More than just a meeting space

Statesville encourages you to “think outside the convention center” by taking advantage of the area’s vibrant surroundings. Imagine attendees stepping into a world of shopping, dining, and outdoor activities, all within walking distance.

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Located downtown, the event center places attendees in a charming, walkable area filled with local boutiques, cafés, and restaurants. Downtown blends historic charm with modern amenities, offering a unique experience large convention centers cannot match.

Outdoor activities and attractions

In Statesville, outdoor adventures complement indoor sessions. Attendees can enjoy nearby parks, scenic hikes, or explore Lake Norman State Park. This balance between work and play helps attendees feel refreshed and rejuvenated.

Culinary delights

Statesville’s diverse culinary scene delights all tastes. From farm-to-table restaurants to eclectic bistros, Statesville’s eateries offer various dining options perfect for networking and relaxation.

Easy accessibility

Centrally located in North Carolina, Statesville is easily accessible from major cities, such as Charlotte, Greensboro, and Winston-Salem —ensuring higher participation rates and a successful event.



Personalized service

The Statesville Event Center prides itself on personalized service. The experienced team is dedicated to helping you every step of the way and taking care of every detail.

Testimonials: “I wanted to follow up and send a sincere ‘thank you’ for all your help making the Golden Leaf Kickoff event a success! Your responsiveness throughout the process gave me great confidence. We received great feedback and are very happy with our experience in Statesville.” — Ellen Chilton, NC Chamber

“Thank you for your help with our All-Dealer Conference. The whole staff was incredibly kind. We look forward to partnering with you and the event center in the future.” — Troy, Pineview Team

Plan your next event in Statesville

Choose Statesville, N.C., for an exceptional event experience. For more information or to book your event, contact the team today. We look forward to hosting you soon! 🍷

Statesville Convention & Visitors Bureau

John Stum Business Development Manager

John Stum is a dynamic and dedicated business development manager in Statesville, driving growth, building partnerships, and fostering community success through strategic collaboration locally.



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Fairfax County, Va.: Where Planners Check Every Box



“Fairfax County checks every box on a planner’s must-have list: desirability, accessibility, and affordability,” says Chris Colvin, director of sales for Visit Fairfax, the

county’s award-winning DMO. “Whether you’re planning a large-scale conference, an intimate retreat, or a mission-driven gathering, we have the hotel and unique meeting space to match.”

Getting attendees here and around is easier than ever, Colvin notes. “Located in northern Virginia, we sit right at the doorstep of the nation’s capital, with access via two major airports, road, rail, and a Washington Metro system that now runs straight to Dulles International Airport.” With more than 19,000 hotel rooms across a wide range of Three- and Four-Star properties, Fairfax County’s flexible meeting and event space can match any group size, budget, or format.

Beyond the hotel ballroom, Fairfax County’s unique meeting spaces, from historic estates to riverfront venues to modern urban rooftops, give planners the tools to build attendee

experiences that stand out. “We work with every group to find a space and a program that feels tailor-made for them,” Colvin says. 🏠

Visit Fairfax

Chris Colvin
Director of Sales

Chris Colvin brings 30 years of metro DC hotel sales leadership to Visit Fairfax, with a career built on strong client relationships and consistent, award-winning results across the Greater Washington region.



703-790-0643
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Holiday Inn Oceanfront Reimagines Maryland Meetings

Give your next meeting, conference, or group event a fresh perspective at the newly renovated Holiday Inn Oceanfront in Ocean City, Md.

Located directly on the Atlantic Ocean, our property combines modern accommodations, flexible meeting spaces, and memorable outdoor venues, all designed to make your event as productive as it is enjoyable.

Our renovated oceanfront guest rooms give attendees more than a place to stay. Comfortable, contemporary accommodations paired with sweeping views of the Atlantic create an experience that extends well beyond the meeting room.

Inside, refreshed meeting spaces provide a versatile setting for conferences, corporate gatherings, retreats, receptions, and special events. Whether you are planning an intimate

gathering or bringing together a larger group, our dedicated team can help create a seamless experience from arrival to departure.

When it is time to step outside, the possibilities continue. Our expansive oceanfront outdoor spaces provide a distinctive backdrop for receptions, networking events, group activities, and memorable evening gatherings. There is something special about exchanging ideas with the sound of the waves in the background and the Atlantic stretching out before you.

From renovated guest rooms to refreshed meeting spaces and inspiring outdoor venues, the Holiday Inn Oceanfront offers planners a complete meeting experience in one of Ocean City’s most memorable settings.

Bring your next event to the beach and make your meeting something attendees will remember long after they leave. 🏠

Harrison Group Hotels & Restaurants

Sara Simon
Corporate Director of Sales

Proudly part of Harrison Group since 2007, Sara Simon specializes in hospitality sales, fostering authentic partnerships with planners, and elevating events through creativity and a passion for meaningful connections.



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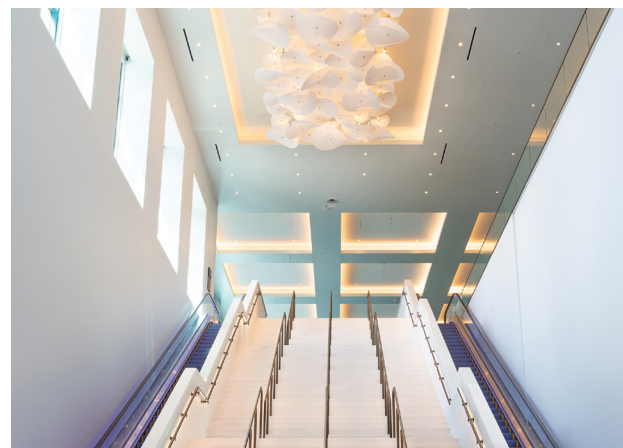
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Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Becomes the Largest Convention Hotel on the U.S. Eastern Seaboard



The iconic Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin, located in the middle of Walt Disney World, has expanded its event capabilities with the opening of more than 100,000 square feet of new event space. The expansion, a two-story venue connected to the Dolphin's existing space, brings the triplex's total indoor and outdoor event space to 600,000 square feet across the Swan, Dolphin, and Swan Reserve to complement 2,619 guest rooms—making it the largest convention hotel on the U.S. Eastern Seaboard.

The opening of the new 100,000 square-foot event space, called the Peninsula, is part of an overall \$300 million, multi-phase expansion and renovation at the Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin. The project also includes extensive upgrades to existing meeting spaces, the completed Swan guest room enhancements, and the ongoing redesign of the Dolphin guest rooms.

"This expansion represents far more than additional meeting space; it reflects our ongoing commitment to listening to our customers and investing in the future of the meetings and events industry," said area general manager Sean Verney. "The new venue provides planners with unprecedented flexibility and creativity to design truly unforgettable experiences. Whether hosting an intimate leadership gathering or a world-class production, our team is uniquely positioned to deliver innovative, immersive events that exceed expectations, foster meaningful connections, and create magical memories that

attendees will talk about long after the event concludes."

The hotel celebrated the opening of the new venue with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on September 10, which included representatives from Tishman, Walt Disney World, Marriott International, and Visit Orlando.

The new space marks the first major expansion of the Walt Disney World Dolphin's meeting space since 2003. The two-story venue offers abundant natural light and extra-wide foyer space for networking and attendee flow. It features 38,000 square feet of multipurpose space and 24,000 square feet of additional pre-function space on the first floor. A breathtaking white grand staircase leads to the second floor, which houses an elegant ballroom offering an additional 40,000 square feet of divisible event space, with 14,000 square feet of pre-function foyer space.

Additional unique features of the venue include a dedicated planner office providing a convenient working space in the heart of an event's activities, outdoor patio space for networking, and several expansive digital screens allowing planners to customize the atmosphere with any combination of video, photos, or graphics.

The property's original water theme, created by acclaimed entertainment architect Michael Graves, inspired the design, which also features a modern flair and warm wooden touches. The additional space allows groups to grow attendance, expand exhibits, or accommodate multiple events on each floor.

Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin meeting space expansion by the numbers:

- 600,000 square feet—Combined new total of indoor and outdoor meeting space at the Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Triplex
- 100,000+ square feet—Total space of new event venue
- 78,000 square feet—New ballroom and multi-use event space
- 38,000 square feet—New pre-function space
- 368,000 square feet—Total event space at Dolphin
- \$300 million—Total cost of expansion and renovation project, including construction of new event space, existing meeting space upgrade, and guest room renovations
- 2—Floors of new event space
- 16—Possible configurations in new event space
- 7,200—Maximum capacity of attendees in new space. 🍷

Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin

Jim Curtis Director of Sales & Marketing

Jim Curtis, director of sales & marketing at Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin, brings more than 30 years of hospitality expertise, award-winning leadership, and a passion for driving team success.



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MORE INFO

Music City Meetings, Reimagined at Loews Nashville Hotel



As gatherings evolve, so do the spaces where they take place. At Loews Nashville Hotel, a reimagined approach to meetings and events is unveiling soon. Debuting in early 2027 as part of the hotel's property-wide renovation, a redesigned Symphony Ballroom and adjoining foyer will feature a lighter, brighter, and more modern design, creating an elegant setting that can shift seamlessly from large-scale gatherings to elegant events.

The enhancements will extend outdoors with the addition of a new event lawn, marking the hotel's largest dedicated open-air event space. The new setting will open the door to alfresco receptions, cocktail hours, and special events beneath the stars in "Music City."

Together, the revamped ballroom, foyer, and new event lawn will offer greater versatility for

meetings and events for six to 600 guests, with refreshed spaces designed for the way people gather today. 🍷

Loews Nashville Hotel at Vanderbilt Plaza

Mareev Mousa Senior Sales Manager

For five years, Mareev Mousa has represented Loews Nashville and partnered with incredible planners and organizations. We're excited to welcome everyone to experience our newly renovated and reimagined hotel.



615-321-1953
mareev.mousa@loewshotels.com
LoewsHotels.com/Nashville

Suite Home Alabama at Graduate Auburn



At Graduate by Hilton Auburn, every gathering comes with a spirited sense of place. Located just steps from Auburn University and downtown Auburn, our hotel combines Southern hospitality with Graduate's signature storytelling to create an experience that's distinctly local and undeniably memorable.

From thoughtfully designed guest rooms inspired by Auburn traditions to welcoming social spaces that spark connection, Graduate Auburn offers a fresh take on meetings, events, and group travel. Whether you're hosting a corporate retreat, board meeting, reunion, wedding celebration, or sports-related event, our team brings creativity, flexibility, and personalized service to every detail.

Guests enjoy comfortable accommodations, flexible event space, complimentary Wi-Fi, a fitness center, pet-friendly rooms, and walkable access to Auburn's restaurants, shops, and campus attractions. Between sessions, attendees can experience the energy of downtown, explore local landmarks, or unwind in spaces designed with character and charm.

At Graduate Auburn, meetings are more than an agenda. They're an opportunity to connect,

celebrate, and create lasting memories in the heart of one of Alabama's most beloved college towns. 🍷

Graduate by Hilton Auburn

Amber Kitson Director of Sales

Amber Kitson is director of sales for Graduate by Hilton Auburn, helping planners create memorable meetings and events through personalized service, local expertise, creative solutions, and authentic Auburn hospitality.



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NASHVILLE

Legacy Reimagined. Reintroducing a Nashville Icon.

A fixture of Nashville hospitality and a trusted setting for industry-leading events, Loews Nashville Hotel at Vanderbilt Plaza recently unveiled a multimillion-dollar transformation featuring an enhanced arrival experience, elegantly redesigned guestrooms and suites, refreshed public spaces, and destination-worthy dining and entertainment. With more than 24,000 square feet of flexible meeting and event space, including the soon-to-be-refreshed Symphony Ballroom, adjoining foyer, and a brand new event lawn debuting in 2027, the hotel offers an elevated backdrop for gatherings and celebrations in Music City.

Learn more at loewshotels.com/nashville

Contact Information:
Loews Nashville Hotel at Vanderbilt Plaza
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Cobb Convention Center: Refreshing the Space. Recharging the Experience.



Cobb Convention Center Atlanta is undergoing a transformative expansion that will redefine the meeting and event experience in the Southeast. Scheduled for completion in spring 2027, the center will accommodate events of every size with greater flexibility, cutting-edge amenities, and an elevated guest experience.

The convention center will feature 377,000 square feet of event space to support everything from executive gatherings to large-scale conventions and exhibitions, including 144,000 square feet of exhibit hall space, two ballrooms, 11 flexible meeting rooms, an executive boardroom, and two outdoor event spaces. The 88-acre campus offers unmatched convenience and connectivity. Attendees can walk to The Battery Atlanta/Truist Park, a premier destination for dining, shopping, and entertainment, and home of the Atlanta Braves—all just minutes from downtown Atlanta and the airport.

Sixteen hotels and 2,916 guest rooms are within walking distance of the convention center. This allows attendees to stay close by and choose accommodation that fits their preferences and budgets. The walkable campus

minimizes transportation needs, making it easy for guests to move between hotels, meeting venues, restaurants, and entertainment. 🍷

Cobb Convention Center Atlanta

Dale Gustafson
Director of Sales & Marketing
Leading the sales and marketing team since 2024, Dale is a hospitality sales leader with 40 years of experience, including 27+ as director of sales & marketing for global hotel brands.



770-989-5055
 events@cobbconvention.com
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Cobb Convention Center Atlanta is expanding, with renovations complete in early 2027. The reimaged venue will offer 377,000 SF of event space on an 88-acre campus, minutes from downtown Atlanta and the airport. With walkable access to The Battery Atlanta, 16 hotels, and nearly 3,000 guest rooms, our team delivers seamless events where big ideas come together.

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2026

STATE OF THE INDUSTRY REPORT

Planners choose Southern destinations to maximize in-person engagement amid economic challenges



By Matt Swenson

Today's meeting planners are using creative strategies more than ever to ensure attendees don't feel the squeeze of higher costs and smaller budgets still plaguing the industry. Based on *ConventionSouth's* 2026 Industry Trends Survey, all signs indicate their efforts to maintain the quality of in-person meetings despite industry challenges are paying off—not only for attendees and meeting planners but also for destinations, organizations, and the global economy.

Among the linchpins of this success are those planners who rely heavily on Southern U.S. destinations for the region's top-flight venues and hospitality. The South's combination of premier convention centers and unique venues, range of price points among hotels, and diverse cultural experiences provides the flexibility event organizers desire.

The 2026 findings show an increase across most categories over last year's survey—which speaks to the South's affordability, accessibility, hospitality, and ability to create memorable

experiences. This year's findings also reveal a shift in how planners are navigating economic and political uncertainty. As one planner noted, "We can't pass along price gouging to our audience. Otherwise, they won't attend or will send fewer people, which hurts everyone."

