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# MONTANA, WYOMING & IDAHO

# CHANGING SIDES OF THE WEST

By Melanie Wynne

A sense of discovery has long been imbued in Montana, Wyoming and Idaho, states shaped by the Wild West and a spirit of adventure. Although history is still evident and cherished in these states, there are new attributes worth seeking out and including in any agenda. Recent years have seen a resurgence of a different kind of spirit—locally crafted beer, wine and liquors—and attendees might be surprised to note that it's now as easy to find farm-to-table dining as it is good old-fashioned barbecue. Art appreciation is as popular as river rafting and rodeo. And yet, the ever-stunning ranges, buttes and hills continue to set the stage for events that reward everyone with excitement, natural spectacle and a sense of positive outcome.

### MONTANA: CELEBRATING THE GREAT OUTDOORS

This year marks the centennial of the National Park Service, and millions of dollars are being poured into the upkeep of its various properties including **Glacier National Park**, which sprawls across roughly 1 million acres of wildlife-filled mountains, prairie and tundra. Several of the park's trails have already been improved, and a major renovation of the famous Going-to-the-Sun Road is expected to wrap up as early as next year. The historic Many Glacier Hotel in the northeastern section of the park is also undergoing a remodel.

One of the popular group touring options are the vintage Red Buses, whose roll-back tops let attendees take in the towering peaks. Each bus can seat up to 17 people. Two special programs scheduled for this summer are the National Park Service's "Centennial Crown of the Continent Tour," which will showcase the cedar forests of Lake McDonald Valley and Going-to-the-Sun Road, and Swan Mountain Outfitters' three-part "Glacier Triple Crown Tour," in which attendees will saddle up on horseback for trail rides near Lake McDonald, Apgar Village and Many Glacier.

Just outside the west entrance, in Columbia Falls, construction has begun on the Cedar Creek Lodge & Convention Center, which could open as early as this summer. Plans include 64 guest rooms and 3,000 square feet of meeting space. Glacier National Park's roughly 1 million acres are home to mountains and the pristine glacial waters of McDonald Creek.

The park's largest gateway city is Whitefish, 25 miles away, home to a mountain resort and host to several festivals each year. Two of its largest meeting venues are the 475-seat Whitefish Performing Arts Center, locally considered a "mini Carnegie Hall" and prepared to welcome groups with 16,000 square feet of space, and the Grouse Mountain Lodge, which offers 11,000 square feet of meeting space, a spa and on-site catering. Golfers will also appreciate the property's location next to the Whitefish Lake Golf Club, whose clubhouse can seat up to 30.

Associated Pest Services chose Whitefish for a meeting last year, drawn by the "small-town feeling, excellent restaurants and great access to the outdoors," said Len Douglen, the group's president at the time and the executive director of the New Jersey Pest Management Association. The group stayed at the Lodge at Whitefish Lake, where Douglen found a warmly accommodating staff that helped him arrange activities such as whitewater rafting and a horseback ride that ended with a cowboy-style cookout, a guitar-playing storyteller, a campfire and s'mores. "What makes Whitefish so exceptional are the people working in the hotels, shops and tour companies who make you feel you're in a special place," Douglen said.

The Lodge at Whitefish Lake completed a renovation in 2014 and has updated guest rooms, an expanded patio and a new fitness center and indoor pool. It can host events of up to 300. The Whitefish Hotel Group, which owns and operates the Lodge at Whitefish Lake, plans to open the new Firebrand Hotel this summer. Plans for the downtown property include 86 guest rooms, bicycle rentals, a 750-square-foot meeting room and an executive boardroom. In other hospitality news, in April, a 76-room Hampton Inn & Suites is scheduled to

