Look out world, Wisconsin is taking its place at the meetings & conventions table.

- Democratic National Convention anyone?
- How about big-time convention space in, of all places, the waterpark capital of the world?
- Don’t mind our hyper-local experiences (yes, that means craft beer and artisan cheese).
- And if you care to host a meeting on a submarine, at a luxury spa or in a mansion, then Wisconsin may be exactly what you’ve been searching for, in all its original, random and eclectic glory.

**MEDIA CONTACTS**

**Kristina LeVan**  
Wisconsin Department of Tourism  
608-266-0458; klevan@travelwisconsin.com

**Craig Trost**  
Wisconsin Department of Tourism  
608-267-3773; ctrost@travelwisconsin.com

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New Venues
- Saint Kate Arts Hotel: Milwaukee’s Intercontinental Hotel is being renovated and rebranded as the city’s first independent arts hotel focused on celebrating the arts and the creative process. The hotel will have 219 art-inspired guest rooms as well as performance space, a gallery and an artist-in-residence program, plus seven different meeting rooms and exhibit space. Opening late spring 2019.
- Potawatomi Hotel & Casino: A second hotel tower is opening here in summer 2019, adding 119 rooms and suites as well as new meeting rooms and a spa.
- Cambria Hotel & Suites Downtown Milwaukee: The city’s historic Third Ward District — with lots of dining, live music and shopping options all within walking distance — is the setting for this new hotel, with a summer open date planned.
- Drury Plaza Hotel Milwaukee Downtown: Opening this summer in the heart of downtown, this historic renovation of the 15-story First Financial Centre includes 5,000 square feet of flexible meeting space.

Why Milwaukee?
Big city convention capabilities, small city work ethic, an international airport, and a great setting on a Great Lake all factored into these decisions:
- The Democratic National Convention is coming to Milwaukee in 2020. The Fiserv Forum, the new arena for the Milwaukee Bucks that opened in fall 2018, will serve as the site for the convention, July 13-16, 2020.
- The League of United Latin American Citizens, the oldest and most widely respected Hispanic civil rights organization in the United States, is holding its national convention and exposition here July 10-13.
- The United Church of Christ General Synod comes to the city June 21-25, with workshops, inspirational gatherings, youth activities and special banquets all on the schedule.
- Edspaces brings together designers and facility managers who work to transform education so all students have a chance to succeed with a focus on innovative learning spaces, and they chose Milwaukee for their annual gathering, set for Oct. 23-25.

Milwaukee’s Must-Experience Cultural Gems
- Get a taste of the city and say “bottoms up” at Milwaukee’s local breweries.
- Hit the virtual links at area golf simulators and take a selfie with the Ryder Cup trophy in honor of the 2020 Ryder Cup coming to Wisconsin
- Visit souvenir-making stations: Wisconsin Museum of Quilts & Fiber Arts and custom printer Bay View Printing Co.
New Venue
- Kalahari Resorts & Conventions is doubling the size of its meeting space to 212,000 square feet, which includes a 52,000 square foot ballroom, sun-drenched pre-function spaces, ‘recharge’ lounges and outdoor patios, all opening this fall. There are more than 750 rooms and suites here to accommodate attendees.

Why Wisconsin Dells?
“Bleisure” popularity, super-fun team-building experiences, international staff, and natural beauty rank right up there among meetings planners:
- Mini-golf, ropes courses, laser tag, and amazing races have all creeped their way into conferences and board meetings.
- There’s an abundance of diversity thanks to the city’s leadership in the J-1 Visa cultural exchange program. One recent conference took advantage of this by featuring a cultural dance performed by staff working at the resort.

Wisconsin Dells’ Must-Experience Cultural Gems
- Some of the state’s most iconic supper clubs are in Wisconsin Dells. The Del-Bar is now third-generation and has been serving guests for 75 years. Ishnala, perched over Mirror Lake, has been a gem in the area for 50+ years, and their mixologists are known for having mastered the Old Fashioned cocktail.
- The beauty of the Wisconsin River and the sandstone formations that tower above it are what made Wisconsin Dells famous long before the manmade fun of the waterparks and state-of-the-art convention centers. Best enjoyed on a Dells Boat Tour, which can accommodate groups up to 175 people.
New Venues

- SpringHill Suites Madison: This modern hotel with spaces for small meetings is near both the University of Wisconsin campus and the happening Hilldale shopping mecca.
- Home2 Suites: Madison’s first Home2 Suites by Hilton is scheduled to open this summer near the city’s bustling Alliant Energy Center.
- Hotel Indigo: This downtown boutique hotel opened in April within the landmark Mautz Paint Company building and features original architecture, nostalgic touches and modern amenities. There’s an onsite restaurant and a meeting room large enough for 85.

Why Madison?
Wisconsin’s capitol city is the perfect blend of academia, arts, natural resources, food and politics, and the Madison convention and visitor bureau knows how to work that.

- Take a Betty Lou Cruise of Lake Monona, with themed drinks and meals available daily May through October. Or paddle Lake Mendota, America’s most studied lake, relaxing after at Memorial Union Terrace and Alumni Park.
- Meet the sassy cows at Sassy Cow Creamery, a third-generation family farmstead, and enjoy a scoop or two of ice cream.
- Learn the art of the cheese board from the culinary masters at The Madison Concourse Hotel.
- Attend a “Bitters Bootcamp” at Avenue Club and Bubble Up Bar and learn to make Wisconsin’s unofficial state cocktail, the Old Fashioned, including creating your own bitters, a vital ingredient in this favorite drink.