There are more insightful results from our annual survey. As always, our industry survey was administered via a third-party platform to encourage candid responses and ensure anonymity. We asked our audience of approximately 18,000 destination and planning professionals to share their responses to a wide range of industry topics, including the number and types of events being planned, attendance, budgets and costs, factors in selecting destinations and venues, technology, and other key areas.

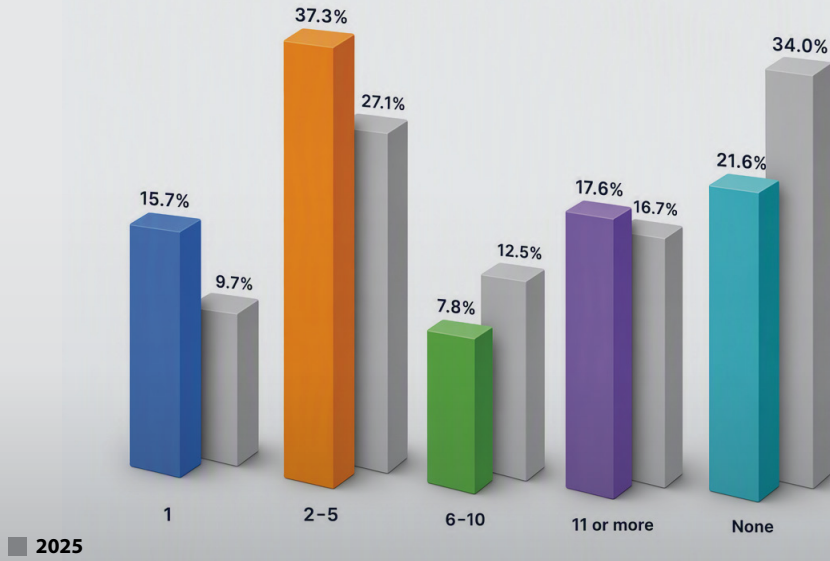
In this report, we analyze the survey's results to shed light on the event industry's biggest and most common challenges, reveal how national trends are impacting event planning, and share some of the creative solutions shaping event planning and experiences.

Event & attendance trends

Planners and attendees alike continue to choose the South for meetings and events. While the number of events in the South increased from last year, so did the percentage of planners reporting higher or the same attendance levels.

In fact, 78.4% of event professionals who responded to *ConventionSouth's* annual survey indicated they plan to hold events in the South within the next 12 months, with an average of 5.1 events. In 2025, only 66% of respondents were planning meetings in the South, for an average of 4 events. Moreover, 17.6% are planning 11 or more events in the South, compared to 16.7% last year. Only one category has decreased since last year: 7.8% of planners reported planning 6 to 10 events in the South over the next 12 months, compared to 12.5% last year. However, notable gains in other categories offset this decrease, with single events increasing from 9.7% to 15.7% and 2 to 5 events increasing from 27.1% to 37.3%.

How many events are you planning in a Southern destination over the next 12 months?



According to the survey, the most common event types being planned over the next 12 months are conferences (47.7%), followed by corporate meetings (29.5%), trade shows and association meetings (27.3% each), and networking/social events (25.0%). By comparison, last year, conferences made up nearly one-half of events (49.6%), followed by networking/social events (44.4%), association and corporate events (both at 35.6%), and trade shows (23.7%). Slightly more than 9% are also planning incentive trips for top performers, which is good news for luxury properties often aligned with incentive business.

Attendance is generally holding steady compared to last year, although the numbers reflect a slight shift. The most encouraging finding is that attendance has remained essentially unchanged for the majority of planners. More than one-half of planners (52.3%) reported the same attendance as the previous year, a negligible decrease from 52.4% last year. Only 18.2% reported higher attendance, compared to 19.8% last year. However, among the 18.2% of planners who reported higher event attendance, 75% experienced an attendance increase of at least 11%; the average attendance increase was 14.7%. Just under 30% (29.5%) reported lower attendance, compared to 27.8% in last year's survey.

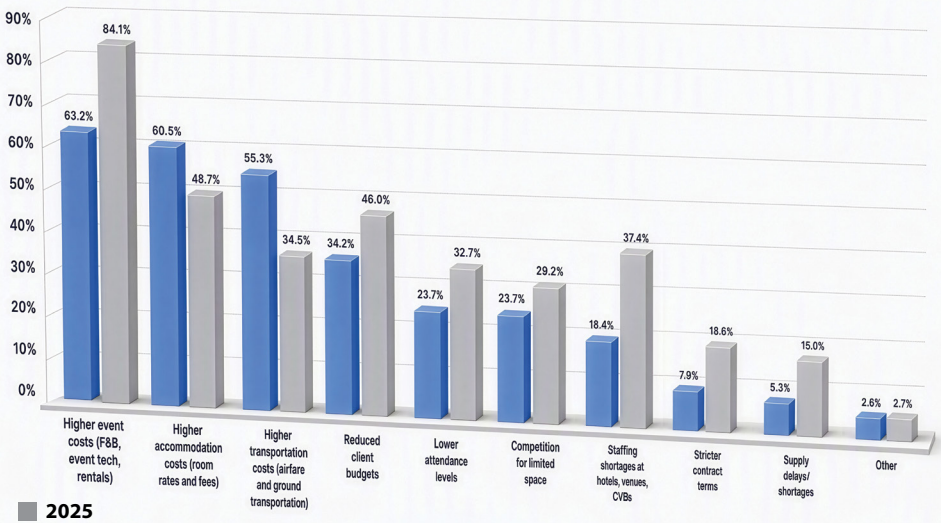
Current challenges

Shrinking budgets and increasing costs for basic amenities come with the territory for many meeting planners. Strains from tariffs and rising fuel prices are adding to a seemingly never-ending list of challenges.

According to our study, among the greatest challenges for planners are higher F&B costs (63.2%), higher accommodation costs (60.5%), and higher transportation costs (55.3%). Other areas of concern are reduced client budgets (34.2%), lower attendance levels (23.7%), competition for limited space (23.7%), hotel/venue staffing shortages (18.4%), and stricter contract terms (7.9%).

Additionally, 63.6% of planners indicated that current economic and political uncertainty is negatively affecting their events. Of those, 51.9% stated they are planning more events with a local/domestic audience; 40.7% reported they are experiencing decreased international attendance; and 29.6% indicated they are experiencing increased costs from international vendors.

What are your biggest challenges?



Some meeting planners expressed uncertainty that the situation will improve soon. “Expect trends to stay the same until the war is over and gas and other costs come down,” noted one meeting planner. “The madness needs to stop,” another meeting planner suggested.

Planners indicated their clients are experiencing similar challenges. Budget restrictions (73%) and higher costs (70%) are the largest concerns among clients, followed by attendance (43.2%) and ROI (21.6%). Each of these issues was a bigger challenge in 2025, with higher costs reported by 86.5% of planners, along with budget restrictions (69.5%), attendance (45.3%), and ROI (32.6%).

Indeed, organizations are tightening their purse strings. The majority of responding planners, 55.3%, indicated that their event budgets decreased this year, while 34.2% reported that their 2026 budgets remained the same as in 2025. Still, these statistics are an improvement over 2025, when 61.2% of planners indicated their budgets had decreased and only 27.6% indicated their budgets had remained the same. Only 10.5% of planners noted their event budgets had increased for 2026, compared to 11.2% reported event budget increases in last year's survey. This drop in reported event budget increases is less than a 1% difference from 2025 to 2026.

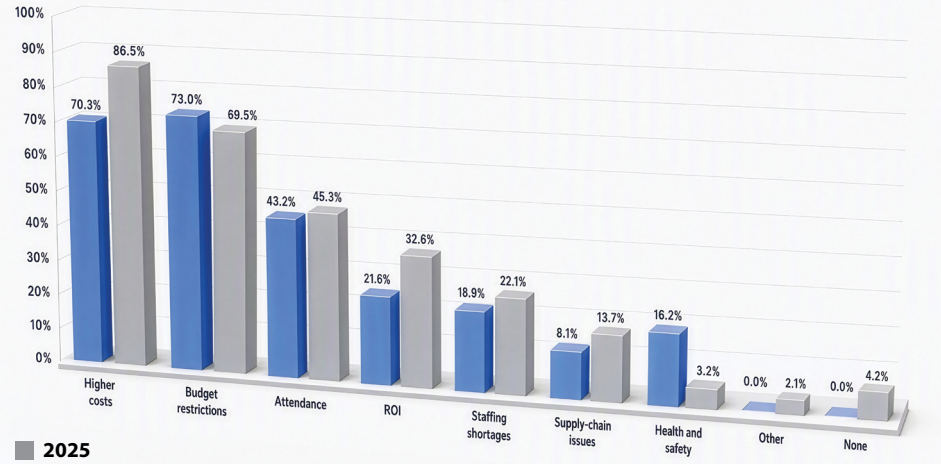
Destination preferences & alternative solutions

To offset today's challenges, planners are reviewing all budget line items to identify potential cost savings so they can continue delivering events that both thrill attendees and please organizational leaders.

The search for savings begins with site selection, with 37.1% of planners citing cost as the most important factor when choosing a destination or venue. Other top considerations when choosing a destination are availability (17.2%), which can provide leverage to planners during negotiations, and location (17.1%), especially when opting for a more affordable suburban venue over downtown.

Reinforcing that the meetings and events industry is built upon relationships, planners are looking to known quantities to host their group. Slightly more than 60% return to the same destination or venue for future gatherings, and 57.6% cite cost as the most compelling reason. Other advantages include

What challenges/concerns about meetings and events are you hearing from clients?



relationships with staff (39.4%), location to attendees (36.4%), available amenities (36.4%), and being a drivable location (30.3%) for the bulk of attendees.

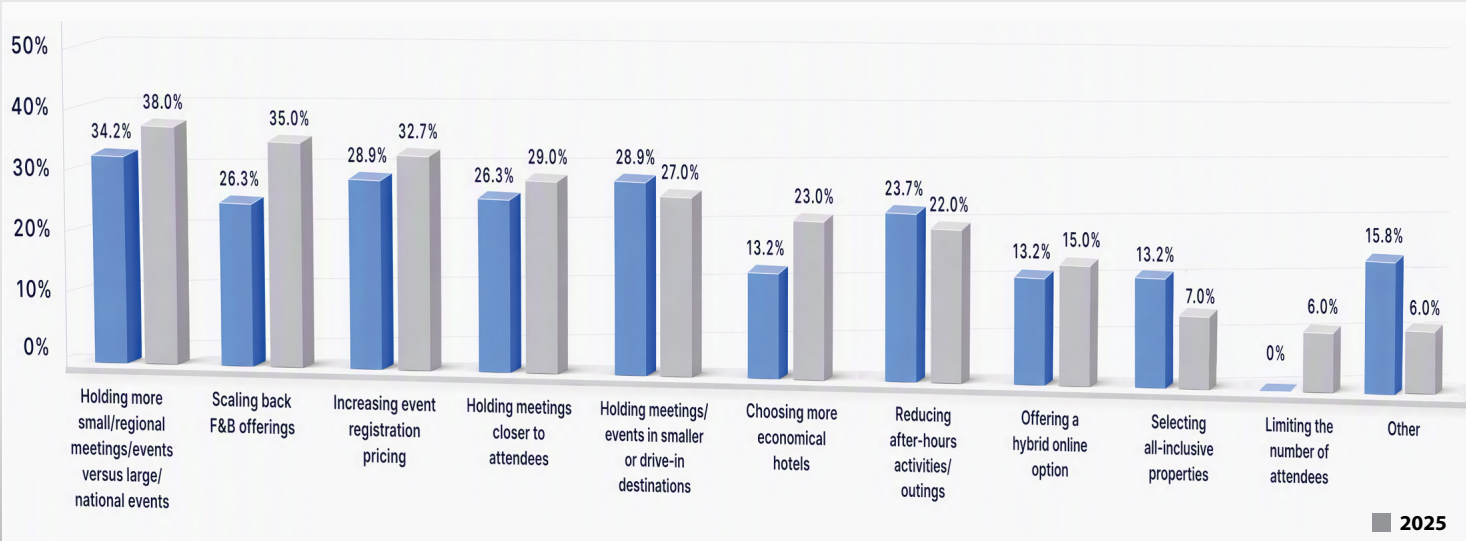
Because international attendance is down, planners are being more intentional about where they hold meetings, often choosing destinations that are convenient for attendees, including association members and corporate staff.

Hosting events in smaller or drivable destinations is among the most popular workarounds for alleviating budget and attendance concerns, as noted by 28.8% of planners. Drivable destinations can eliminate the dangers of travel delays and high airfares,

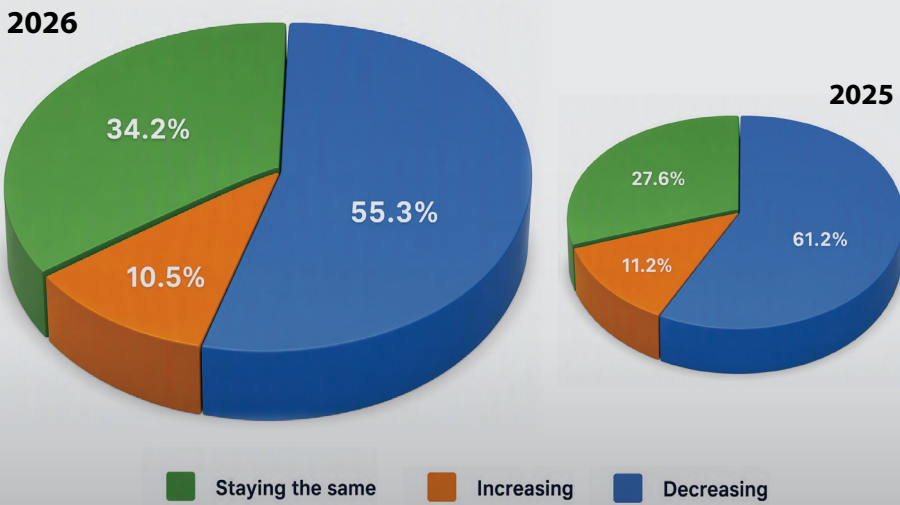
helping cut costs and increase registration. Similarly, hotels and venues in mid-sized or smaller markets tend to be more affordable than those in metropolitan hubs. The same advantages apply to hosting meetings closer to attendee locations, a tactic favored by 26.3% of respondents. These follow trends from the 2025 survey, when 29% of planners reported holding events closer to attendees and 27% opted for drive-in venues.

There is also significant interest in regional and small conferences, which, at 34.2%, is the most common alternative to managing costs. This is down slightly from 2025, when 38% of planners held smaller and regional events

What alternatives are you considering to manage increasing costs?



What are clients saying about their travel/event budgets?



and pre-planning duties, including: creating proposals (60%); copy/text generation (53.3%); developing marketing strategies (46.7%); generating graphics (40%); event/project management (40%); marketing automation (40%); and research (40%).

