



News Release

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SEATTLE HOSTS MEGA CITYWIDE CONVENTION THIS WEEK Worldwide Attendance of Neurologists Will Fill Hotels, Restaurants and Shops, and Buoy Many Struggling Seattle Businesses

SEATTLE – Seattle’s largest and most lucrative convention of the year is sure to draw smiles from area business owners when it convenes in Seattle beginning today. The American Academy of Neurology (AAN) 2009 Annual Meeting, running through May 2, is projected to bring more than 12,000 delegates from more than 70 countries to Seattle and generate economic impact of more than \$25 million for the city and region.

The “citywide” convention is based at the Washington State Convention & Trade Center and will use 24 downtown Seattle hotels and numerous off-site meeting venues. The business compression it generates will benefit hotels well beyond downtown, and many local restaurants, retail outlets, visitor attractions and service businesses throughout the city will see some of their strongest business of the year.

While worldwide leisure travel business remains soft, Seattle is expecting record convention business now through mid-summer, thanks to many national meetings and conventions that were booked years ago. Unlike many other major U.S. cities, Seattle has not experienced significant convention cancellations during the economic downturn because its bread-and-butter convention market is composed of associations like AAN. Associations, which depend on annual meeting revenue, tend to hold their contracted dates while consumer- and exhibit-based meetings are more vulnerable to attendance drops and cancellations.

The convention and meetings market is particularly important to Seattle’s economy, accounting for more than 40 percent of Seattle’s downtown hotel occupancy. Typically, convention delegates spend nearly twice as much while in town as leisure travelers and, on average, spend an extra 2.5 days sightseeing in and around Seattle before or after conventions. AAN’s pre- and post-convention stays in and around Seattle are expected to be strong as

delegates affiliated with this association tend to bring family members to the annual convention.

Seattle's Convention and Visitors Bureau booked the AAN annual meeting in 2000, beating out several competing cities, including runner-up San Francisco. Seattle's winning bid focused on the city's strong medical and neurological research infrastructure, as well as its vibrant and easily-walkable downtown, strong overall hotel package, abundance of top-notch dining, shopping and culture, the quality of service and geographic location of the Washington State Convention & Trade Center and the wealth of appealing off-site meeting venues throughout the area.

In addition to the AAN, Seattle has already hosted several citywide conventions this year and more in tow throughout the spring and summer. The International Trademark Association will bring 8,000 delegates to town May 15-21 and contribute \$17 million in economic impact.

"We are pleased to bring the world's largest gathering of neurologists to Seattle for the 61st AAN Annual Meeting," said Catherine M. Rydell, CAE, CEO and Executive Director of the American Academy of Neurology. "Seattle's incredible amenities enhance the overall Annual Meeting experience for our attendees, who come from all over the world to receive top-tier education programming and a wealth of information on the latest advances in neurologic research."

"Associations such as the American Academy of Neurology are critical components of Seattle's tourism," said Tom Norwalk, President & CEO of Seattle's Convention and Visitors Bureau. "Associations are typically booked years in advance, hold their dates even during economic downturn and often exceed projected attendance due to Seattle's popularity."

Seattle's Convention and 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. As a membership-based organization, SCVB connects more than 800 local businesses with the lucrative visitor market. Some 9.5 million visitors spend \$5.16 billion in Seattle and King County annually, contributing \$468 million in state and local tax revenues. Direct visitor spending benefits hotels, retailers, restaurants, attractions, transportation services and other businesses, and supports jobs for more than 63,000 people in the Seattle region.

Anatomy of a Convention: American Academy of Neurology Annual Meeting, Seattle, April 23-May 2, 2009

Booking Details

- Booked in: **2000**
- Booked by: **Seattle's Convention and Visitors Bureau**
- Primary competitors: **West Coast cities**
- Opportunity cost (if Seattle had not won bid): **Immeasurable**
- Re-booking potential: **Dependent upon sufficient meeting and hotel space**

Attendees

- Attendees: **more than 12,000**

Hotels

- Committed Hotels: **24**
- Hotel Room Nights Contracted: **30,000**
- Hotel Rooms on Peak Night (Monday, 4-27): **5,000**

Economic Impact

- Total Projected Economic Impact: **\$25 million**
- Hotel spending: **\$6.5 million**
- Food and Beverage Spending: **\$4.1 million**
- Retail Spending projected: **\$1.5 million**
- Transportation: **\$1.3 million**
- Entertainment & Recreation: **\$260,000**
- Venue rental, electrical, staging, etc.: **\$12 million**
- Regional Compression Index: **Highest Potential**

Washington State Convention & Trade Center:

- Compostable/recyclable bottles of water used: **17,300**
- Box lunches: **4,000**
- Table cloths: **4,000**

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