

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Destinations Showcase Washington Reports Record Expo Participation; Hosted Buyer Program Extended to Chicago Event

Survey Shows 84 Percent of Planners to Book Meetings with Destinations Evaluated at Show

Washington, D.C. (April 2, 2009) – Destination Marketing Association International today released findings of a recently completed survey of planners who attended Destinations Showcase Washington that indicates 84 percent are likely to book meetings with destinations that they evaluated at the show on Thursday, Feb. 26, 2009. In addition, 46 percent are considering booking a destination that they had not previously considered, as a direct result of knowledge gained at the one-day event.

“This underscores the importance of face-to-face meetings for our own industry,” says Jim Duda, managing director of Destinations Showcase. “You have to be present if you want an opportunity to win business. This is especially true for second- and third-tier cities that might not be top of mind for a planner until they’re educated. I hear all the time ‘Wow, I didn’t realize that my event requirements fit there. I need to add that place to my map.’”

Destinations Showcase Washington is the meeting industry’s largest forum offering an exhibit hall comprised exclusively of destination marketing organizations and industry associations. A record 213 exhibitors participated—including 187 domestic destinations, 17 from international locales, and nine industry associations. Nearly 1,100 pre-qualified association, corporate, government, independent, and third-party meeting professional attended—many with RFPs in hand—looking to identify new destinations for their upcoming meetings, conventions, and trade shows.

“Destinations Showcase attracted qualified decision makers that were looking to do business in a down market and, as an exhibitor, you cannot ask for more than that,” noted Missey Garcia-Smith of Nashville Convention & Visitors Bureau.

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In addition to the record number of booth spaces, Destinations Showcase Washington also saw an increase in the average number of exhibit personnel manning each booth, along with planner participation levels near last year's—including 13 hosted buyers brought in from outside the Baltimore-Washington area through a newly launched program.

“As a first time attendee of the Hosted Buyer's Program, [Destinations Showcase] was an event planners dream,” said Yvonne Petro, a corporate planner with Lowepro, a manufacturer of popular photography bags, in Sebastopol, Calif.

DMAI plans to extend the Hosted Buyer Program for Destinations Showcase Chicago. The program—which targets professionals who plan international events and large-scale domestic meetings, conventions, and trade shows—provides complimentary travel, two nights' lodging, and show admission to selected applicants.

Destinations Showcase Chicago takes place on Wednesday, June 24, 2009, at the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center in Rosemont, Ill. The full-day event will feature morning breakout sessions, a keynote presentation by marketing expert Don Neal of Leading Authorities Inc.—with lunch provided by the Albuquerque Convention & Visitors Bureau, and an afternoon expo featuring 100 meeting destinations from the U.S. and beyond.

Meeting professionals may register online for free admission at www.destinationsshowcase.com. Planners who live outside of the Chicago region are encouraged to apply for the limited-time hosted buyer offer at www.destinationsshowcase.com/hostedbuyer.

About Destination Marketing Association International

DMAI represents 1,400+ professional members from 650+ destination marketing organizations throughout nearly 30 countries. Called the International Association of Convention & Visitor Bureaus until August 2005, the association has worked to enhance the professionalism, effectiveness, and image of destination marketing organizations since 1914. Get updated information 24 hours a day, seven days a week at www.destinationmarketing.org.

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