Meanwhile, 28.6% of planners use a third-party RFP service; of those, only 10% pay for an RFP service.

Healthy choices

Planners are making a distinct effort to avoid passing on economic challenges to their attendees. Only 26.3% reported scaling back F&B options, while 23.7% have reduced after-hours activities. Our survey shows planners still value flexible menus, local sourcing, healthy options, and dietary accommodations despite rising F&B costs.

Even the most empathetic event organizers are growing frustrated by negotiating stances taken by hotels and venues. “I understand inflation related to food increases, but those now far outpace inflation, and new costs and fees have popped up and risen dramatically,” shared one planner responding to the survey.

Accommodating food allergies (69.5%) and dietary restrictions (61.2%) are the most important factors when planning F&B. One planner has observed less emphasis on serving alcohol at events, which supports planners’ reported efforts to offer healthier food options (58.3%). In addition, 44.5% of planners noted working with local and sustainable vendors as a priority.

attendees—eliminating travel, lodging, and F&B costs for those who choose virtual events.

Technology trends

A large percentage of planners rely on technology to help complete important aspects of their jobs, including conducting site visits. Of note, 47% of planners use virtual tours when selecting destinations or venues to save on travel costs and the time out of the office. Artificial intelligence (AI) is also becoming more commonplace, with 42.9% of planners now using AI in their routine tasks. Of those who reportedly use AI, the most common applications are in marketing

rather than larger/national meetings. Smaller events with fewer attendees allow planners to better personalize the experience, which in turn heightens attendees’ enjoyment and instills loyalty to the association or corporation hosting the event.

Some planners (13.2%) said they are controlling costs by booking all-inclusive resorts (a relatively common strategy for incentive programs), allowing organizers to lock in their budgets early in a fiscal year.

The same percentage of planners indicated they are offering hybrid events as a more convenient and affordable option for

Community, well-being & safety

To help plan the most engaging events, 55.9% of planners contact attendees as part of their pre-event planning process to gauge their interest in networking, entertainment, and offsite activities. According to survey responses, 88% of planners attempt to weave the local culture and community into their event agendas. Historic attractions and local entertainers are utilized by 83.3% of planners. Natural attractions (parks, beaches, lakes, rivers, etc.) are popular among the 43.3% of planners who incorporate them into their event agendas, while 36.7% of planners add some type of arts- and-crafts activity. One-fifth of planners (20%) also aim to include a CSR component benefiting a local organization.

Relatedly, more than one-third of planners (35.5%) include physical health and wellness offerings, and 29.4% include mental health and wellness components.

Event security is becoming a greater concern, especially in the wake of the assassination of Charlie Kirk at a university event, multiple scares involving President Trump at both public and private functions, and the fatal shooting of a healthcare executive outside the company’s conference. According to our survey, 91.1% of planners are concerned about physical security at their events, and 64.7% are taking measures to increase physical security. By comparison, in the 2025 survey, 79.2% planners said they were concerned about physical security, and 46.3% said they were taking added measures. Planners did not share how they are increasing event security.

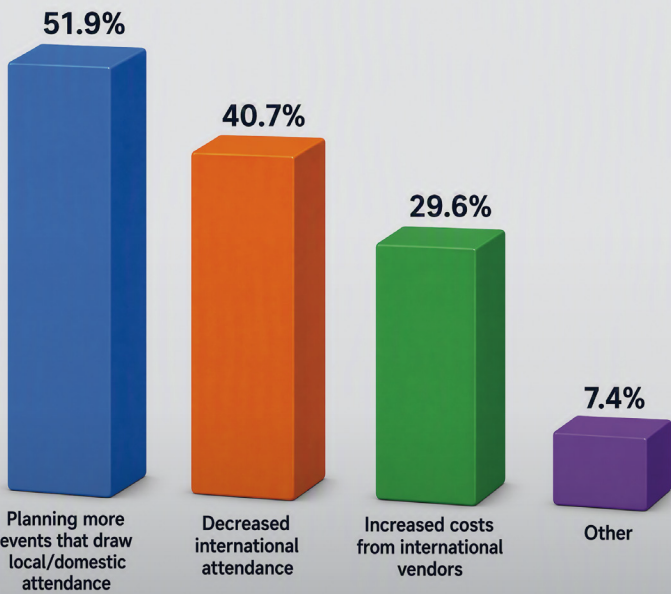
Takeaways

Despite rising event costs, planners are not merely cutting budgets. They are changing the structure and location of events to make them more affordable without sacrificing quality.

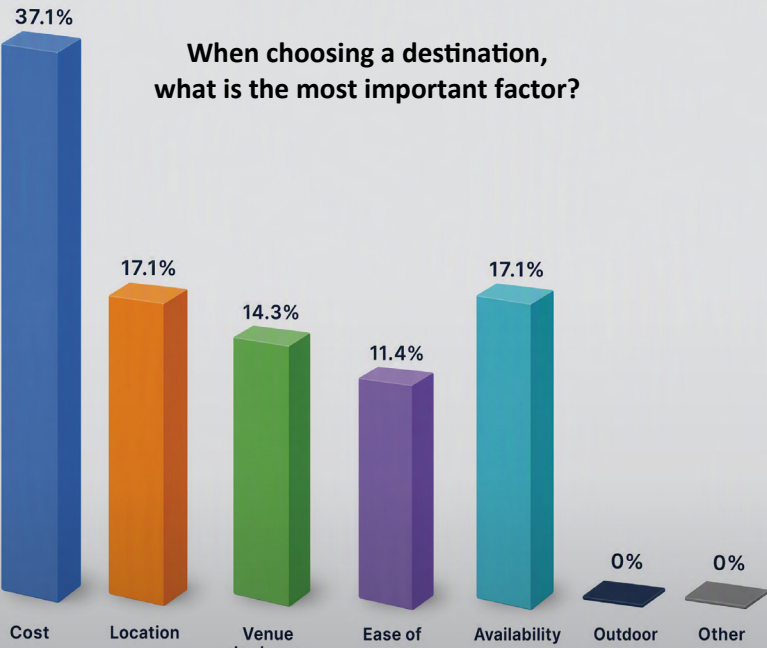
By making conferences more convenient to attendees, planners and their clients are preemptively addressing attendees’ concerns about travel and time away from home while also limiting travel costs. Planners’ efforts to maintain high standards for F&B and the overall event experience underscore the importance of ROI for both participants and clients.

Southern destinations are well-positioned to capitalize on the industry’s shift toward affordable, accessible, and regional events. As the study shows, planners prefer destinations and venues with an established relationship and often return based on previous experiences. 🌟

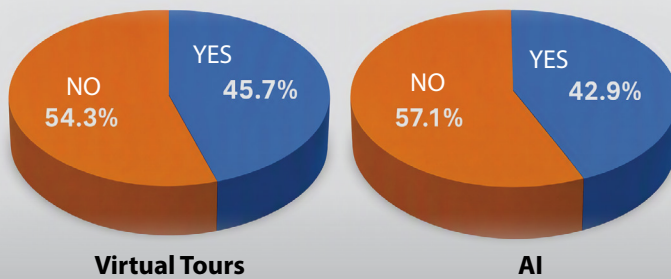
How has the uncertainty impacted your events?



When choosing a destination, what is the most important factor?



Do you use technology as part of your event resources?

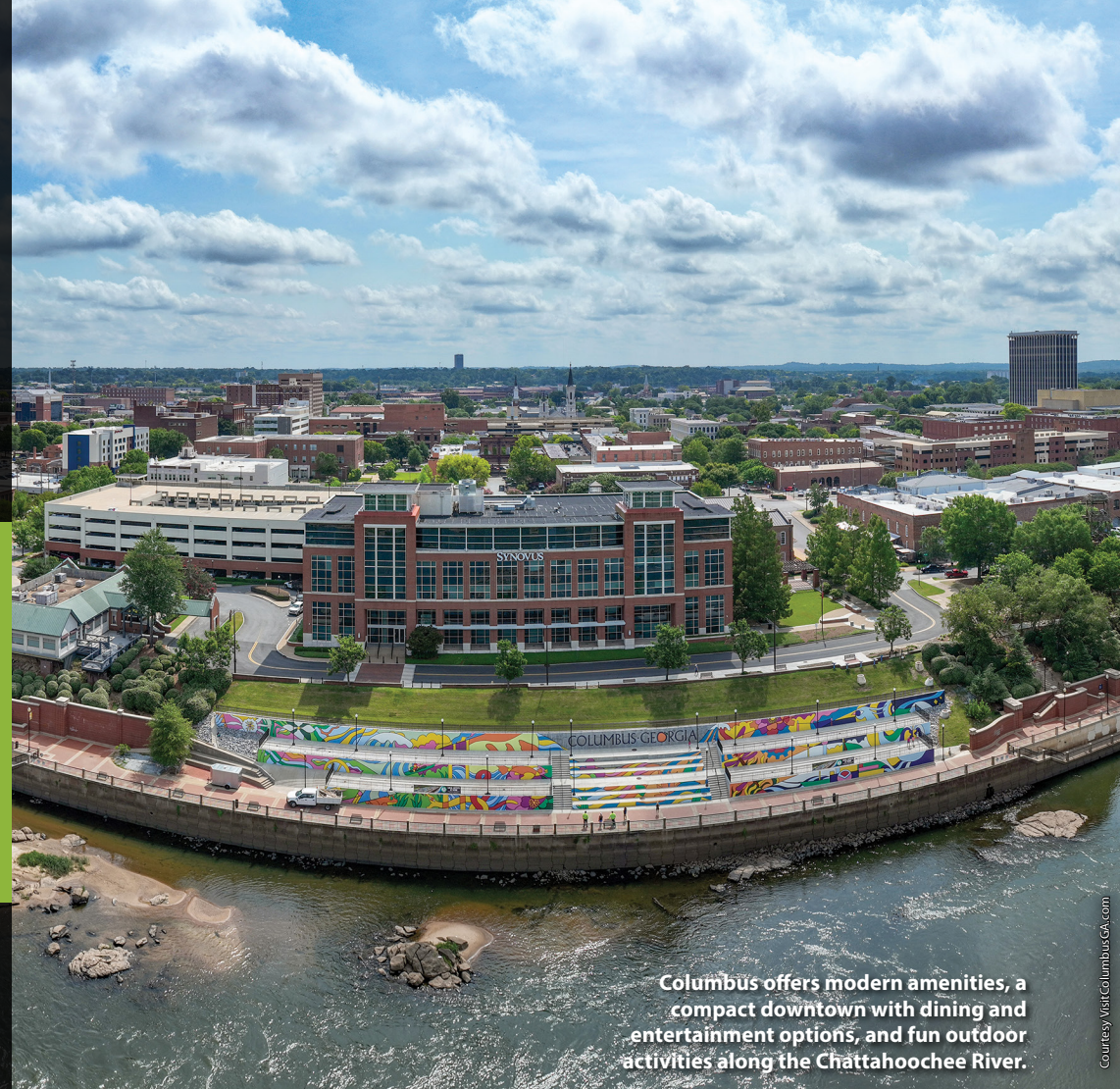


From high-capacity convention campuses and airport-accessible hotels to mountain retreats and lakefront resorts, Georgia offers planners a broad range of settings. Destinations across the state add college-town energy, riverfront recreation, museums, music history, and small-city hospitality. What's more, walkable districts, distinctive culinary scenes, and family-friendly attractions make it easy to build attendance and encourage extended bleisure stays.

EVENT PLANNERS' GUIDE TO

GA Georgia

BY KEITH LORIA



Columbus offers modern amenities, a compact downtown with dining and entertainment options, and fun outdoor activities along the Chattahoochee River.

Courtesy VisitColumbusGA.com

Metro Atlanta Alpharetta/Fulton County AwesomeAlpharetta.com; @AwesomeAlpharetta

“Alpharetta stands out as a walkable, welcoming destination with a strong small-business culture, an elite dining scene, and a mix of modern meeting infrastructure and memorable entertainment districts,” says Janet Rodgers, president and CEO of Awesome Alpharetta, the Alpharetta Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB).

Alpharetta offers 4,105 guest rooms across 31 modern hotels. Its primary meeting anchor is the 44,000-square-foot Alpharetta Conference Center, connected to the 330-room Hotel at Avalon, Autograph Collection. Avalon combines lodging, shopping, dining, and outdoor gathering areas in a sip-and-stroll district. A 1-mile paved section of the Alpha Loop connects with downtown Alpharetta, where independent restaurants, boutiques, and the Town Green give attendees options without a motor coach.

“Planners also appreciate that Alpharetta offers the feel of a destination city without sacrificing convenience,” Rodgers says.

The Atlanta Marriott Alpharetta features more than 10,000 square feet of meeting space across 13 event rooms, 12 breakout rooms, and pre-function space; the largest space can accommodate up to 800 guests. The property's scale can support a general session and concurrent breakouts while keeping the room block and program under one roof.

Ameris Bank Amphitheatre creates a different kind of gathering place. The 12,000-seat concert venue can host groups during performances; its main seating area can convert to banquet space, and a newer pavilion accommodates semi-private events with up to 150 guests. Brooke Street Park, the downtown Town Green, and the Plaza at Avalon offer seasonal live music on a smaller scale, helping planners add local entertainment without producing a full concert.

Alpharetta's culinary appeal is equally useful for dine-arounds, with more than 270 restaurants and roughly 50 concepts unique to the city.

Fairway Social, Garage 2 Grid Sim Racing, Sandbox VR, and the Atlanta National Pickleball Club provide indoor team activities, while more than 25 parks, the Alpha Loop, and the Big Creek Greenway support wellness breaks. Families extending a stay can add interactive games, cooking studios, playgrounds, and shopping across Avalon, downtown, and North Point.

ATL Airport District ATLDistrict.com; @ATLDistrict

The ATL Airport District comprises Fairburn, Hapeville, South Fulton, and Union City, all positioned near Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (ATL) and approximately 15 minutes from downtown Atlanta.

“Eighty percent of our country's population is located within a two-hour flight or less of the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport,” says Mercedes Miller, president of the ATL Airport District. More than 3,000 hotel rooms give planners airport convenience at rates the district reports are approximately 30% below those in the city center.

The Georgia International Convention Center (GICC) is the district's largest event venue, with 300,000 square feet of space and more than 7,000 hotel rooms in the vicinity. Its inventory includes 150,000 square feet of exhibit space, a 40,000-square-foot ballroom divisible into eight salons, and more than 42,000 square feet of pre-function space surrounding the ballroom.

The airport's SkyTrain makes the trip from the terminal to GICC in approximately two minutes, simplifying arrivals for fly-in meetings. The GICC campus also offers technology, catering, and event-logistics support, while the nearby Gateway Center Arena provides another 100,000 square feet of flexible space.