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VENUE GUEST ROOMS / FU	NCTION	SPACE
MONTANA		
EAST GLACIER PAR		7 400
Glacier Park Lodge & Resort	156	7,188
WEST GLACIER		
Glacier Outdoor Center	12	2,000
WHITEFISH		
Grouse Mountain Lodge	143	11,000
Lodge at Whitefish Lake	136	8,000
Whitefish Mountain Resort	276	7,000
Best Western Rocky Mountain Lodge	79	2,522
KALISPELL		
Hilton Garden Inn	144	14,000
Red Lion Hotel	170	12,000
Best Western Plus/Flathead Lake	59	10,475
Hampton Inn	120	2,700
Homewood Suites	100	1,500
BIGFORK		
Flathead Lake Lodge	45	5.000
Mountain Lake Lodge	30	5,000
Marina Cay Resort	50	2,300
POLSON	00	2,000
KwaTaqNuk Resort	112	5,500
Red Lion Ridgewater Inn & Suites		
	80	3,500
MISSOULA	4.40	00.000
Hilton Garden Inn		22,000
Holiday Inn/Downtown		15,000
DoubleTree Hotel Edgewater	171	8,936
Quality Inn	82	
Ruby's Inn & Convention Center	126	6,500
Broadway Inn & Conference Center	79	
Best Inn	- 84	
Best Western Plus Grant Creek Inn	126	3,500
Wingate by Wyndham	100	3,300
Courtyard by Marriott	92	2,200
C'Mon Inn	118	2,000
GREENOUGH		
The Resort at Paws Up	122	93,485
SEELEY LAKE		
Montana Island Lodge	11	6,000
Double Arrow Resort	32	3,000
HAMILTON		
Bitterroot River Inn	65	3,400
TROUT CREEK		
Lakeside Motel & Resort	18	3,000
HELENA		
Red Lion Colonial Hotel	148	15,000
FUNCTION SPACE IS SHOWN IN SQU		

### SPOTLIGHT

YELLOWSTONE NATL PARK +
VENUE GUEST ROOMS / FUNCTION SPACE
HELENA Best Western Great Northern Inn 101 8,000
Holiday Inn Conference Center 71 6,500
Jorgenson's Inn & Suites 116 5,432 BUTTE
Copper King Hotel & Convention Ctr. 149 17,000
Fairmont Hot Springs Resort 152 8,558 Finlen Hotel 55 5,000
Butte War Bonnet 131 4,260
BIG SKY
Big Sky Resort 800 55,000 Buck's T-4 72 7,000
320 Guest Ranch & Resort 58 6,000
Rainbow Ranch 16 3,805
GREAT FALLS Best Western Heritage Inn 231 17,000
Holiday Inn 168 6,700
Townhouse Inns 109 5,060
Hilton Garden Inn 115 3,000 BOZEMAN
Best Western GranTree Inn 120 12,000
Holiday Inn/Bozeman 179 7,300 Comfort Inn/Bozeman 121 4,094
Comfort Inn/Bozeman 121 4,094 Hilton Garden Inn 122 4,000
BILLINGS
Holiday Inn The Grand Montana 316 50,000
Holiday Inn The Grand Montana   316 50,000     Billings Hotel & Convention Center   236 23,000     Crowne Plaza/Billings   289 16,000     Big Horn Resort   106 13,000
Holiday Inn The Grand Montana   316 50,000     Billings Hotel & Convention Center   236 23,000     Crowne Plaza/Billings   289 16,000
Holiday Inn The Grand Montana   316 50,000     Billings Hotel & Convention Center   236 23,000     Crowne Plaza/Billings   289 16,000     Big Horn Resort   105 13,000     Northern Hotel   160 12,000     Hilton Garden Inn   128 4,000     Vegas Hotel   100 4,000
Holiday Inn The Grand Montana 316 50,000   Billings Hotel & Convention Center 236 23,000   Crowne Plaza/Billings 289 16,000   Big Horn Resort 105 13,000   Northern Hotel 160 12,000   Hilton Garden Inn 128 4,000
Holiday Inn The Grand Montana   316   50,000     Billings Hotel & Convention Center   236   23,000     Crowne Plaza/Billings   289   16,000     Big Horn Resort   105   13,000     Northern Hotel   160   12,000     Hilton Garden Inn   128   4,000     Vegas Hotel   100   4,000     WEST YELLOWSTONE     Holiday Inn Conference Hotel   123   10,000     LEWISTOWN     Yogo Inn of Lewistown   123   7,500
Holiday Inn The Grand Montana   316   50,000     Billings Hotel & Convention Center   236   23,000     Crowne Plaza/Billings   289   16,000     Big Horn Resort   105   13,000     Northern Hotel   160   12,000     Hilton Garden Inn   128   4,000     Vegas Hotel   100   4,000     WEST YELLOWSTONE     Holiday Inn Conference Hotel   123   10,000     LEWISTOWN
Holiday Inn The Grand Montana   316 50,000     Billings Hotel & Convention Center   236 23,000     Crowne Plaza/Billings   289 16,000     Big Horn Resort   105 13,000     Northern Hotel   160 12,000     Hilton Garden Inn   128 4,000     Vegas Hotel   100 4,000     WEST YELLOWSTONE   Holiday Inn Conference Hotel     Holiday Inn Conference Hotel   123 10,000     LEWISTOWN   123 7,500     PRAY   Chico Hot Springs Resort     Chico Hot Springs Resort   110 4,500     WYOMING   JACKSON HOLE AREA
Holiday Inn The Grand Montana   316   50,000     Billings Hotel & Convention Center   236   23,000     Crowne Plaza/Billings   289   16,000     Big Horn Resort   105   13,000     Northern Hotel   160   12,000     Hilton Garden Inn   128   4,000     Vegas Hotel   100   4,000     WEST YELLOWSTONE   Holiday Inn Conference Hotel   123   10,000     LEWISTOWN   123   7,500   PRAY     Chico Hot Springs Resort   110   4,500     WYOMING   JACKSON HOLE AREA   Snow King Resort   204   17,500
Holiday Inn The Grand Montana   316 50,000     Billings Hotel & Convention Center   236 23,000     Crowne Plaza/Billings   289 16,000     Big Horn Resort   105 13,000     Northern Hotel   160 12,000     Hilton Garden Inn   128 4,000     Vegas Hotel   100 4,000     WEST YELLOWSTONE   Holiday Inn Conference Hotel     Holiday Inn Conference Hotel   123 10,000     LEWISTOWN   123 7,500     PRAY   Chico Hot Springs Resort     Chico Hot Springs Resort   110 4,500     WYOMING   JACKSON HOLE AREA
Holiday Inn The Grand Montana   316   50,000     Billings Hotel & Convention Center   236   23,000     Crowne Plaza/Billings   289   16,000     Big Horn Resort   105   13,000     Northern Hotel   160   12,000     Hilton Garden Inn   128   4,000     Vegas Hotel   100   4,000     WEST YELLOWSTONE     Holiday Inn Conference Hotel   123   10,000     LEWISTOWN     Yogo Inn of Lewistown   123   7,500     WYOMING     JACKSON HOLE AREA     Snow King Resort   110   4,500     JACKSON HOLE AREA   Snow King Resort   204   17,500     Jackson Lake Lodge   385   17,000   Four Seasons Resort   124   8,000     Snake River Lodge   128   5,500   5,500   5,500
Holiday Inn The Grand Montana   316   50,000     Billings Hotel & Convention Center   236   23,000     Crowne Plaza/Billings   289   16,000     Big Horn Resort   105   13,000     Northern Hotel   160   12,000     Hilton Garden Inn   128   4,000     Vegas Hotel   100   4,000     WEST YELLOWSTONE     Holiday Inn Conference Hotel   123   10,000     LEWISTOWN     Yogo Inn of Lewistown   123   7,500     WY OMIN G     JACKSON HOLE AREA     Snow King Resort   204   17,500     Jackson Lake Lodge   385   17,000     Four Seasons Resort   124   8,000

