



## **Frequently Asked Questions- 1 Greater Hartford Convention & Visitors Bureau**

### **What is the role of the Greater Hartford Convention & Visitors Bureau (GHCVB)?**

Established in 1974, the Greater Hartford Convention & Visitors Bureau (GHCVB) is a non-profit organization that works with Hartford's businesses, institutions, nonprofits and surrounding communities to market the region as a convention, meeting and trade show destination. The GHCVB promotes and facilitates meetings and conventions in Greater Hartford Area. Together with the Capital City Economic Development Authority (CCEDA), the Connecticut Convention Center, and the entire hospitality community, GHCVB is aggressively promoting the region's complete menu of meeting, lodging and leisure options.

### **What services does the GHCVB offer to meeting planners?**

The Greater Hartford Convention & Visitors Bureau:

- Actively promotes Greater Hartford as a meeting destination to corporations, trade associations, non-profit organizations and fraternal groups through presentations and promotional materials
- Provides meeting planners representing the above organizations with detailed reference materials on Greater Hartford to aid in site selection
- Coordinates with area hotels to establish room blocks for inclusion in conference proposals.
- Prepares official bid packets for groups considering Hartford as an event destination
- Arranges site inspections and familiarization tours.
- Assists visiting groups in their meeting preparation efforts. These include coordination with local services, transportation, on-site logistics and registration assistance, providing liaison with City and State officials, assistance with special permits, pre- and post-conference activities, spousal tours and visits to local attractions, shopping and dining.

### **What benefits do GHCVB members receive?**

GHCVB members benefit from:

- Listings in the annual Greater Hartford Visitor Guide, Meeting Planners' Guide
- Presence on [www.enjoyhartford.com](http://www.enjoyhartford.com)
- Referrals
- Networking
- Meeting coordination services

### **Why is Greater Hartford an ideal location for meetings and conventions?**

**Ease.** Hartford is easy to get to. In and out of and around. Bradley International Airport has an established reputation as a hassle free alternative to other congested Northeast airports; and it was named by *Newsweek* as one of the nation's top boutique airports.



## FAQ-2

**Value.** Today's convention and meeting planners seek both value and amenities. Reducing cost is very important to meeting planners today. Greater Hartford's wide variety of lodging options are competitively priced compared to lodging rates with our neighbors in New York, Boston and Providence.

**Demographics.** Association meeting planners want to attract a large concentration of their members. They recognize that Hartford is a desirable spot to convene a large percentage of members that live in Connecticut or neighboring states. Hartford is located within 100 miles of more potential convention delegates than any other city besides New York. Twenty-three million people live within a two-hour drive of Hartford, and there's more than one million people along the Knowledge Corridor stretching from central Connecticut to western Massachusetts.

**History. Established in 1634, Hartford is one of America's oldest cities.** When it comes to history and historic preservation, we wrote the book. From the Mark Twain House and Museum to the Harriet Beecher Stowe Center, from the Butler-McCook Homestead to The Old State House to Coltsville, examples of our proud origins abound.

**Gateway.** Hartford is the gateway to New England, which is ranked as one of the nation's top five tourism destinations. Seventy five percent of all meeting groups look to New England as a meeting site every five to seven years.

**Facilities.** In the summer of 2005, Hartford will triple its meeting and convention space when the 540,000 square foot Connecticut Convention Center joins the Hartford Civic Center, Connecticut Expo Center and numerous other hotel and historic meeting sites throughout the city. Hartford will have nearly three-quarters of a million square feet of space.

**Collaborations.** Greater Hartford and Central Connecticut boast a highly educated workforce, presence of numerous technology groups, several leading healthcare facilities, arts, cultural and fraternal organizations, an active non-profit sector and nationally renowned college sports teams. Hartford represents a centrally-located, attractive, affordable and accessible meeting spot for associations and other professional groups which work within these market segments.

### **What is the size of the meetings and conventions market in the U.S.?**

According to *Meetings & Conventions* magazine's 2002 Meetings Market Report, the U.S. meetings market represents a \$40.8 billion dollar industry. Of this \$40.8 billion total, the corporate market represents \$10.3 billion and approximately 844,000 meetings annually; the association/convention and meetings market is over \$30.5 billion with more than 189,000 meetings annually.

### **What do association and convention meeting planners look for when selecting a meeting destination?**

According to *Meetings & Conventions* magazine's 2002 Meetings Market Report, top factors for facility selection among association and convention meeting planners include meeting rooms, cost of hotel or facility, negotiable rates, food service, sleeping rooms and billing procedures.