Hotel options include the 510-room Hilton Atlanta Airport, offering 34,002 square feet with a capacity of 800 people; 214-room Kimpton Overland Atlanta Airport, with 12,801 square feet and a capacity of 375; and 178-room Embassy Suites by Hilton Atlanta Airport North, with 4,521 square feet and a capacity of 474. For planners comparing the district's expanded footprint, the CVB has launched a 360-degree virtual tour covering local points of interest and potential itinerary stops.

Groups can move beyond the ballroom at the Porsche Experience Center, the renovated Delta Flight Museum, Swing ATL, and Wolf Creek Golf Course. Delta Flight Museum features historic aircraft and a Boeing 737 simulator; its hangar setting can also host private events. The Rooftop at the Overland, overlooking both the Porsche track and airport runways, is ideal for receptions. Downtown Hapeville adds walkable restaurants, public art, Hapeville Depot Museum, and Atlanta Printmakers Studio.

Fairburn and South Fulton broaden the options further with the Georgia Renaissance Festival, Duncan Park, Wolf Creek Amphitheater, Boat Rock Preserve, and South Fulton Tennis Center. Newer restaurants range from Puerto Rican cuisine at Weepa to plant-based comfort food at Unbelievagan.

“The ATL Airport District team is committed to creating the most accessible, customer-focused convention, meeting, and visitor destination in the United States,” Miller adds.

Atlanta
DiscoverAtlanta.com; @DiscoverAtlanta
“Atlanta doesn't just host conventions; it elevates them,” says Charlene Lopez,

executive vice president and chief sales officer of the Atlanta CVB.

Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport helps make that scale practical, with nonstop service to more than 160 domestic and nearly 90 international destinations. Citywide lodging exceeds 115,000 rooms.

Atlanta's downtown convention district brings large-scale meeting space, major hotels, dining, and attractions into a compact

footprint. The Georgia World Congress Center (GWCC) has 1.5 million square feet of exhibit space, 13 exhibit halls, 99 meeting rooms, and two grand ballrooms. Billed as the world's largest LEED Gold-certified convention center, it anchors a 200-plus-acre sports and entertainment campus, which includes Mercedes-Benz Stadium, State Farm Arena, Centennial Olympic Park, and Signia by Hilton Atlanta. More than 13,000 hotel rooms are

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accessible to the GWCC campus, giving large programs choices at several price points.

Major convention hotels include the 1,663-room Atlanta Marriott Marquis; 1,260-room Hyatt Regency Atlanta; 1,249-room Hilton Atlanta; 1,073-room Westin Peachtree Plaza; 1,059-room Omni Atlanta Hotel at Centennial Park; 976-room Signia by Hilton Atlanta; and 763-room Courtland Grand Hotel.

Surrounding attractions include the Georgia Aquarium, World of Coca-Cola, Chick-fil-A College Football Hall of Fame, and National Center for Civil and Human Rights, allowing planners to create off-sites and companion itineraries within close proximity to downtown.

The historic Fox Theatre extends Atlanta’s event inventory into Midtown. Its landmark auditorium seats 4,665, while private-event spaces include the 6,885-square-foot Egyptian Ballroom, accommodating 500 for banquets or 600 for receptions; the 3,814-square-foot Grand Salon, which opens to a terrace and accommodates 150 for banquets or 200 for receptions; and the 10,000-square-foot Marquee Club, accommodating up to 350 for receptions. The Marquee Club’s rooftop and conservatory can host up to 150, weather permitting.

Atlanta’s neighborhoods help planners vary the experience. Downtown is the choice for the largest meetings and walkable attractions; Midtown adds the Woodruff Arts Center, Fox Theatre, Atlanta Botanical Garden, and restaurant clusters; and Buckhead combines luxury hotels, high-end shopping, and executive dining. MARTA connects the airport to all three districts and now offers real-time trip information, service alerts, and tap-and-pay access. The growing Atlanta Beltline provides another way to build walking, cycling, and neighborhood dining into itineraries.

Teambuilding ranges from Wellness by the Water classes at the Georgia Aquarium to community-service projects with Piedmont Park or Meals on Wheels Atlanta. For bleisure travelers, the city has more than 300 parks and outdoor spaces, Civil Rights landmarks, and family attractions.

“Atlanta makes it easy to turn a business trip into an unforgettable family getaway,” Lopez says.

Several developments are also underway. The 50-acre Centennial Yards project is revamping a section of downtown with entertainment, dining, and mixed-use development, including the recently opened

80,000-square-foot Cosm immersive venue and a planned Live Nation concert hall. South downtown is restoring and activating 58 historic buildings across 16 acres, while The CTR (the former CNN CTR) is adding a food-and-culture hub.

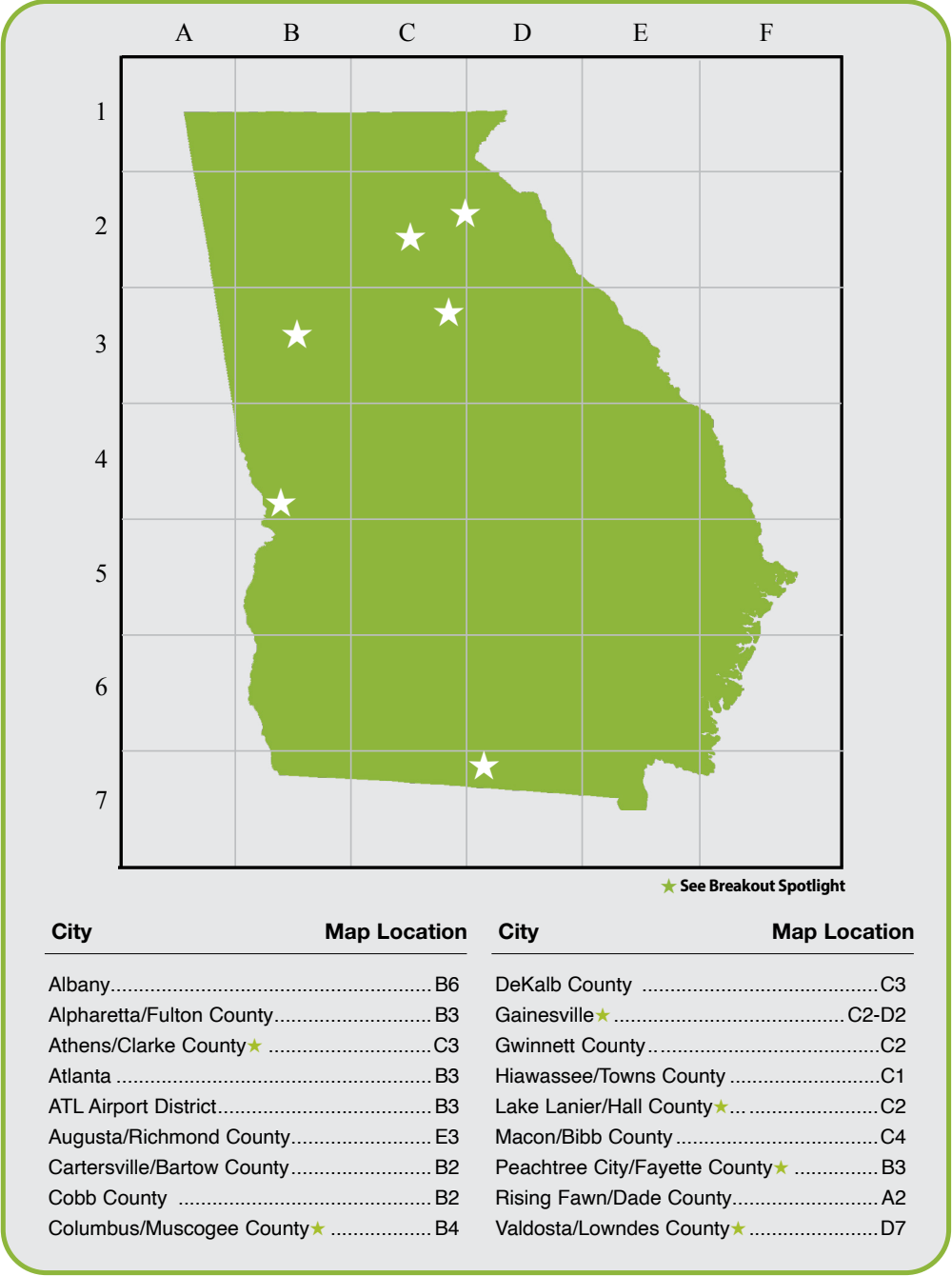
Atlanta’s dining scene now includes 63 MICHELIN Guide selections and eight MICHELIN one-star restaurants, with chef-driven options stretching from fine dining in Buckhead to food halls and Southern cuisine across the city’s neighborhoods.

Cobb County

TravelCobb.org; @TravelCobb

Cobb County combines approximately 14,000 hotel rooms with one of metro Atlanta’s most concentrated meeting and entertainment districts. The destination is approximately 20 minutes from Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport and 10 minutes from downtown Atlanta.

“Cobb is ‘Atlanta’s Sweet Spot’ and the best place to stay and play in the region,” says Holly Quinlan, president and CEO of Cobb Travel & Tourism.



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OUR FACILITIES

- Nine hotels
- Two hotels with conference centers
- Over 1,000 rooms
- 90,000+ square feet of meeting space
- Unique meeting venues
- Close proximity to Atlanta’s airport

WHY PEACHTREE CITY?

- Easy access to major interstates
- Complimentary services and value-added extras for meeting planners
- 100+ miles of shared-use paths
- Over 100 restaurants
- One of the safest cities in Georgia

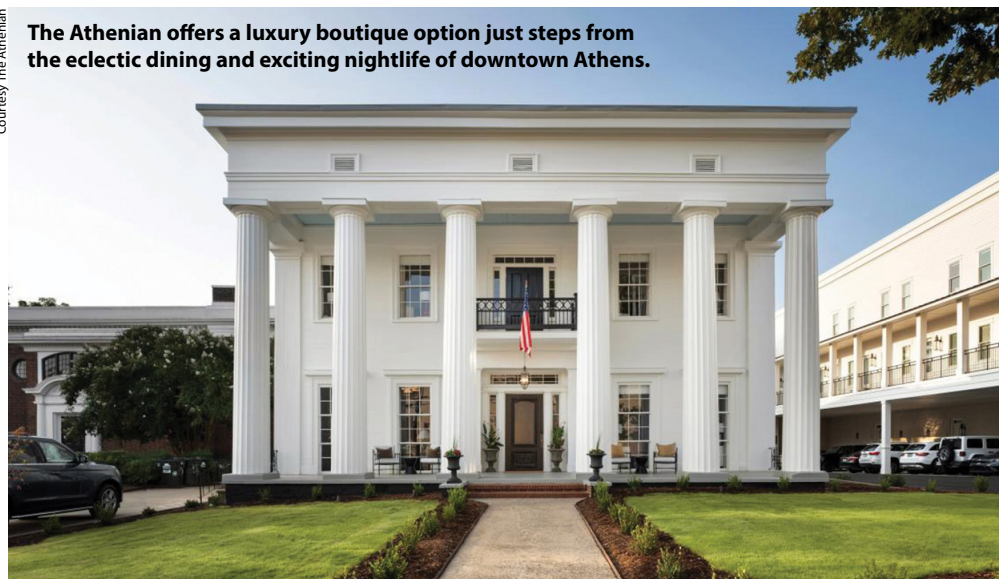
Courtesy Alpharetta CVB

Alpharetta combines a walkable downtown with modern meeting facilities, a variety of hotel options, and convenient dining, shopping, and entertainment.



Courtesy The Athenian

The Athenian offers a luxury boutique option just steps from the eclectic dining and exciting nightlife of downtown Athens.



Cobb Galleria Centre is moving forward under a new name, Cobb Convention Center Atlanta, as it undertakes a renovation and expansion expected to be completed in 2027. The venue currently offers more than 320,000 square feet of flexible event space, and the project will add more than 13,000 square feet, a two-story grand entrance, a junior ballroom, outdoor event courtyards, additional natural light, upgraded technology, and connected, all-weather parking. Existing convention, concourse, rotunda, and ballroom areas are also being refreshed.

Approximately 2,700 guest rooms are within a mile of the convention center, including Renaissance Atlanta Waverly Hotel & Convention Center, Omni Hotel at The Battery Atlanta, Atlanta Marriott Northwest

at Galleria, Embassy Suites by Hilton Atlanta Galleria, and Sheraton Suites Galleria-Atlanta. Pedestrian connections link the convention campus with the Renaissance, Cumberland Mall, Truist Park, and The Battery Atlanta. A renovated pedestrian bridge and a reversible ramp from Interstate 75's express lanes further improve access.

The home field of the Atlanta Braves, Truist Park offers a variety of group spaces and options, including private suites, the Xfinity Rooftop, and on-field activities. The Battery's restaurants, bars, live music, and attractions make post-meeting programs at Truist Park easy to organize. Additional nearby teambuilding choices include The Escape Game, Good Game powered by Topgolf Swing Suite, Muse

Paintbar, Main Event, Andretti Indoor Karting & Games, and Dave & Buster's.

For groups venturing beyond the convention district, Marietta Square adds historic character; Smyrna supplies an expanding dining scene; and Kennesaw brings Civil War history. Cobb County's beverage producers form the Cobb Ale Trail, and its restaurants include MICHELIN-recognized options. Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park, performances at Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre, and other local attractions give attendees and accompanying families reasons to extend the trip.

DeKalb County

DiscoverDeKalb.com; @DiscoverDeKalb

DeKalb County gives groups access to metro Atlanta while offering distinctive settings near Emory University and the Decatur, Stone Mountain, and Brookhaven communities.

Surrounded by 26 wooded acres, Emory Conference Center Hotel offers 325 guest rooms, including six executive suites, and features more than 32,000 square feet of meeting space to accommodate groups of up to 400 people. With more than 22 meeting rooms, including a 240-seat amphitheater and a 74-seat amphitheater, it is suitable for training, education, and multiday corporate programs. Complimentary Wi-Fi is available throughout guest rooms, function spaces, and public areas. Other amenities include two restaurants and in-room dining, a sundries shop, a fitness center, an indoor pool, an outdoor firepit,



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Located in the heart of Downtown Athens, Georgia, The Classic Center brings people together to celebrate, learn, and connect. Featuring beautifully renovated event spaces, unique meeting venues, exceptional hospitality, and outstanding event services, The Classic Center offers a wide range of entertainment options and flexible spaces for conferences, meetings, special events, and more. With its distinctive character and unconventional approach to the traditional convention center, The Classic Center is a premier destination for memorable events of all kinds.



ClassicCenter.com @TheClassicCenter @ClassicCenter



In addition to its historic aircraft and a Boeing 737 simulator, Delta Flight Museum provides an incredible setting for private events.

Courtesy ATL Airport District CVB

and hiking, biking, and jogging trails. The six-lane Wisteria Lanes Bowling Alley & Pub provides an onsite option for private events and teambuilding. A dedicated conference-planning team can coordinate gatherings throughout the property.