The arch at Yellowstone National Park's north entrance is inscribed: "for the benefit and enjoyment of the people."

open with an indoor pool, a golf-simulator room and 1,000 square feet of meeting space. And north of town, at the Whitefish Mountain Resort, the Summit House benefited from an expansion project last year; its mountaintop restaurant—the only such one in the state and boasting 360-degree views—can now seat up to 135 people.

South of Whitefish, Kalispell is home to the area's main airport, Glacier Park International, as well as two meeting hotels: the Hilton Garden Inn and the Best Western Plus Flathead Lake Inn & Suites, which can accommodate meetings of up to 700 and 650, respectively. In July, the National Potato Council held a meeting in Kalispell at the recommendation of its current chair, who hails from nearby Ronan. Hollee Alexander, the council's senior director of programs and events, called it an "amazing experience," with members commenting on the "breathtaking" scenery. The group utilized the Hilton Garden Inn, and favorite activities included a sail on Flathead Lake followed by a meal of Montana specialties; farm and orchard visits; and a tour of the 19th-century Conrad Mansion (which can also host events).

About 115 miles south, Missoula is another heavy-hitter when it comes to grand scenery, surrounded by five mountain ranges. The city is also home to the University of Montana, which has 37,000 square feet of gathering and exhibit space, and a wealth of cultural venues, including the Roxy Theater, a historic venue with three spaces, the largest of which can seat up to 140. Additional venues include the Hilton Garden Inn/Missoula, with meeting space for up to 1,600; the Carousel, which can accommodate up to 2,000; and the Caras Park Pavilion, set beside the Clark Fork River and able to host up to 3,500 people.