Madison’s Must-Experience Cultural Gems

- The Dane County Farmers’ Market on the Capitol Square is the largest producers-only market in the country and runs mid-April through mid-November. Pop in to the state capitol building and look up at the massive and ornate dome, the only granite dome in the U.S.
- Bike around the lakes or keep it urban and cruise the capital city with a bike from the bike-sharing system Madison B-Cycle. Madison was bestowed Platinum status by the League of American Bicyclists, one of just a handful of cities in the U.S. to receive this honor.
- The National Mustard Museum is home to the world’s largest collection of mustards, more than 6,000 in all from all 50 states and more than 70 countries.
**Fond du Lac**: Hotel Retlaw has reopened following a $25 million renovation to preserve the historical significance and aesthetics of this Art Deco property that echoes to the Roaring Twenties and the Jazz Age. The Retlaw features 121 guest rooms and 10,000 square feet of flexible meeting space including the Crystal Ballroom. There’s also a spa with indoor relaxation pool.

**Green Bay**: The historic Hotel Northland, designed by the same architect who created Hotel Retlaw, reopened on Valentine’s Day this year. It originally opened back in 1924 and operated through the 1960s as residence for Green Bay Packers and host of visiting NFL teams. It’s within easy walking distance to the KI Convention Center and offers 11,000 square feet of meeting space of its own. Also available for private events is a lower level bar area complete with a two-lane bowling alley.

**Kenosha**: The Stella Hotel & Ballroom, which opened in April, is the revitalization of a 100-year-old building that once served as the city’s Elk’s Club. There are 80 guest rooms, a restaurant, seasonal rooftop bar, and 4,000 square feet of meeting space including a two-story elegant ballroom.

**Beloit**: The Beloit College Powerhouse is a 120,000 square-foot, $38 million project that recently received the World Architecture Festival award for top overall future project in the world for 2018. It opens this fall, connecting college and community and offering collaborative meetings and gathering spaces, a conference center and outdoor decks overlooking the Rock River.

**Waukesha**: The Historic Courthouse 1893, Waukesha County’s original courthouse, is now home to two floors of meeting and event space in the city’s downtown district.

**Pewaukee**: The Ingleside Hotel, formerly Country Springs Hotel, has completed its $12 million renovation of meeting space, guest rooms and public spaces. Business travelers can step outside to hiking trails or stay inside and take advantage of the fitness center, yoga area with courtyard views, and pool and waterpark.

**Appleton**: Home2 Suites by Hilton opens this spring. This extended stay, 104-room property will offer flexible meeting space and it’s pet-friendly. Also in Appleton and opening this summer, a 125-room Holiday Inn with casual bar/restaurant and 5,000 square feet of ballroom space.
Wisconsin Dells: Sundara Inn & Spa, a darling of national travel magazines, completed a 40,000 square foot expansion with meeting rooms, demonstration kitchen, rooftop greenhouse and on-site hiking trails. While in Wisconsin Dells, groups can further relax and de-stress during a tour of New Life Lavender & Cherry Farm.

Eau Claire: This city has been compared to Portland and Austin for its makers-and-creators culture. Take a cooking class at Forage, which caters to vegetarian and vegan diets and also focuses on eliminating food waste as much as possible. It’s located in Banbury Place, the former Uniroyal Tire factory turned artists’ collective.

Manitowoc: The Farm Wisconsin Discovery Center opened last July and quickly became a prominent location for agricultural tourism events and other professional meetings. While the center has a 4,500 square-foot conference room, meeting attendees are encouraged to experience the exhibits, see the calf birthing barn, and enjoy Wisconsin-made culinary treats from the country store.

Fond du Lac: Try goat yoga, themed brunches or a farm-to-table dinner at LaClare Family Creamery. The list of national awards for their goat cheese and goat yogurt is a mile long and they’re even expanding with a redesigned retail shop and restaurant.

Green Bay: New for groups this year are Signature Experiences including: tours of the Green Bay Botanical Gardens to learn about sustainability and herbal remedies; an immersion in the Oneida Nation way of life including learning to cook a staple of their diet, white corn; and a wine sensory evaluation paired with a wine and food class at Parallel 44 Vineyard & Winery.
Manitowoc: Council of American Maritime Museums Annual Conference, April 24-26, Wisconsin Maritime Museum

Janesville: SAFECON Safety & Flight Aviation Annual Conference of the National Intercollegiate Flying Association, May 13-18, Southern Wisconsin Regional Airport

Appleton: National Holstein Association’s Annual Convention, June 24-27, Red Lion Paper Valley Hotel

Milwaukee: Whirlpool National Annual Sales Conference, April 27-May 2, Wisconsin Center

Manitowoc: Historic Naval Ships Association Annual Conference, Sept. 17-20, Wisconsin Maritime Museum

UNCONVENTIONAL MEETING SPACES

Mansions: If mansions are what you’re after, then make your way to Milwaukee for your next meeting. Milwaukee’s Pabst Mansion, built for one of the city’s original beer barons, Captain Frederick Pabst, is sought after for its Gilded Age architecture and Victorian décor. The Schuster Mansion was built for tobacco industrialist George Schuster and is known as “The Red Castle.” The Brumder Mansion was built for the son of prominent Milwaukee business leader George Brumder and even includes a theater for live performances.

A Submarine: If you’re looking for a meeting venue in the water, then step inside the USS Cobia, a WWII submarine moored along the Manitowoc River at the Wisconsin Maritime Museum in Manitowoc. If you really want to immerse your group in this piece of Naval history, ask about their overnight program.

A Carriage House: The restored Tallman Carriage House in Janesville is part of the Rock County Historical Society Campus and includes indoor and outdoor meeting spaces. Be inspired by the area’s entrepreneurs who shaped Wisconsin commerce and industry.