For additional event space, the historic Houston Mill House is connected to the hotel by a short bridge and can host private dinners and other indoor or outdoor functions. Emory Point's shops and restaurants are a short walk away, while nearby Decatur offers chef-driven dining and a walkable downtown. The Michael C. Carlos Museum on the Emory campus, Fernbank Science Center, and Callanwolde Fine Arts Center give planners additional options for excursions and companion programs.

Gwinnett County

ExploreGwinnett.org; @ExploreGwinnett

More than 100 hotels and 12,000 guest rooms support meetings throughout Gwinnett County. The destination's largest gathering place is Gas South District, a multipurpose campus with an arena, a convention center, a theater, and outdoor gathering areas. The district is joined by the 348-room Westin Atlanta Gwinnett, which has 28,029 square feet of event space, including 16 event rooms and eight breakout rooms. Its largest space can accommodate up to 1,050 people.

Other full-service options include the 300-room Sonesta Gwinnett Place Atlanta, with 20,000 square feet of meeting space; 271-room Hilton Atlanta Northeast, with 16,239 square feet; 230-room Crowne Plaza Atlanta NE-Norcross, with 9,400 square feet; 166-room Embassy Suites by Hilton Atlanta NE Gwinnett Sugarloaf, with 6,842 square feet; and 222-room Atlanta Marriott Peachtree Corners, with 4,894 square feet. The Lawrence Hotel, a newly opened 120-room boutique property in Hilton's Tapestry Collection, expands Lawrenceville's lodging inventory with flexible event space and two dining concepts near the historic square.

"The Explore Gwinnett sales team provides hands-on support and thoughtful recommendations based on their clients' interests," says Lisa Anders, COO of Explore Gwinnett. "That assistance can include group-accommodation sourcing, site inspections, vendor recommendations, and other planning support."

Through Explore Gwinnett's "Show Your Badge" program, attendees enjoy discounts on restaurants, shopping, and entertainment simply by presenting their conference identification at participating Duluth businesses.

Gwinnett County's diverse international dining scene can shape entire offsite programs. The guided Seoul of the South Korean Food Tour and free digital Korean

Food Pass connect groups with more than 30 restaurants, bakeries, cafés, and spas. Pickle and Social offers dining, live music, a rooftop bar, and both indoor and outdoor pickleball. BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir offers cultural tours and vegetarian cuisine. Escape the Netherworld offers year-round team problem-solving.

Walkable downtowns in Duluth, Suwanee, and Lawrenceville give smaller groups access to restaurants, public art, and outdoor gathering spaces. With more than 50 parks, Gas South District entertainment, Medieval Times Dinner & Tournament, Aurora Theatre, and the Gwinnett Stripers Triple-A minor league baseball, Gwinnett County offers a variety of activities and attractions for attendees and their families to enjoy.

Peachtree City/Fayette County

VisitPeachtreeCity.com;

@VisitPeachtreeCity

The Peachtree City CVB represents a resort-style destination located approximately 25 minutes from Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport and accessible from interstates 75 and 85.

Peachtree City has nine hotels, more than 1,000 guest rooms, and more than 100 restaurants. Its best-known amenity is a network of more than 100 miles of paved multiuse paths, allowing attendees to move among hotels, restaurants, and recreation by golf cart.

The Hilton Peachtree City Atlanta Hotel & Conference Center has 250 rooms and 31,385 square feet of meeting space, with a capacity of 600 people. The Crowne Plaza Atlanta SW-Peachtree City offers 236 rooms and approximately 63,000 square feet of event space, with a capacity of 500. Together, the city's conference center hotels provide more than 90,000 square feet of flexible meeting and exhibit space in retreat-style settings. The CVB can help planners identify venues, accommodations, and activities suited to the group's size and agenda.

Trilith LIVE broadens Fayette County's appeal for meetings, performances, and produced events. The 530,000-square-foot campus includes a 2,200-seat theater, two 25,000-square-foot sound stages, insert stages, a luxury cinema, meeting rooms, and more than 120,000 square feet of creative office and support space. The production infrastructure makes the venue suitable for conventions,

banquets, live broadcasts, and events requiring sophisticated staging. An adjacent parking deck and other walkable lots support large arrivals.

Airbase Georgia's 12,000-square-foot aircraft hangar is another memorable option for receptions and dinners. Drake Field provides waterfront green space; Line Creek Brewing Co. can anchor a casual evening; and the city's paved paths make golf-cart scavenger hunts and outdoor wellness activities easy to arrange. This mix offers planners a quiet conference-center environment with access to Fayette County's growing film and entertainment district.

Central Georgia

Athens/Clarke County

VisitAthensGA.com; @VisitAthensGA

Athens combines 2,660 guest rooms with a downtown meeting district adjacent to the University of Georgia (UGA).



Downtown Duluth in Gwinnett County features a variety of restaurants, nightlife spots, and family-friendly activities for meeting attendees to enjoy after sessions.

Courtesy City of Duluth



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For a fun group outing in Athens, catch a Rock Lobsters hockey game at Akins Ford Arena.

“Athens is the kind of place where attendees can spend the day in meetings and the evening exploring a nationally recognized music scene, independent restaurants, local shops, and the energy of a classic college town—all without needing a car,” says Elyse Worthey-Harris, director of sales and destination services for Visit Athens GA.

The Classic Center campus serves as the city’s meetings hub, offering more than 118,604 square feet of flexible meeting and event space, plus substantial pre-function areas. Its inventory includes the 22,000-square-foot Foundry Pavilion, which accommodates banquets for 1,100, and the newly renovated 18,000-square-foot Athena Ballroom, with a reception capacity of 1,900 and a banquet capacity of 1,000. The 8,400-square-foot Atrium can host 500 for receptions and 300 for banquets. The Classic Center Theatre seats 2,122, while Akins Ford Arena accommodates up to 8,000 for sports events, concerts, and general sessions. The arena is also home to the Georgia Music Collections, offering groups another connection to Athens’ musical legacy.

Hotel options include the 190-room Hyatt Place Athens/Downtown, with nearly 4,000 square feet of function space; the renovated 182-room Courtyard by Marriott Athens Downtown, with 3,918 square feet; the 130-room Hotel Indigo Athens Downtown; and the 50-room Rivet House.

Visit Athens GA offers complimentary planning support, including Passkey online housing for eligible conferences, customized welcome experiences, and contract facilitation. Local add-ons range from backstage music tours and culinary sessions at Athens Cooks or Condor Chocolates to the University of Georgia Challenge Course. College Square’s pedestrian plaza also gives groups a new gathering point between downtown and UGA’s North Campus.

“Athens offers meeting planners the facilities they need and attendees the experiences that make a destination memorable,” Worthey-Harris says.

Augusta/Richmond County

VisitAugusta.com; @VisitAugusta

Augusta’s downtown meeting district places groups beside the Savannah River, Riverwalk, and a growing collection of restaurants and attractions. Destination Augusta represents more than 70 hotels and 50 special-event venues, giving planners a range of options, from full conventions to smaller offsite gatherings.

The 372-room Augusta Marriott at the Convention Center anchors the district, with direct access to the 81,102-square-foot Augusta Convention Center. The convention center features 14 meeting rooms and 26 breakout rooms; its largest space, the Olmstead Exhibit Hall, accommodates up to 3,895 people.

Downtown’s walkable setting makes it easy to connect business sessions with riverfront breaks, group dining, and the city’s arts and history. Destination Augusta can also turn local assets into structured group experiences. Planners might schedule a Petersburg boat trip on the Augusta Canal, a nature program at Phinizy Swamp Nature Park, or a customized Authentic Augusta activity. Augusta & Co. serves as a useful downtown welcome stop, while rooftops, breweries, and the riverfront provide settings for receptions and informal networking.

For future programs, the New Augusta Arena is slated to open in fall 2027, with seating for up to 10,500. The arena’s Great Hall will serve as a connecting point to the renovated Bell Auditorium, creating a broader campus for concerts, sporting events, general sessions, and public-facing programs.

Columbus/Muscogee County

VisitColumbusGA.com;

@ColumbusGeorgia

“From the first planning call to the last session of your event, we are in your corner every step of the way, making sure your meeting is not just successful but also truly unforgettable,” says Tonja Ray-Smith, director of sales for VisitColumbusGA.

Columbus offers 5,000 guest rooms across 50 hotels, an active riverfront, and a compact Uptown district where groups can combine meetings with restaurants, arts, and outdoor adventure. The Columbus Georgia Convention & Trade Center is the principal venue, offering 182,000 square feet of usable space, more than 55,000 square feet of exhibit space, a 22,000-square-foot ballroom, and 17 breakout rooms.

The Columbus Civic Center seats up to 10,000 and includes a 360-degree concourse, 23,000 square feet of floor space, and an additional 5,000 square feet of hospitality suites. Cunningham Conference Center features a banquet hall, six seminar rooms, and a boardroom. RiverCenter for the Performing Arts has three theaters with seating capacities ranging from 150 to 2,000, while Bibb Mill Event Center offers more than 55,000 square feet across eight industrial-chic spaces.

Hotel options include the 178-room Columbus Marriott, the 107-room Hotel Indigo Columbus at Riverfront Place, and the 125-room AC Hotel Columbus Downtown.

The Pearl is a newer Uptown option in a restored, multilevel historic building. Its first floor houses The Mix Market, a casual food hall and bar, while the upper-level event space accommodates approximately 300-350 guests. Uptown’s walkability, restaurants, and shopping simplify dine-arounds and evening events. Chattabrewchee Southern Brewhouse and Sand Trap Social, which combines golf simulators with upscale casual dining and drinks, add more group-friendly choices.

The Chattahoochee River delivers ready-made teambuilding through whitewater rafting, kayaking, and ziplining. Columbus and the surrounding area have more than 40 major attractions, including Coca-Cola Space Science Center, National Infantry Museum, National Civil War Naval Museum at Port Columbus, Columbus Museum, and the Lunch Box Museum, part of Columbus Collective Museums. Ride On Bikes, Dragonfly Trails, Columbus Botanical Garden, and service projects with Feeding the



Established as a National Historic Landmark in 1974, the Johnston-Felton-Hay House in Macon offers guided tours and is available for private events.



ALL OUT **Support.** ALL OUT **Success.**

In Columbus, GA, meetings come with built-in excitement. From walkable riverfront venues and fresh hotels to whitewater thrills and vibrant nightlife, the destination delivers unforgettable experiences. Behind it all, our team is your all-out partner, coordinating site visits, logistics, and standout moments from first call to final applause.

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Go All Out

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Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre's venues include the 2,750-seat John A. Williams Theatre and a 10,000-square-foot ballroom.

Valley Food Bank or the Chattahoochee River Conservancy can help planners build active or community-focused programs.

Macon/Bibb County

VisitMacon.org; @VisitMacon

With more than 5,000 guest rooms and venues for groups of 20 to 10,000, Macon supports both association meetings and large public events. The Edgar H. Wilson Convention Centre has 82,000 square feet of space, including a 30,800-square-foot exhibit hall, and is connected to the 220-room Macon Marriott City Center. Other facilities include the Macon Coliseum, with 49,006 square feet and a 9,000-seat arena; Macon City Auditorium, with an 18,108-square-foot floor and 2,504 theater seats; Anderson Conference Center, with 16,960 square feet and a reception capacity of 1,600; and the 150,000-square-foot Rhythm & Rally Sports and Events, which houses 32 pickleball courts. The Atrium Health Amphitheater, opened in 2024, accommodates up to 10,000. A new Macon Arena is planned for 2028; it will feature approximately 250,000 square feet, approximately 10,200 seats, and an adjacent 30,000-square-foot flex hall.

Macon's accessible location at the crossroads of interstates 75 and 16, approachable pricing, plentiful parking, and compact footprint help simplify logistics. Visit Macon's complimentary destination support includes hotel and venue sourcing, RFP assistance, site visits, local vendor and speaker connections, customized tours, welcome materials, and coordination with community partners.

Macon's offsite appeal is rooted in music, architecture, and history. "Meetings in Macon have more soul," says Gary Wheat, president and CEO of Visit Macon. "Attendees can step out of the ballroom and into a city whose stories span thousands of years, from Ocmulgee Mounds to the music that helped shape American culture."

Northern Georgia

Cartersville/Bartow County

OnlyInCartersvilleBartow.com;

@VisitCartersvilleBartow

Cartersville-Bartow County offers approximately 1,400 guest rooms and a central meeting hub just off Interstate 75. Clarence Brown Conference Center features 40,000 square feet of event space and is located near the 118-room Courtyard by Marriott Cartersville.

The destination's "Museum City" identity gives planners a ready-made collection of offsite experiences. Booth Western Art Museum, Tellus Science Museum, Savoy Automobile Museum, and Bartow History Museum can support tours, receptions, and themed programming spanning Western art, natural history, classic cars, and local heritage. Booth Western Art Museum alone encompasses 120,000 square feet and offers private-event settings amid its galleries.

For a more secluded program, Barnsley Resort combines 142 guest rooms with 16,000 square feet of indoor event space, including a 5,000-square-foot ballroom, plus gardens, golf, and outdoor activities.

Hiwassee/Towns County

TheRidgesResort.com; @TheRidgesResort

The Ridges Resort on Lake Chatuge gives executive retreats and incentive groups a mountain-lake setting approximately two hours from Atlanta, Chattanooga, Tenn.; Greenville, S.C.; and Asheville, N.C. The 66-room property includes meeting rooms, a ballroom, patios, and a 3,000-square-foot event pier extending over the water.

The resort's Red Banks Ballroom, Blue Ridge Room, and High Cove Room can support board meetings, receptions, and social events, while the marina, waterpark, Topgolf Swing Suite, and two restaurants fill out group itineraries. The combination of indoor meeting space and lakefront settings makes the property especially well-suited to programs blending focused sessions with recreation.

Lake Lanier/Hall County

LanierIslands.com; @LanierIslands

Lanier Islands Resort is set on 1,200 acres, approximately 45 minutes from Atlanta. With more than 38,000 square feet of flexible event space and Legacy Lodge accommodations, villas, and lake houses, the resort can host everything from board retreats to gatherings of up to 700 guests.

Many meeting rooms and outdoor venues take advantage of the resort's lakefront setting. Teambuilding options include pontoon boat races, golf-cart scavenger hunts, bridge-building challenges, and group activities at Game Changer entertainment center. Golf, spa treatments, boating, and the resort's night-lit par-3 course, The Six, provide additional ways for planners to extend the agenda beyond meetings.

Rising Fawn/Dade County

StayCloudland.com; @StayCloudland

Cloudland at McLeMore Resort, Curio Collection by Hilton is a mountaintop option in Rising Fawn, near Cloudland Canyon State Park. The resort has 245 guest rooms and approximately 20,000 square feet of indoor and outdoor event space, including two ballrooms, breakout rooms, three event lawns, and a pavilion. Its largest indoor space can accommodate up to 400.