The state capital of Helena struck gold back in 1864 and gave rise to

many grand mansions, which are still well preserved and concentrated in the Helena Historic District. In addition to tours of the town, the Helena trolley can be hired for wheeled excursions for up to 27 people. The largest meeting hotel in town, the Radisson Colonial Hotel, has event space for up to 500, and to the west, Carroll College welcomes association conferences and banquets and has summer housing options. Lewis & Clark County Fairgrounds is also popular with planners; facilities include a 36,000-square-foot exhibit hall and a 24,000-square-foot multiuse building that can be configured as an arena. And the Gateway Center offers 11,400 square feet of event space and a commercial kitchen.

In Montana's biggest city, **Billings**, many events are held at MetraPark. Its main venues are a 12,000-seat arena, the 77,400-square-foot Expo Center and a 28,800-square-foot pavilion. More intimate meeting facilities in town include the Billings Petroleum Club, which can host groups of up to 300; the nearby Yellowstone Art Museum, for events of up to 400; and the 1,400-seat Alberta Bair Theater. The downtown, historic Depot Complex can also host special events of up to 300 and is home to Trailhead Spirits, a craft distillery that welcomes groups in its Tasting Room.

Billings' main convention hotel, the Holiday Inn The Grand Montana, is under new management and will undergo a renovation this year before being reflagged as a Radisson next year. It remains open and offers 50,000 square feet of meeting space. The downtown Crowne Plaza will also undergo a makeover this year before becoming a DoubleTree by Hilton property at the end of the year. Additionally, a 95-room Home2 Suites by Hilton is expected to open this fall, an 85-room Comfort Suites is in the works next to the Geyser Park Family Fun Center, and the Northern Hotel has renovated its guest rooms. Another frequented property is the Big Horn Resort, which hosted the events for the Museums Association of Montana, the Montana Correctional Association and the Montana Agricultural Business Association last year.

Southwestern Montana is ski country. Groups that meet in **Bozeman** can head to the nearby slopes of Bridger Bowl, where the mid-mountain Deer Park Chalet can host up to 300 people and, at the base of the resort, the Jim Bridger Lodge has space for functions of up to 150. Après-ski, groups might head over for a tasting at the Rough-Stock or Wildrye craft distilleries or Bozeman Spirits. Several central venues also welcome group events, and one of the largest is Montana State University, where the Brick Breeden Fieldhouse has 50,000 square feet of space.

And then there's **Big Sky**, home to one of America's largest ski complexes: the 5,800-acre Big Sky Resort. It offers lodging for more than 2,000 attendees and the 55,000-square-foot Yellowstone Conference Center and the outdoor Lone Peak Pavilion can accommodate up to 500 people (available in the summer months). The resort recently added new terrain parks and runs, a new stash park and a family-friendly kids' adventure area. And a highlight is the ride up the Lone Peak Tram to an altitude of 11,166 feet, where the views extend out to three states and two national parks.

### WYOMING: EPIC PARKS & PIONEERING WAYS

A mecca for nature and wildlife lovers—and well-outfitted for association gatherings—the public lands of Wyoming are some of the nation's most popular attractions. During the summer months, planners can arrange river-rafting, fly-fishing, horseback-riding and hiking excursions, while the winter offers opportunities for sleigh rides, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. And year-round, historic sites narrate stories of the famous (and infamous) legends that shaped Western history.

Set atop a supervolcano, Yellowstone National Park is a geologic wonder bubbling with geothermal waters, steaming with geysers—and a natural habitat to grizzlies, wolves, elk and bison. There are two venues within Yellowstone that offer event space for up to 100 guests: the Old Faithful Snow Lodge & Cabins near the park's famous geyser and the Mammoth Hot Springs Hotel & Cabins.

Just south of Yellowstone, Grand Teton National Park offers equally spectacular scenery, including the Snake River, the Teton Range and glacial Jenny Lake, the latter of which has seen surrounding trails spruced up thanks to the centennial improvement project. The park's hub, the Jackson Lake Lodge, is decorated with Native American and western art, has 17,000 square feet of meeting space for up to





600 people and is loved for 60-foot windows that offer panoramic views of the lake and mountains. Jackson Hole Airport is also located within the park, just 30 miles south of the lodge.