### FAQ-3

#### **What have been the results of GHCVB's sales efforts?**

Last year, the GHCVB generated 138 sales leads with estimated potential attendance of 186,546 and booked 126 events with a total attendance of 92,906 and 85,305 room nights. Also in 2003, GHCVB secured 10 letters of intent for the Connecticut Convention Center and citywide events for a projected total of 25,131 room nights and \$261,075 in rental revenue.

As of March 2004, GHCVB has secured a total of 14 citywide events with an average attendance of 1,892 and estimated delegate spending of \$24,840,000.

#### **What strategies and tactics are GHCVB employing to reach this goal? What are focus markets?**

Situated between Boston and New York and centrally located within New England, Hartford must develop its own identity, focusing on differentiating itself within different markets of the convention industry than these competitors. Hartford's primary advantage is its location, within 100 miles of more potential convention delegates than any other U.S. city besides New York. The 23 million people within a two-hour drive of Hartford are ranked in the top five percent nationally in per capita income and educational attainment.

#### **In 2004, GHCVB is focusing on six key areas:**

**1. Convention Sales.** Attract meetings to Hartford and the Connecticut Convention Center from more than 9,000 convention groups and corporations that hold more than 25,000 meetings and conventions each year in the U.S. GHCVB sales efforts are focused on five niche markets: Education groups, technology groups, healthcare groups, ethnic groups and sports groups.

**Goal: 150,000 future room nights. 100% rebooking of all potential groups. Convention Center revenue of \$1,076,440**

**2. Market Research.** Utilizing qualified sales referrals and leads, identify convention planners within the above market niches for immediate solicitation.

**Goal: Qualified leads for Northeast rotation, utilizing 140,000 gross square feet of exhibit space and/or 1,100 committable room nights.**

**3. Partner Marketing.** Establish/continue collaborative working relationships with the Connecticut Convention Center, Greater Hartford Tourism Bureau and State of Connecticut.

**Goal: Revenue achievement, client satisfaction.**

**4. Advertising.** Develop an aggressive campaign to build awareness of Hartford and the Connecticut Convention Center, including sales collateral, promotional items, direct mail and trade advertising.

**Goal: Establish a local, regional and national identity for Hartford and the Connecticut Convention Center.**



## FAQ-4

**5. Public Relations.** Execute an aggressive awareness campaign that includes monthly releases, Email bulletins, media kits, and interviews.

**Goal: National presence for Greater Hartford as a meeting destination, and for the Connecticut Convention Center.**

**6. Private Sector Support.** Retain and expand a large local membership base to build awareness and generate additional funds to market the region as a meetings and conventions destination. Increase advertising revenue in the GHCVB's annual visitor guide.

**Goal: Realize \$330,000 in private sector funds.**

## **What direct sales activities has GHCVB participated in to market Hartford both within New England, and nationwide?**

**Trade Show Presence.** GHCVB's sales force has been actively participating in shows nationwide to promote Hartford to meeting and trade groups such as Meeting Planners International, the American Society of Association Executives, the New England Meetings & Incentives Expo, National Association of Sports Commissions; GWSAE, Religious Conference Management Association, and the International Association of Hispanic Meeting Professionals, quarterly sales trips in cities such as Boston, New York, Washington and Chicago.

**Bring it Home to Hartford campaign.** GHCVB's Bring it Home to Hartford campaign actively works with area leaders who leverage their professional contacts and networks to bring meeting and event business into the city and region.

**Membership in regional and national meeting planners' associations.** GHCVB professionals are active participants in a number of meeting planners trade groups, including International Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus (IACVB), Meeting Planners International (MPI) and Yankee Meeting Planners International (YMPI), various religious, sports, association and diversity organizations.

## **What is GHCVB's new marketing campaign?**

In partnership with Hartford-based Pita Communications, GHCVB is launching an aggressive campaign for the meeting and convention trades industry. The campaign includes marketing collateral, print advertising, trade show booths, promotional items and public relations—all designed to attract convention, trade and meeting business to Hartford.

To make Hartford stand out from other cities' advertising, four one-word themes — **Smooth. Groove. Genius. Home.** — are used in the trade advertising campaign. All reinforce the campaign's slogan: *PLAN. BOOK. PLAY. With the greatest of ease.* The ads are intended to help position Greater Hartford as a centrally-located, affordable, contemporary location that offers myriad historic attractions and world-class arts and culture.



## **FAQ-5**

The advertising is being placed in dozens of meeting and convention trade publications, including Association Journal, Black Travel Magazine, Convene, Destination Showcase, Expo Magazine, Facilities and Destinations, Forum Magazine, Hispanic Meetings and Travel, Meetings East, Meetings & Conventions, and many more.

To increase editors' awareness of Hartford's assets, press releases, photos and story ideas, highlighting current events and ongoing attractions, are being sent to editors at meeting and convention and industry-specific trade publications nationwide.