Golf, spa treatments, hiking, poolside functions, and access to Cloudland Canyon State Park give planners recreation options for incentive programs, wellness breaks, and executive retreats. 🌲



VisitColumbusGA



Courtesy VisitColumbusGA.com



With its blend of historic character and modern meeting facilities, Columbus offers much more beyond the ballroom. Planners can choose from 4,800 hotel rooms and more than 750,000 square feet of flexible event space, including the riverfront Convention & Trade Center, housed in a restored 19th-century ironworks. Attendees can explore Uptown Columbus' vibrant nightlife, tour nationally recognized museums and one-of-a-kind attractions, or enjoy more adventurous activities like whitewater rafting and ziplining. The VisitColumbusGA team provides dedicated planning support to help bring every detail together.

VisitColumbusGA.com

Explore Gainesville



Courtesy Explore Gainesville



Known as the "Queen City of the Mountains," Gainesville combines the charm of its historic, vibrant downtown with the scenic surroundings of the Blue Ridge Mountains and Lake Lanier, providing an inspired setting for meetings and events. Gainesville offers approximately 1,200 hotel rooms and more than 100,000 square feet of flexible space, including The Ramsay Center, which accommodates more than 600 guests, and The Boathouse at Lake Lanier Olympic Park. Attendees can enjoy boating, fishing, paddling, hiking, biking, golf, and nature adventures, as well as downtown's locally owned restaurants, shops, public art, and live music.

ExploreGainesville.org

Rainwater Conference Center



Courtesy Valdosta



Valdosta's Rainwater Conference Center is an inviting and serene destination for any event. The waterfront venue offers more than 30,000 square feet of space, including the Grand Hall, Garden and Gazebo suite conference rooms, two boardrooms, and the covered outdoor Veranda. Set along a tranquil lake with a fountain and surrounded by cypress trees, the conference center provides a picturesque backdrop for conventions, corporate meetings, receptions, weddings, and private events. Rainwater Conference Center features modern furnishings and cutting-edge technology, along with onsite catering.

VisitValdosta.org/Meetings/Rainwater

Trilith LIVE



Courtesy Trilith LIVE



Located in the Town at Trilith, Trilith LIVE is a fully customizable 530,000-square-foot venue with a theater, full broadcast capabilities, flexible meeting rooms, an outdoor plaza, a hotel, dining, retail, and parking—all in one accessible community, just outside Atlanta. It is equipped to host everything from concerts and theater productions to corporate events, conventions, and trade shows. This next-generation, multipurpose venue seamlessly delivers a full-service, immersive experience—providing planners the tools to create standout experiences.

TrilithLIVE.com



Courtesy The Classic Center

The Classic Center



The Classic Center and Akins Ford Arena offer beautifully renovated event spaces, exceptional hospitality, flexible services, and distinctive venues in the heart of downtown Athens. The versatile campus can accommodate a wide range of event needs while giving attendees plenty to see and do. Planners can incorporate entertainment into their programs, host an exciting evening event, or give attendees the opportunity to experience a concert, family show, or sporting event. In addition, Athens' walkable downtown allows attendees to easily explore area hotels, restaurants, shops, and attractions.

ClassicCenter.com

Visit Peachtree City



Just 25 minutes south of the world's busiest airport, Peachtree City offers easy accessibility, modern amenities, and a relaxing alternative to busy metropolitan areas. Its 100-plus miles of tree-lined multi-use paths provide a retreat-like setting for meetings. Planners can choose from a number of nationally known hotel brands, including the Hilton Peachtree City Hotel and Conference Center and the neighboring Crowne Plaza, which together offer more than 90,000 square feet of flexible space. The 12,000-square-foot hangar at CAF Airbase Georgia provides an incredible backdrop for events and immersive experiences for attendees.

VisitPeachtreeCity.com

Courtesy Lanier Islands Resort

Lanier Islands Resort



Set on 1,200 scenic acres just north of Atlanta, Lanier Islands Resort blends the beauty of a lakeside retreat with the convenience of a full-service destination. The resort offers 38,000 square feet of flexible meeting space, outdoor venues, and customizable teambuilding experiences. Activities and amenities include Legacy Golf Course, The Six par-3 night golf course, virtual sports at the Game Changer indoor entertainment center, pickleball, hiking and biking trails, and Tranquility Spa. Planners can choose from updated accommodations at Legacy Lodge, lakefront villas, or renovated lake houses.

LanierIslands.com

Destination Spotlight



Want to learn more about the destinations and venues featured in our state spotlights? Scan the QR Code here to access our expanded online coverage, including sponsored content from the region's top destinations and venues for meetings and events. Our online Event Planners' Guides include extensive information about destinations, hotels and resorts, unique venues, cultural attractions, activities, history and heritage, dining, and entertainment to enhance your event experience. Scan the QR Code now to find out what's in store for your next meeting or event!

© Darryl Brooks / dreamstime.com

The Bluegrass State of Kentucky provides planners with a central U.S. location and a variety of destinations at all price points. The state is known for bourbon, fast horses, top college basketball, and one-of-a-kind attractions, such as Mammoth Cave National Park, the Louisville Slugger Museum, National Quilt Museum in Paducah, National Corvette Museum in Bowling Green, and even a prototype for the Brooklyn Bridge in Covington.

EVENT PLANNERS' GUIDE TO

KY

Kentucky

BY D. FRAN MORLEY

Northern Kentucky

Covington, Florence & Newport

MeetNKY.com; @MeetNKY

Collectively known as Northern Kentucky, the cities of Covington, Florence, and Newport are not just a stop along the way, says Stefanie Wyckoff, director of convention sales for MeetNKY. "We are the destination. In Northern Kentucky, rolling hills meet vibrant city streets, and the skyline comes with a side of Southern hospitality. Connected by the Ohio River to downtown Cincinnati, our two-state destination gives meeting planners the best of both worlds: world-class amenities paired with authentic local character."

Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport (CVG), just 15 minutes from Covington, offers convenient access from more than 50 nonstop destinations.

The Northern Kentucky Convention Center in Covington features 110,000 square feet of

meeting, exhibition, and social function space, including a 17,500-square-foot ballroom, 10 meeting rooms, a 400-seat amphitheater, and a 46,200-square-foot event center that can accommodate 254 booths. The 321-room Cincinnati Marriott at RiverCenter is connected to the center via skybridge and has meeting space to accommodate 300 guests. The adjacent 227-suite Embassy Suites Cincinnati RiverCenter offers 8,000 square feet of function space.

A few blocks away, North by Hotel Covington has 53 apartment-style rooms, and the attached Hotel Covington has 114 guest rooms. The sister properties share a 200-person-capacity ballroom, a 375-person-capacity event center, and The Lightwell venue, which is built atop a former swimming pool and accommodates 500 guests.

A new 131-room Residence Inn by Marriott in Newport is set to open in 2027. There are currently 7,803 guest rooms in the immediate region.

Meetings in Northern Kentucky are enhanced with riverboat options along the Ohio River.

Northern Kentucky provides planners with unique options for outdoor gatherings and recreation, according to MeetNKY. At Boone County Arboretum, groups can take guided horticultural tours, wellness walks, nature photography sessions, and plant-focused experiences that align with planners' sustainability and wellness goals. BB Riverboats, including the *Belle of Cincinnati* and the *River Queen*, have meeting space for up to 280 guests. The Purple People Bridge, which spans the Ohio River, can accommodate up to 1,200 guests, while Covington Plaza, directly behind the Cincinnati Marriott at RiverCenter, can accommodate 1,350 guests for receptions.

In Newport, Hofbräuhaus Brewery & Restaurant offers authentic Bavarian menu items, beers brewed on site, a seasonal bier garden, and event space to accommodate 300 people. Newport Aquarium has four event rooms with a banquet capacity of 200 guests. The entire aquarium is available for after-hours events and can accommodate 1,000 guests.

Courtesy MeetNKY

North-Central Kentucky

Carrollton

VisitCarrolltonKY.com; @TourCarrolltonKY

On the Ohio River, approximately halfway between Cincinnati and Louisville, Carrollton is a “small American River Town” with much to explore, according to VisitCarrolltonKY.com. The town of approximately 10,000 people offers a historic downtown, Civil War sites, parks, and scenic beauty, as well as numerous annual festivals and concerts.

General Butler State Resort Park, overlooking the confluence of the Ohio and Kentucky rivers, has a 53-room lodge, 24 one-to-three-bedroom cottages, and a conference center seating 450 people banquet style and 750 people theater style. All of the park’s facilities have been recently renovated.

Maysville

VisitMaysvilleKY.com; @VisitMaysvilleKY

Approximately an hour from either Cincinnati or Lexington, Maysville is an Ohio River town with a historic downtown. Old Washington is a frontier village dating back to the 1780s, with log homes and Georgian-style townhouses. Nearby, the family-owned Old Pogue Distillery has been making bourbon and whiskey since 1876. The Landing at Limestone entertainment district occupies a historically significant riverfront area believed to be where Kentucky’s first barrels of bourbon were shipped down the Ohio River.

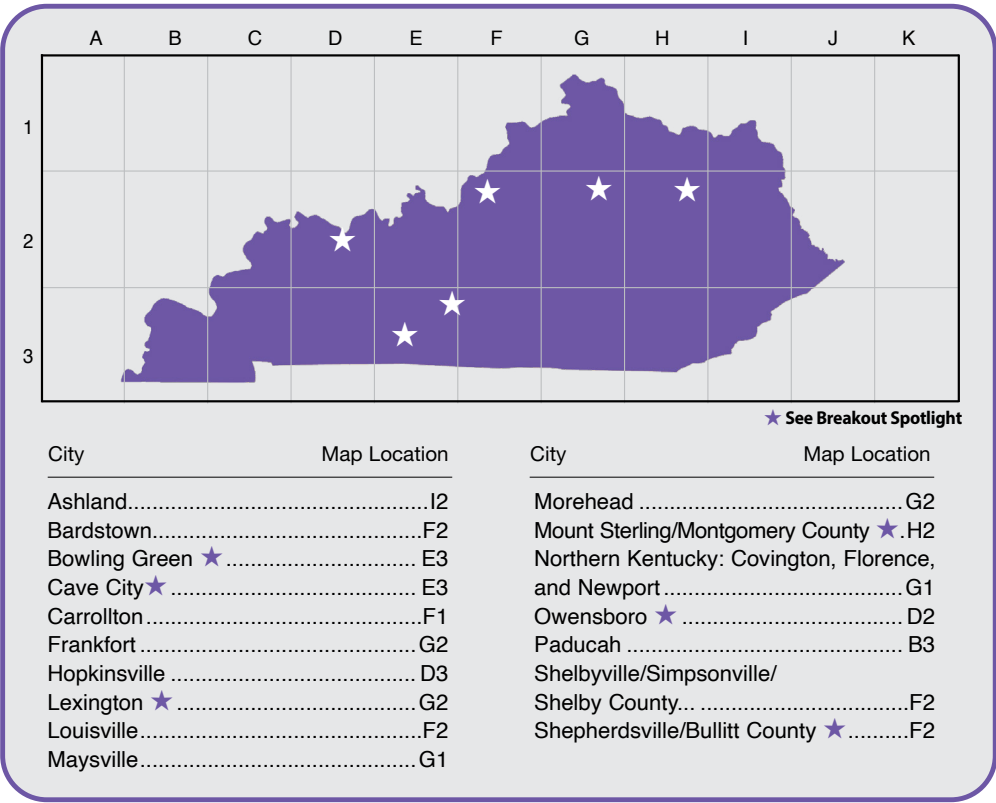
Downtown’s 1886 Cox Building is the town’s main event facility, according to VisitMaysvilleKY.com. It has three event spaces, including a 2,600-square-foot ballroom seating 200 guests. Additional venues include the 500-seat Washington Opera House, the 700-seat Russell Theatre, and the 93-room Hampton Inn Maysville, which has one small meeting room.

Central Kentucky

Bardstown

VisitBardstown.com; @VisitBardstown

Bardstown wears the crown of the “Bourbon Capital of the World,” says Stacey Phelps, president of Visit Bardstown. “We have 12 distilleries within 16 miles of our historic Main Street, including James B. Beam, Maker’s Mark, and Heaven Hill, plus many places where you can sample the best bourbons in tasting rooms, cellars, bars, and restaurants. Bardstown is more than just bourbon,” Phelps notes. “Settled in



1780, Bardstown is Kentucky’s second-oldest city, offering a slice of Americana with history, culture, and a strong dose of nostalgia.”

Bardstown’s Museum Row includes America’s largest and most complete collection of museums devoted to the Western Theater of the Civil War. Other attractions include My Old Kentucky Dinner Train, which offers themed rides for all ages; Oscar Getz Museum of Whiskey History, which completed a major redesign to celebrate Spalding Hall’s 200th anniversary; and My Old Kentucky Home State Park, which features an outdoor summer musical production honoring the iconic Stephen Foster song.

Major event venues include the Log Still Distillery, a 300-acre campus with multiple venues seating up to 700 dinner guests; the nonprofit Guthrie Opportunity Center, with a 20,000-square-foot multipurpose hall; My Old Kentucky Home, with a ballroom seating 200 theater style; and Bardstown Bourbon Co., with a variety of spaces to accommodate approximately 75 reception guests.

The 95-room Fairfield by Marriott Inn & Suites Bardstown can accommodate 80 people in banquet or theater seating; the 35-room Bardstown Motor Lodge is a retro-style hotel suited for small group buyouts; and the 80-room Holiday Inn Express & Suites Bardstown has space to seat 128 theater style.

Bowling Green

VisitBGKY.com; @VisitBGKY

Bowling Green offers affordability, ease of navigation around town, and a central location right off I-65, between Louisville and Nashville, Tenn., according to Marissa Butler, hospitality services director for Visit Bowling Green. “Visitors can stroll around a historic downtown, walk among legendary Corvettes or get behind the wheel of a brand-new Corvette, glide through natural wonders on a cave boat tour, or hold an event in a cave.”

As the only place in the world where Corvettes are made, Bowling Green is home to the National Corvette Museum (NCM). The museum’s unique event spaces can accommodate groups of up to 1,500 guests; spaces include the 8,297-square-foot conference center, the Skydome with a 360-degree wall of customizable video screens, and additional indoor and outdoor reception and event spaces. The museum offers tours of the Corvette assembly plant and teambuilding experiences on the track at NCM Motorsports Park.

The city-owned Sloan Convention Center has 35,500 square feet of meeting and exhibit space, including a ballroom accommodating up to 1,500 reception guests. Connected to the convention center is the 218-room Holiday Inn University Plaza, which is in the final stages of a

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multimillion-dollar renovation and will rebrand as a Crowne Plaza, according to Butler. Just across the street from the convention center are the 93-room Courtyard by Marriott Bowling Green Convention Center, with one small meeting room, and the 133-room Hilton Garden Inn Bowling Green, which includes four meeting rooms.