Located between the airport and the town of Jackson, the National Museum of Wildlife Art offers roughly 13,000 square feet of event space-facilities include classrooms, galleries, a terrace and a 200-seat auditorium-and overlooks the National Elk Refuge. Downtown, attendees can explore galleries, shops, fine restaurants and a central square designed with elk antlers (collected after the animals have naturally shed them). From here, it's just a 15-minute walk to the Snow King Resort Hotel, which has more than 10,000 square feet of meeting space, and, down the street, its Grand View Lodge, with another 7,500 square feet of indoor meeting space. Both properties are convenient to the "hometown hill" for skiing, snowboarding and tubing.

Roughly 12 miles to the northwest, **Teton Village** lies at the base of the Jackson Hole Mountain Resort and is home to a handful of high-end options for groups. Such properties with meeting space include the Teton Mountain Lodge & Spa, which can host up to 150 people for events; the Snake River Lodge & Spa, for functions of up to

220; and the Four Seasons Resort/Jackson Hole, which can accommodate special events of up to 270.

Planners who want to give attendees a taste of the Wild West while based relatively near Yellowstone's east entrance (open generally from early May to early October) can base their group in **Cody**, founded in 1896 by showman Buffalo Bill Cody. Today, its well-preserved downtown is full of shops and restaurants and the Irma Hotel, named for Cody's daughter and featuring the handcarved cherrywood bar that Queen Victoria gave him as a gift. The hotel can host banquets of up to 200, and during the summer months, an evening gunfight takes place just outside its doors.

The largest venue in town is the Buffalo Bill Village Resort, featuring 10,000 square feet of special-event space and a Holiday Inn, a Comfort Inn and a collection of remodeled cabins. A few blocks away, the multi-museum Buffalo Bill Center of the West has gathering space for up to 700. Each June, it hosts an annual powwow of 28 tribes. Other summertime fun includes nightly rodeo action between June 1 and August 31 in Stampede Park.

And speaking of rodeos, each summer in the state capital of **Cheyenne**, Frontier Days kicks up its booted heels (and spurs) at Frontier Park, where

The Wyoming State Capitol in Cheyenne is undergoing a restoration as part of the Wyoming Capitol Square Project.

event facilities include an arena for up to 19,000 people and a 30,000-squarefoot exhibit hall. For this perennial favorite on the American rodeo circuit, accommodations tend to sell out fast, so groups heading to town this time of year should plan ahead accordingly.

Cheyenne now has more than 2,500 hotel rooms within its city limits. A new Staybridge Suites and Fairfield Inn & Suites opened last year, and a 130-room Hilton Garden Inn is expected to open later this year downtown with 8,000 square feet of meeting space. In January, the SpringHill Suites by Marriott completed a renovation of its lobby and guest rooms. One of the city's largest meeting hotels is the 80-acre Little American Hotel & Resort, which can host functions of up to 1,475 and has a nine-hole golf course and a heated pool.

Cowboy-themed dinner shows and guided trail rides are part of the package at the Bit-O-Wyo Ranch, 20 miles northwest of town. Also worth visiting nearby is Curt Gowdy State Park, where a renovated welcome center offers panoramic views of the Laramie Mountains, and an amphitheater and the Hynds Lodge (open from May through September) serve groups with meeting space and overnight accommodations.

Back in town, the Cheyenne Frontier Days Old West Museum, with an extensive carriage collection, is available for gatherings of up to 100 guests, while the restored 1886 Chevenne Depot Museum can host up to 300 people. The Ice & Event Center has 17,000 square feet of floor space and can seat up to 2,100 people and the Cheyenne Civic Center Performing Arts Theatre can seat up to 1,496 people. The Cheyenne Botanic Gardens can host up to 150 for events but is undergoing an expansion and renovation that may limit availability; the project is expected to be complete by next spring.

Roughly 180 miles north, on the banks of the North Platte River, **Casper** has greatly developed since its days as an outpost in the mid-1800s, bolstered by oil, coal and uranium. Attractions include the National Trails Historic Interpretive Center and several museums.

Overlooking the verdant Platte River Valley from its hilltop location, the Casper Events Center offers, arguably, some of the best views in town. It can accommodate conventions with as many as 10,000 people, or trade shows can utilize its 29,000 square feet of exhibit space.

