



Seattle's Convention and Visitors Bureau

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News Release

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SEATTLE WINS HIGHLY COVETED MEETINGS INDUSTRY GROUP

SEATTLE - Conferon, one of the meeting and convention industry's most influential organizations, announced today that it will hold its annual meeting and trade show in Seattle, August 21-25, 2005. Seattle was chosen despite several highly competitive bids from other U.S. cities.

Conferon is the nation's largest privately-owned convention management company, providing associations and corporations with conference planning and site expertise, hotel contract analysis and negotiation, attendee management, supplier negotiations, and marketing consulting and trade show sales and management.

Next summer's annual meeting will feature an estimated 600 attendees, including 180 Conferon staff, some 100 of Conferon's top meeting planner clients and more than 300 exhibitors and local sponsors and hosts.

"While Seattle hosts groups with more attendees, Conferon's influence is sizeable on key meeting planner decision makers at associations and corporations," said Don Welsh, Senior Vice President of Sales & Marketing for Seattle's Convention & Visitors Bureau. "This is a rare chance to showcase our city to key Conferon staff who have the potential to recommend Seattle to key convention groups," said Welsh.

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The presence of Conferon's 100 top meeting planner clients at the conference is a built-in bonus. These key planners each typically produce \$750,000 or more in annual hotel guestroom revenue.

Seattle's Convention & Visitors Bureau launched an aggressive bid for the Conferon meeting three years ago, according to Janet Hunter, Director of Sales. The bureau lead a task force made up of local hoteliers, convention management companies, visitor attractions, transportation companies, airline partners and the Washington State Convention & Trade Center. In addition to outlining prospective hotel rooms, meeting space, air and ground transportation and food and beverage options, the task force created a complete conference itinerary with city tours, teambuilding events and prize giveaways. The group highlighted the city's typically superb August weather, making statistical comparisons with competing cities, and positioned Seattle's unique meeting venues and downtown walkability as competitive advantages. Additionally, a comical Austin Powers-inspired video featuring Seattle's collegial destination sales team was delivered to the doorstep of the Conferon meeting planners.

Seattle's Convention & Visitors Bureau is a non-profit economic development agency responsible for competitively marketing Seattle as a destination for meeting and convention groups and leisure travelers. Visitors spend \$3.6 billion in Seattle and King County annually, contributing more than \$300 million in state and local tax revenues. Direct visitor spending benefits hotels, retailers, restaurants, attractions, transportation services and other businesses, and supports jobs for 60,000 people in the Seattle region.

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