Additional lodging includes the 195-room Embassy Suites by Hilton Bowling Green, with 4,000 square feet of event space, and the 128-room SpringHill Suites by Marriott Bowling Green.

Unique venues include The Capitol historic arts center, with a 750-seat auditorium and a small meeting room; La Gala, with 10,000 square feet of function space; The Venue at 939 Adams, featuring a 2,000-square-foot deck and space to host 720 guests; and threeTHIRTYone, with 9,600 square feet of versatile event space to seat up to 350 banquet guests. Located on the campus of Western Kentucky University (WKU), Knically Conference Center has 31,748 square

feet of meeting and event space to seat 1,200 guests theater style; spaces include ballrooms, a conference room, lobby space, and a courtyard. Also on the WKU campus, the Eva and Jim Martens Alumni Center offers multiple event rooms, seating up to 250 people banquet style.

Just outside downtown, Lost River Cave has outdoor gathering spots, including a new pavilion seating 75 guests. Chaney's Dairy Barn serves homemade ice cream and offers event space for 115 guests.

Frankfort

VisitFrankfort.com; @VisitFrankfort
Kentucky's capital of Frankfort, home to approximately 25,000 people, is a historic city with a walkable downtown lined with 19th-century homes and commercial structures, many listed on the National Register of Historic Places. A highlight of downtown is the Greek Revival-style Old State Capitol, which served as the state capitol from 1830 to 1910.

According to VisitFrankfort.com, event facilities include distilleries, hotels, and historic sites. Castle & Key Distillery offers private tours, tastings, and experiences, along with indoor and outdoor spaces for 200 people. Buffalo Trace Distillery can accommodate up to 300 people for private events.

The 189-room Capital Plaza Hotel expects to complete major renovations by the end of 2026, with updated guest rooms, redesigned entry, and expanded event space. The hotel currently has 10,000 square feet of function space for 450 guests. According to FrankfortKYParksAndRec.com, the renovations are part of a strategic development plan to encompass the city's riverfront from Capital View Park to Buffalo Trace Distillery.

Historic venues for smaller events include the Thomas D. Clark Center for Kentucky History, with space to accommodate 200 guests, and The Foundry on Broadway, with 4,500 square feet of flexible space.



Paroquet Springs Conference Centre

With 40,000 square feet of banquet, meeting and exhibit space, the Paroquet Springs Conference Centre is perfect for group meals, small conferences and trade shows.



- Flexible facilities within the Centre accommodate groups up to 1500
- Break-out rooms provide the atmosphere for small meetings
- 12,000 square feet of exhibition space for larger events and trade shows with multiple break out rooms
- Complete audio-visual capabilities throughout the Centre
- Banquet Room comfortably seats 800
- Free onsite parking
- Free Professional Setup and Service Staff
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Great Location

- Centralized location for Tourist and Family activities
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- Only minutes to Louisville International Airport
- Convenient, affordable restaurants
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- Turn left on JB Hall, then left onto Paroquet Springs Drive

Nearby Activities

- Visit tranquil Bernheim Arboretum & Research Forest
- Hunt antiques at many local shops & flea markets
- Tour Jim Beam's American Outpost & Distillery
- 4 Roses Distillery
- Kart Kountry fills the need for speed and challenge
- Bullitt County History Museum
- Golf Courses and Driving Ranges
- May 2026: Aquatic center with indoor / outdoor pool and pickle ball courts.

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With its cobblestone streets and nearly 200 beautifully preserved historic buildings, downtown Bardstown offers small-town Southern charm.



Lexington

VisitLex.com; @VisitLEX

Sandy Johnson, director of destination sales for VisitLEX, says meeting planners consistently highlight Lexington's unmatched hospitality. "What feels like everyday friendliness to our locals creates a uniquely memorable experience for visitors. For our VisitLEX convention sales team, this level of community warmth is a selling advantage and one that sets our city apart."

Johnson also notes the city's budget-friendly status. "Hosting your convention here maximizes your bottom line without compromising on quality. Price points in Lexington are \$20-\$40 lower than comparable destinations, and our central location—within a day's drive of two-thirds of the U.S. population and just 10 minutes from Blue Grass Airport (LEX)—makes Lexington easily accessible."

Blue Grass Airport recently announced Future LEX, a multi-phase development designed to enhance the passenger experience and support long-term growth. "These improvements will position the airport to accommodate demand, with annual enplanements projected to nearly double by 2045," Johnson says.

The 366-room Hyatt Regency Lexington is undergoing a \$30 million-plus renovation of all guest rooms, meeting and event spaces, and public areas; renovations are expected to be completed in the first quarter of 2027. The hotel has 26,000 square feet of function

space and is connected to the Central Bank Center complex, which includes 100,000 square feet of exhibit space, 16 meeting rooms, a 24,300-square-foot ballroom, the iconic 20,500-seat Rupp Arena, and the 900-seat Lexington Opera House. Across the street from Central Bank Center is the 369-room Hilton Lexington Downtown, which features 18,690 square feet of function space.

Downtown Lexington has more than 1,200 hotel rooms, 75 restaurants, theaters, shops, galleries, and nightlife. The Distillery District on Manchester Street is within walking distance of the Central Bank Center. There are 9,300 guest rooms throughout the city.

Marriott Lexington Griffin Gate Golf Resort & Spa, with 408 guest rooms and 28,901 square feet of event space, is the city's largest hotel; its ballroom accommodates up to 1,200 guests. The resort property also includes a historic 19th-century mansion suitable for group events of up to 200 guests.

Gatton Park on the Town Branch is a new 12-acre downtown urban park adjacent to Rupp Arena. It includes an event lawn, public art, and a 5,000-person capacity amphitheater.

As the "Horse Capital of the World," Lexington offers plenty of ways for event attendees to experience equine legends up close, including tours and group activities. There are 450 Thoroughbred horse farms within 30 minutes of the city.

Kentucky Horse Park offers tours and exhibits, riding, and regularly scheduled

events. The park features a variety of venues and spaces for private events, including the International Museum of the Horse, which accommodates up to 300 people for receptions; the Big Barn, which seats up to 1,500 dinner guests; a 20,800-square-foot exhibit hall; and additional indoor and outdoor venues. Keeneland, a Thoroughbred racing facility and the world's largest Thoroughbred auction house, has six unique event venues to host up to 250 guests.

Louisville

GoToLouisville.com; @GoToLouisville

Louisville's unique brand of Southern hospitality, one-of-a-kind attractions, Urban Bourbon Experiences, rich culinary scene, convenience, and affordability make it a world-class destination for any meeting or event, says Doug Bennett, executive vice president of Louisville Tourism. "Attendees love 'Bourbon City's' restaurant and bar scene, the thrill of visiting Churchill Downs, Museum Row, and distillery tours. Following on the heels of several new bourbon experiences in 2025, the 2026 debuts include NuLu Whiskey Co. and Sole, a speakeasy located beneath a newly opened downtown bakery, Secret Recipe."

Louisville also welcomed Mashup Food Hall in the NuLu/LouMed District, offering a diverse lineup of chef-driven, family-owned eateries and gathering spaces suitable for business meetings or post-meeting get-togethers.

Two major new downtown hotel developments are in the works, according to Louisville Tourism. A JW Marriott hotel is set to open downtown in 2027, adjacent to 4th Street Live!. The 26-story redevelopment of a former bank building will feature approximately 418 guest rooms and more than 15,000 square feet of meeting and event space. Also, construction is expected to start in 2027 on a \$700 million redevelopment of the city's iconic Humana Building, which is being transformed into a 1,000-room convention-style hotel with more than 100,000 square feet of premium event venues.

Located adjacent to Muhammad Ali Louisville International Airport (SDF), Kentucky Exposition Center (KEC) continues its \$460 million expansion and renovation. A new 350,000-square-foot multipurpose building, expected to be completed in January 2027, will make KEC the fifth-largest convention center in the country, according



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Guided horseback rides along Shelby Trails Park in Shelby County are ideal for group outings and teambuilding.

Courtesy ShelbyKY Tourism

to Louisville Tourism. KEC currently has 1.2 million square feet of contiguous meeting space, including two arenas, 46 meeting rooms, and more than 300 acres of outdoor event space. Less than a mile from the airport, Crowne Plaza Louisville Airport Expo Ctr by IHG features 50,000 square feet of function space across 21 event rooms, including two ballrooms and an exhibit hall. The Crowne Plaza anchors a cluster of select-service hotels, providing more than 5,000 guest rooms. In downtown, Kentucky International Convention Center (KICC) includes an exhibit hall that can accommodate 1,039 booths or seat more than 19,000 people theater style, a 40,000-square-foot ballroom seating 2,592 banquet guests, 52 meeting rooms, and a 165-seat tiered conference theater. KICC connects to the 620-room Louisville Marriott Downtown, with 54,767 square feet of event space, and to the 393-room Hyatt Regency, with 20,600 square feet of function space.

There are more than 7,000 guest rooms within walking distance of KICC, including two historic properties: The Brown Hotel Louisville, with 294 guest rooms and 17 event spaces, including the elegant Crystal Ballroom and a rooftop garden; and The Seelbach Hilton Louisville, with 308 guest rooms and 21,490 square feet of function space, which includes the Rathskeller—the only surviving Rookwood-Pottery room in the world, which accommodates up to 300 for receptions.

Other major downtown event hotels include

the 1,310-room Galt House Hotel, with more than 130,000 square feet of function space; 612-room Omni Louisville Hotel, with 70,000 square feet of meeting and event space; and 304-room Embassy Suites by Hilton Louisville Downtown, with 18,509 square feet of event space.

Significant offsite venues include the 23,000-seat KFC Yum! Center, with more than 10 event spaces to accommodate up to 800 guests; the iconic Churchill Downs, with special race-day packages and indoor and outdoor event spaces to accommodate more than 1,500 guests; Louisville Slugger Museum, offering museum and factory tours, a 280-person-capacity Skybox, and full-venue rentals for 400-plus guests; and the Muhammad Ali Center, with a 158-seat auditorium, the rooftop View Pointe Hall, and additional indoor and outdoor venues.

Shelbyville/Simpsonville/ Shelby County

VisitShelbyKY.com; @Visit_ShelbyKY Shelby County offers an array of bourbon-centric lodging, shopping, and dining, along with Bulleit Distillery and Jephtha Creed Distillery, says Janette Marson, president and CEO of ShelbyKY Tourism. “Our location is perfectly positioned for easy access to Louisville, Lexington, and Northern Kentucky. We also offer a rare peek into the world of Saddlebred show horses, and we’re known as the ‘Saddlebred Horse Capital of the World.’”

Opened in 2021, Shelbyville Conference Center has more than 12,000 square feet of multipurpose space for meetings and events, with room to seat 400 for banquets or 600 theater style. Event guests can arrive in style via the 24-passenger Shelbyville Trolley.

Candlewood Suites Shelbyville, located approximately 10 minutes from Shelbyville Conference Center, and Fairfield Inn & Suites Shelbyville, adjacent to both Jephtha Creed Distillery and Talon Winery, each have 84 guest rooms. Talon Winery has an indoor-outdoor event space for 250 guests.

According to ShelbyKY Tourism, there are 750 guest rooms in the county, including bed-and-breakfast options and vacation rentals.

Unique teambuilding programs or group excursions include horseback riding at Red Fern Riding Center, one of Kentucky’s only guided horseback-riding facilities, or a barrel tasting experience at Jephtha Creed Distillery. As Marson explains, guests can “thieve,” or siphon their bourbon sample right from the barrel. The distillery is owned and operated by a mother-and-daughter team, and the family grows all the corn used in their product lines just 10 miles from the distillery.

Shelbyville also has great shopping. “Wakefield-Searce Galleries has one of the largest collections of English antiques in the United States,” Marson says. “Also in nearby Simpsonville, Outlet Shoppes of the Bluegrass is Kentucky’s only designer outlet mall.”

Shepherdsville/Bullitt County TravelBullitt.org

Just 15 minutes south of Louisville Muhammad Ali International Airport and approximately 30 minutes from Bardstown, Bullitt County is the trailhead of the Kentucky Bourbon Trail®. The county’s Wine, Whiskey & Ale Trail features nine distilleries, four wineries, and a craft brewery.

According to TravelBullitt.org, the 40,000-square-foot Paroquet Springs Conference Center offers prime event space, including 12,000 square feet of exhibition space and a banquet room seating 800 guests. Approximately 15 minutes away, Bernheim Arboretum and Research Forest has indoor and outdoor event spaces for 100 guests, and The Kitchen Table at James B. Beam Distilling can host 110 guests for dinners or receptions. The 22-acre Bourbon Luxe Estate and Venue has a five-bedroom home

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We’re revving up relationships while supercharging service in southern Kentucky this year with a conversion of our convention center hotel. With renovations complete, the 218-room property connected to the Sloan Convention Center is now officially **Crowne Plaza Bowling Green**, fueling our standards with a higher octane! Whether it’s feeling the adrenaline while racing Corvettes at the NCM Motorsports Park, exploring Lost River Cave hidden beneath the city’s streets, or networking over local live music and craft cocktails, we’ll help put your participants on the fast track to fun!



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Courtesy Morehead-Rowan County Tourism

Morehead Conference Center in Morehead-Rowan County includes 18,000 square feet of exhibit space, an 8,800-square-foot ballroom seating 500, and additional breakout and pre-function spaces.



and space for teambuilding and corporate events. Home2 Suites by Hilton Shepherdsville Louisville South has meeting space for 35 guests.

Eastern Kentucky Mount Sterling/ Montgomery County

MtSterlingTourism.com; @MyMtSterlingKY

With a historic, walkable downtown, colorful public art, and unique attractions like the iconic Ruth Hunt Candy factory, Mount Sterling provides easy access, affordable venues, and personalized planning support, says Tracy Pearce, director of tourism for Mount Sterling-Montgomery County Tourism. “Downtown, visitors can explore beautifully preserved architecture and public art, browse locally owned boutiques, tour the Gateway Regional Arts Center, enjoy handcrafted sweets, and experience Court Days in October, Kentucky’s oldest festival.”

Event venues include Clay Community Center, with space to seat 600 guests; Irish Hills Golf, Restaurant, and Event Venue, with seating for 200 in the restaurant and more than 300 in the enclosed pavilion; Gateway

Regional Arts Center, with space to seat 150 for dinners or 175 theater style; and Sterling Meadows, with space to seat 200 for banquets. The 69-room Ramada Limited Mount Sterling has 4,844 square feet of meeting space.

