



Produced by:



2025 M St., NW, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20036 USA
Phone: 202.296.7888 • Fax: 202.296.7889

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

DMAI marks 25th anniversary of Destinations Showcase Washington

*Annual Conference & Expo draws more than 900 meeting professionals
and nearly 200 exhibiting organizations*

Washington, D.C. (March 3, 2011) – Destination Marketing Association International celebrated the 25th anniversary of Destinations Showcase Washington, at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center in downtown Washington, D.C., on Thursday, Feb. 24. More than 900 meeting professionals attended the annual event, including 34 out-of-town hosted buyers; along with representatives of 174 exhibiting destinations from across North America and beyond, and eight industry associations.

“There was increased optimism at the event this year,” said Jim Duda, managing director of Destinations Showcase. “There appears to be more intent to buy from the planners and that resulted in more RFPs for destinations and strong energy on the trade show floor.”

In addition to the Conference & Expo’s morning breakout sessions, a keynote luncheon featuring Eileen McDargh, and afternoon expo, this year’s Destinations Showcase included several new additions:

- The PMSI Promotional Products Fair offered a wide-selection of board, speaker, and membership gift ideas from 10 suppliers outside of the registration and breakout sessions area.
- A Social Media Help Desk, sponsored by TripBuilder, was added to the expo hall. Social media experts Jessica Levin and Midori Connolly, whom presented an “Engaging Technology” breakout session earlier in the day, answered planners’ questions about using Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and other social media to network and market events.
- Immediately following the closing of the expo hall, Hospitality Industry Professionals (HIP) Network hosted an official Destinations Showcase After-Party at nearby Bar 7.

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The one-day Conference & Expo and its sister Destinations Showcase Chicago, taking place on Thursday, June 2, at the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center in Rosemont, Ill., are the meetings industry's only events to feature an exhibit hall comprised exclusively of destination marketing organizations and industry associations.

Registration is now open for Destinations Showcase Chicago and admission is complimentary to qualified meeting professionals who pre-register online. Alternately, out-of-town planners may apply for DMAI's third annual hosted buyer program that provides selected participants with complimentary admission, travel, hotel accommodations, and special face-to-face appointments with sponsoring DMOs. For more information, visit www.DestinationsShowcase.com.

About Destination Marketing Association International

Destination Marketing Association International (DMAI) is the world's largest and most reliable resource for official destination marketing organizations (DMOs). Dedicated to improving the effectiveness of professionals from nearly 625 DMOs worldwide, DMAI's membership represents more than 3,000 DMO professionals, students, educators, and industry partners in over 30 countries. Meeting professionals will benefit from DMAI's empowerMINT.com program, a new online tool for meeting and event planners. Connecting planners and their events to destinations and their experts, empowerMINT.com simplifies the researching, distribution, and selection of DMOs and partnering hotels and meeting venues. empowerMINT.com leverages and integrates the existing MINT historical database and thousands of existing customer relationships to create the DMO industry's first lead generation and sales network.

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Media contact: Brady Lutsko at 412-381-1105 or blutsko@destinationmarketing.org

Note to editors: photos of this event are available for download at flickr.com/destinations-showcase/