A major renovation of the Parkway Plaza Hotel & Convention Centre is nearing completion. The project, which began last year under new ownership, is updating all guest rooms, public spaces and meeting space (more than 43,000 indoors and out). Two other notable meeting properties are the Ramkota Hotel & Conference Center (formerly the Best Western Ramkota Hotel) and the Ramada Plaza Casper Hotel & Convention Center. Both offer more than 10,000 square feet of event space.

### IDAHO: GROWTH IN THE GEM STATE

Though it's best known for potatoes, there is more to Idaho than just its agricultural aptitude. The state provides a slew of fun and fantastic natural distractions for group events, including hunting for glittering star garnets, huckleberry picking, fishing in trout-filled lakes and rivers and hiking through pine forests filled with bluebirds and fragrant wildflowers. Also worth noting is the craftbeer trend currently sweeping the state, which is very fitting considering Idaho is the nation's largest barley producer and its third-largest hop producer. More than 50 such breweries welcome groups for tastings. The Idaho Brewers Trail Map offers a complete listing.

VENUE GUEST ROOMS / FUN	стю	SPACE		
JACKSON HOLE ARE				
Hotel Terra	132	4,500		
Inn at Jackson Hole	83	1,500		
CODY				
Holiday Inn Buffalo Bill Village Resort	346	10,000		
SHERIDAN				
Holiday Inn Sheridan-Convention Ctr.	215	12,000		
Best Western/Sheridan Center	139	7,181		
GILLETTE				
Clarion Inn & Convention Center	159	10,423		
CHEYENNE				
Little America Hotel & Resort	188	32,000		
Cheyenne Holiday Inn & Conf. Center	254	19,000		
Historic Plains Hotel	100	9,000		
Comfort Inn & Suites	72	1,000		
TownePlace Suites	96	250		
CASPER				
Parkway Plaza Hotel	287	25,000		
Ramkota Hotel & Conference Center	229	14,000		
Ramada Plaza Riverside Hotel	200	11,726		
Hilton Garden Inn	121	3,000		
LANDER				
Pronghorn Lodge	56	2,323		
RIVERTON				
Holiday Inn Riverton Convention Ctr.	121	10,000		
TEN SLEEP				
Big Horn Ski Lodge	265	17,000		
LARAMIE				
Hilton Garden Inn		13,000		
FUNCTION SPACE IS SHOWN IN SQUARE FEET				



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In recent years, Boise has been topping "best of" lists in magazines like Time, Sunset and Forbes for its active recreational environment, booming cultural scene and economic cost of doing business. The capital city is also a convivial and creative one, and groups might find themselves heading out to try the beverages of the Boise Ale Trail in their spare time or gathering at the new, multimillion-dollar Jack's Urban Meeting Place (JUMP) downtown, which offers features that include a variety of studios—including one for cooking and another for multimedia projects-as well as meeting rooms and green outdoor spaces.

Boise is also home to a sizable Basque community, some 16,000 people who have immigrated from northern Spain since the 19th century, and the heritage is celebrated in the singular Basque Block downtown. Its focal point is the Basque Museum & Culsurrounding block businesses can host events for hundreds of attendees.

Meghan Likes, meeting and events specialist for the National Co+op Grocers, said she chose Boise for the organization's July 2015 marketing conference because the city offered "an urban environment without sacrificing the state's natural beauty. Boise is affordable, safe and inviting for participants and has a walkable downtown area with great dining options."

Likes opted to base her grocers at the downtown Grove Hotel, which is attached to the 5,400-seat CenturyLink Arena. Not only did participants find the hotel's service "extremely efficient" and "super friendly," but they also enjoyed being walking distance from the Boise Co-op, the group's local member co-op.

The adjacent Boise Centre presently offers 50,000 square feet of flexible exhibit and convention space but is undergoing a \$70 million expansion that will add 36,000 square feet to the facility—including a 14,000-squarefoot ballroom—by late this summer.

Boise State University welcomes outside events at the 2,037-seat Morrison Center for the Performing Arts and at Taco Bell Arena, which has 17,472 square feet of exhibit space or seating for upwards of 12,000 people, as well campus, the historic Boise Depot can host up to 300 guests in its Great Hall.

South of downtown, near the airport, the Boise Hotel & Conference Center was rebranded as the Wyndham Garden Boise Airport last summer. It can accommodate meetings of up to 450. A few miles away, the World Center for Birds of Prey has outdoor event space and All the activities in Grand Teton National Park are easily accessible to groups meeting at the park's Jackson Lake Lodge.

offers various educational programs and avian flight demonstrations.