Morehead

VisitMorehead.com; @VisitMoreheadKY

Morehead and Rowan County offer planners something increasingly rare, says Joy Brown, executive director of Morehead-Rowan County Tourism. “We’re a destination where business and authentic experiences naturally come together. Within minutes, groups can paddle scenic waterways, hike the Sheltowee Trace National Recreation Trail, explore Daniel Boone National Forest, or fish or boat on Cave Run Lake.”

Morehead is home to Morehead State University, creating opportunities for educational partnerships, collegiate events, and access to cultural and athletic venues. “Combined with affordable accommodations, convenient interstate access, and a walkable downtown, we offer exceptional value without sacrificing quality,” Brown adds. Culture seekers will enjoy the nationally recognized Kentucky Folk Art Center, with live performances and exhibits.

The 32,000-square-foot Morehead Conference Center includes 18,000 square feet of exhibit space, an 8,800-square-foot ballroom seating 500, and additional breakout and pre-function spaces. Morehead State University has a variety of spaces, including a 600-seat ballroom, a 100-seat theater, and a 6,500-seat arena. Rowan County Arts Center includes a 300-seat auditorium, gallery spaces, and additional indoor and outdoor event spaces.

The recently renovated 95-room Holiday Inn & Suites Morehead (formerly the Comfort Inn) and 64-room Hampton Inn Morehead each have small meeting rooms.

Ashland

VisitAKY.com; @VisitAshlandKY

The largest city in eastern Kentucky, Ashland boasts a revitalized, pedestrian-friendly downtown called The District, which features art installations, locally owned restaurants and boutiques, an arts center, a museum, and a riverfront park on the Ohio, according to VisitAKY.com.

Paramount Art Center features a 1,419-seat theater and a 150-seat banquet hall; a new conference center, adjacent to the theater, is under construction and is expected to open in 2027, according to ParamountAshland.com. It will feature 18,000 square feet of rental space, including a large ballroom. The Highlands Museum & Discovery Center has 11,000 square feet of space to accommodate up to 600 people theater style.

The 152-room Delta Hotels by Marriott Ashland Downtown has 4,590 square feet of meeting space to accommodate 300 guests theater style.

Western Kentucky Hopkinsville

VisitHopkinsville.com; @VstHopkinsville

Known for creating globally recognized baking products, including Ghirardelli brownie mix, Cracker Barrel biscuit mix, and Red Lobster Cheddar Bay biscuit mix, Hopkinsville is proud of its multigenerational agriculture operations and its fame as the “Batter Capital of the World.” In addition, Hopkinsville is also home to Fort Campbell and the U.S. Army’s 101st Airborne Division, 5th Special Forces Group, and 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment. Many businesses offer special military discounts, according to VisitHopkinsville.com.

The James E. Bruce Convention Center has a 15,000-square-foot, column-free exhibit hall and eight ballrooms at 1,300 square feet each, which can be combined to accommodate up to 1,200 guests. The attached 104-room Holiday Inn & Suites Hopkinsville Convention Center has a boardroom for 30 people. The 71-room Hampton Inn & Suites Hopkinsville has a small meeting room.

Burdock Farms has a 4,000-square-foot Chapel Barn and outdoor spaces. The Hopkinsville campus of Murray State University and Hopkinsville Community College have classroom and auditorium spaces. Nearby, Pennyriple Forest State Resort Park has a 24-room lodge, two meeting rooms accommodating up to 120 people, and a 200-seat restaurant.

Owensboro

VisitOwensboro.com; @VisitOwensboro

Home to the Bluegrass Music Hall of Fame & Museum, the Kentucky Fiddle Championships,



Lexington's many distilleries provide a unique setting for group dinners.

Mary Jane Speer/Courtesy VisitEX



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ROMP fest, and other events, Owensboro earns its standing as the “Bluegrass Music Capital of the World.” Downtown’s Bluegrass Music Hall of Fame & Museum features a 4,000-square-foot event room with a large balcony overlooking the Ohio River that can accommodate 300 reception guests, a 447-seat theater, and other meeting and function spaces, plus an outdoor pavilion, a stage, and a lawn that accommodates 1,500 people.

With slightly less than 102,000 square feet of event space, Owensboro Convention Center includes a 44,000-square-foot exhibition hall, two ballrooms seating 910 dinner guests, and the 8,900-square-foot Kentucky Legend® Pier, which extends over the Ohio River and accommodates 1,000 guests.

Adjacent to the convention center are the 123-room Holiday Inn Owensboro Riverfront, with a 1,300-square-foot meeting room, and the 150-room Hampton Inn & Suites Downtown Owensboro/Waterfront, with 2,231 square feet of meeting space.

Also in downtown, RiverPark Center has a 1,479-seat main theater, a 160-seat theater, and additional indoor and outdoor venues. Owensboro Sportscenter has a 5,000-seat multipurpose arena. Owensboro Museum of Science and History includes gallery and lobby space for events and offers group tours.

Paducah

Paducah.Travel; @PaducahCreativeCity

Paducah is the “City of Many Ways,” because of its customizable, accessible, and authentic experiences, says Liz Hammonds, lead brand and public affairs strategist for Paducah CVB. “Visitors can tailor their Paducah experience to their interests, exploring the world-renowned arts scene, locally owned shopping and dining, and authentic American history.”

Creativity shows up in every corner of the UNESCO Creative City, Hammonds adds. “Paducah’s adaptive reuse of historic buildings gives the city a distinctive atmosphere: An old Greyhound bus station now houses a local microbrewery, while a former Coca-Cola bottling plant holds a coffee shop, pizza restaurant, and yoga studio.” Groups can enjoy the city’s Signature Experiences, with hands-on, curated opportunities led by curators, artists, historians, and community storytellers who bring Paducah’s culture and history to life.

The Paducah-McCracken County Convention & Expo Center is the city’s largest event space, with 80,000 square feet of exhibit space, 20,000 square feet of ballrooms, and 29,358 square feet of meeting space. The adjacent 123-room Holiday Inn Paducah Riverfront has a 1,392-square-foot meeting room.

The Carson Center for the Performing Arts has a 1,806-seat main theater and a multipurpose room seating 250 theater style, plus additional smaller rooms and a terrace overlooking the river. Walker Hall Event Center can seat 300 dinner guests, while the historic Market House Theatre has eight event spaces with a capacity of 200. Commonwealth Event Center has customizable event space for up to 650 guests.

1857 Hotel and Events Center has 14 boutique hotel rooms, three condos, and indoor space to seat up to 175 guests, plus additional outdoor space. There are more than 2,000 guest rooms within a five-mile radius, with two new hotels under construction: a TownePlace Suites by Marriott and Aloft by Marriot, according to Paducah CVB.

Paducah’s Barkley Regional Airport (PAH) now offers direct daily flights to Chicago and Houston. 📍

Paroquet Springs Conference Centre



Courtesy Paroquet Springs Conference Centre

Bullitt County’s Paroquet Springs Conference Centre offers 40,000 square feet of flexible meeting space, state-of-the-art technology, a noted chef, a dedicated event coordinator, and ample free parking. Planners can choose from several venues, including the 12,000-square-foot Salt River Room, with a banquet capacity of 800 guests, and an outdoor garden. Located off I-65, just 15 miles south of downtown Louisville and Louisville Muhammad Ali International Airport, Paroquet Springs Conference Centre is a convenient option for regional and state association meetings, business and social events, and expos.

ParoquetSprings.org

VisitLEX



Courtesy VisitLEX

Known as the “Horse Capital of the World,” Lexington is anchored by a vibrant downtown where bourbon, hospitality, and Bluegrass culture come together. Lexington offers the accessibility, convenience, and infrastructure needed for successful events of every size, with a state-of-the-art convention center, 14 convention hotels within 15 minutes of downtown and Blue Grass Airport, and more than 9,300 hotel rooms. Attendees can explore 11 bourbon distilleries, enjoy chef-driven dining, and immerse themselves in uniquely Kentucky experiences. VisitLEX’s sales and services team works alongside planners to create memorable meeting experiences.

VisitLEX.com/Meetings

Visit Bowling Green, KY



Courtesy Visit BGKY

As Kentucky’s fastest-growing city and home of the Corvette, Bowling ‘Green puts visitors on the fast track to fun. Groups can enjoy trackside board meetings, followed by touring laps at NCM Motorsports Park. Lost River Cave and Chaney’s Dairy Barn set the stage for unique venue experiences as well, while Sloan Convention Center offers 35,500 square feet of meeting and exhibit space, onsite catering, and audiovisual support. Located between Louisville and Nashville, Tenn., Bowling Green combines convenience and modern amenities with Southern charm and hospitality.

VisitBGKY.com

Owensboro Convention Center



Courtesy Owensboro Convention Center

Owensboro blends small-town charm with big-city amenities. Home to the Bluegrass Music Hall of Fame & Museum, it is also known as the “Bar-B-Q Capital of the World.” Owensboro Convention Center features more than 102,000 square feet of meeting space, including a spacious exhibit hall, three ballrooms, and multiple breakout rooms. Onsite catering and professional staff help planners create seamless and memorable events. Attendees can enjoy Owensboro’s vibrant riverfront along the Ohio River, unique attractions, and live music.

OwensboroCenter.com

Mount Sterling/Montgomery County



Courtesy Mount Sterling - Montgomery County Tourism

Located off I-64, just minutes from Lexington, Mount Sterling pairs flexible venues and comfortable accommodations with a welcoming community to accommodate meetings of all sizes. Clay Community Center offers a flexible layout, a full-service kitchen, and audiovisual capabilities for events of up to 600 people, while Irish Hills Golf, Restaurant & Events provides a unique setting. Attendees will enjoy the charming, walkable historic downtown, lined with public art and locally owned shops and restaurants, as well as local attractions like the Ruth Hunt Candy Factory and the Red River Gorge.

MtSterlingTourism.com/Meeting-Spaces

Cave Area Conference Center



Leslie Kidd

Located in Cave City, less than two miles from I-65, Cave Area Conference Center features 24,000 square feet of meeting space to accommodate groups of up to 1,000. The renovated conference center includes an auditorium, six meeting rooms, and an outdoor pavilion. Onsite catering is available, along with state-of-the-art audiovisual capabilities. A professional events staff is on hand to provide assistance, ensuring seamless, successful events. Attendees can enjoy local dining at more than 20 restaurants, outdoor activities, and the 53,000-acre Mammoth Cave National Park.

CaveAreaConferenceCenter.com

Closing Remarks

1 Hotel Austin Brings Meetings and Nature Together

By Helen Jacob



In Austin, where the city's skyline meets its green spaces, 1 Hotel Austin makes a case for bringing both into the meeting room. Set within the 74-story Waterline—the city's tallest tower—1 Hotel Austin offers 252 guest rooms, more than 10,000 square feet of event space, and a decidedly greener take on the luxury hotel experience. The hotel sits at the edge of the Rainey Street District, where downtown Austin meets Waller Creek, Waterloo Greenway, and the Ann and Roy Butler Hike-and-Bike Trail. For meeting groups, the urban-outdoor setting means attendees can trade the ballroom for a trail, a rooftop, or one of Austin's many restaurants and music venues.

The meeting spaces themselves make a strong case for staying on property. On the 14th floor, planners can choose from a 4,500-square-foot divisible ballroom, 6,000 square feet of pre-function space, three boardrooms, and indoor and outdoor terraces overlooking downtown and Lady Bird Lake. Floor-to-ceiling windows frame sweeping views of Austin, making the city itself part of the room.

“At 1 Hotel Austin, our event spaces bring nature and thoughtful design together to create memorable experiences of every size,” says Jon Tompkins, director of sales and marketing for 1 Hotel Austin. “With flexible venues, exceptional culinary offerings, personalized service, and Certified Sustainable Gatherings, we're the ideal partner for meetings, weddings, and celebrations that inspire connection while leaving a lighter footprint.”

Sustainability is more than a talking point. The hotel incorporates reclaimed wood, locally quarried limestone, reusable glassware, and thousands of native and climate-appropriate plants. The property has more than 4,000 plants representing more than 30 species, and an onsite apiary supplies honey for Neighbors Café and Wine Bar.

Sustainability carries through to the meetings themselves. The hotel's Certified Sustainable Gatherings program helps planners reduce waste through responsible sourcing, lower-impact menus, reusable serveware, donations, and other event-specific strategies.



For dining, three distinct venues offer planners plenty of options, from casual networking to a memorable group dinner. Alteño, from James Beard Award nominee chef Johnny Curiel, serves fire-driven cuisine inspired by the Jalisco Highlands and includes a private dining room. Neighbors Café and Wine Bar shifts from breakfast spot to wine bar as the day progresses. Upstairs, the watr rooftop concept, first introduced at 1 Hotel South Beach, pairs Japanese-inspired dishes with inventive cocktails and offers sweeping skyline views from 16 stories above the city.

The hotel's 252 accommodations, including 60 suites, continue the nature-meets-Austin theme with oak, natural stone, woven textiles, greenery, and floor-to-ceiling windows. Guest rooms also include yoga mats, filtered water taps, Bamford bath amenities, and locally made snacks for guests to enjoy.

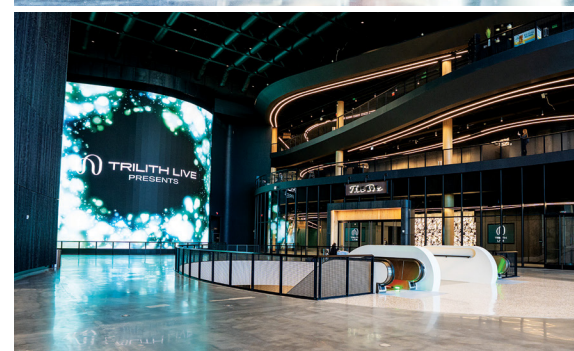
To help attendees decompress after a day of sessions, the wellness floor offers a fitness center, a yoga studio, and Bamford Wellness Spa. The spa's treatment menu combines Bamford's signature rituals with massages, personalized facials, infrared sauna sessions, soundwave therapy, red-light treatments, and recovery experiences. Guests can also take advantage of additional wellness activities surrounding the hotel property, including a three-mile Sunday run club around Lady Bird Lake and other experiences built around the hotel's proximity to the trail, lake, and surrounding parkland. The hotel offers a regular calendar of events for guests to enjoy curated experiences, including cocktail-making classes, clothes-dyeing workshops led by Central Texas Fashion Coalition, and journaling and vision boarding.

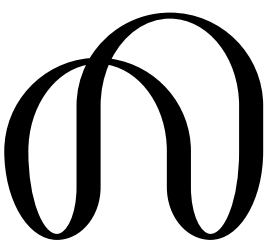
With flexible event space, destination dining, wellness amenities, and sustainability-focused practices, 1 Hotel Austin gives meeting and event planners a distinctive option in the Texas capital. Its location and design connect groups with Austin's natural and creative energy while maintaining the convenience of a full-service urban hotel, delivering meetings, celebrations, and events as memorable outside the ballroom as they are inside it. 🌿

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