Northwest of downtown, in Garden City, is Expo Idaho, with 84,000 square feet of space. Facilities include the 72,000-square-foot, three-section Exposition Building, a smaller building that can host up to 500 and surrounding parkland dotted with cottonwood trees.

In the city of Nampa, the Ford Idaho Center has a 120,000-square-foot arena, a 100,000-square-foot sports center and a 10,500-seat amphitheater. At Northwest Nazarene University, planners can turn to the Brandt Center, which houses the 1,500-seat Swayne Auditorium and a 9,000-square-foot lobby. Other area venues include the Nampa Civic Center, home to 14 event spaces including an auditorium for up to 640 people and a banquet room for up to 1,200, and the Warhawk Air Museum, which honors American veterans, displays a rotating collection of vintage military aircraft and features a 20,000-square-foot wing dedicated to both World Wars.

An emerging wine-tasting destination is southwestern Idaho's Snake River Valley, home to more than 30 wineries, most of which offer group tours and tastings. Growing conditions in this sunny area are similar to the Rioja region of Spain, and its most common wines include chardonnay, riesling, syrah, malbec and tempranillo.

About 160 miles east of Boise, with an airport served by nonstop daily flights from several West Coast hubs, is **Sun** resort towns in America. Following an extensive remodel, the Sun Valley Lodge reopened last June with 108 guest rooms (including five celebrity suites named after famous resort visitors), a new 20,000-square-foot spa, an outdoor pool and café overlooking Bald Mountain, a refurbished lobby and restaurant and meeting space for up to 1,000 people. In nearby Ketchum, with views of the Smokey and Boulder ranges, the Knob Hill Inn offers 1,800 square feet of outdoor space for events of up to 150 and four indoor meeting spaces, the largest of which can accommodate up to 130.

The biggest city in the northern Idaho Panhandle is Coeur d'Alene, which is just 30 miles from Spokane, Washington. Attendees who want to spend their free time outdoors can do so in the surrounding, pine-filled national forest or at dozens of glacial lakes in the area, including the eponymous Lake Coeur d'Alene. Along its shores, the Coeur d'Alene Resort features a spa, marina, an 18-hole golf course and 32,000 square feet of conference space, including the 11,000-square-foot Hagadone Event Center. Last year, the Idaho School Board Association met at the resort, as did the International Interior Design Association and the Pacific Branch of the Entomological Society of America.

Winter is an especially fun time to visit Coeur d'Alene, as there are two ski resorts within an hour's drive of town. In **Kellogg**, Silver Mountain features a large-sized indoor water park and a snow-tubing course and can accommodate groups of up to 350. Schweitzer Mountain, in **Sandpoint**, can host up to 250 and has trails for snow biking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, snowmobiling and good old-fashioned downhill skiing.

# SPARKING INSPIRATION THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

There's no real off-season in Montana, Wyoming and Idaho, when one considers how much there is to do especially outdoors—year-round. The kinds of networking that can be enjoyed indoors are just as wonderful outdoors on a hike. In these states, camaraderie and a connection to nature are two of the highlights of any association event.

VENUE GUEST ROOMS / FU	истю	I SPACE			
IDAHO					
BOISE					
Grove Hotel	252	36,000			
The Riverside Hotel	303	21,000			
Wyndham Garden Boise Airport	116	12,000			
Red Lion/Boise Downtown	182	8,000			
Best Western Vista Inn	85	4,412			
Oxford Suites	132	4,292			
Springhill Suites by Marriott	230	3,600			
Hampton Inn/Downtown	186	3,200			
COEUR D'ALENE					
Coeur d'Alene Resort	338	32,000			
Best Western Plus	122	13,000			
WORLEY					
Coeur d'Alene Casino Resort Hotel	202	40,000			
SUN VALLEY					
Sun Valley Resort	530	25,000			
Elkhorn Resort Golf & Ski Club	131	5,000			
Knob Hill Inn	29	3,800			
MCCALL					
Shore Lodge	77	13,000			
POST FALLS					
Red Lion Templin's Hotel	163	11,000			
POCATELLO					
Red Lion	150	13,000			
Holiday Inn	190	8,429			
IDAHO FALLS					
Hilton Garden Inn	119	16,520			
Shilo Inn Suites Hotel	161	10,900			
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