

Agenda Item \_I-1

**TO: APA California Chapter Board**

**FROM: Kurt Christiansen, AICP**

**VP for Conferences**

**DATE: January 17/18, 2014**

**SUBJECT: Summary for 2013 Conference (Visalia)**

Recommended Action:

It is recommended that the APA California Board receive the summary for the 2013 Conference hosted by the Central Section in Visalia.

Background:

The 2013 APA California Conference was hosted by the Central Section, October 6-9, 2013 at Visalia Marriott and Convention Center (Visalia, CA). Despite a more remote location and the beginning of the State coming out of an economic recession, the Central section working closely with the State resulted in the 2013 APA Conference netting an approximately a $150,000 profit.

This was the fourth year sessions and workshops received pre-approved continuing maintenance credit to assist members with meeting the AICP continuing maintenance requirements. Additionally, this was the fourth year the submittal of “Request for Presentations” was completed on-line. This was the second year the conference offered MCLE credits for 12 sessions.

Several conference innovations introduced by previous Local Host Committees were implemented again in 2013, including the mobile App and smaller dimensioned print program. Additionally, a golf tournament was proposed, but only 6 people signed up and the tournament was turned into open play. The conference also maintained a strong commitment to sustainability as local produce was featured on the lunch and dinner menus at the host venue, the Visalia Marriott.

Summary:

As with any event of this size, we received compliments and criticisms. The compliments included: enjoyed the location and venue, Pre-Conference Training, the healthy food choices at the breaks, input on sessions and mobile workshops was generally positive, land use law updates and CEQA sessions always a hit, the no conference bag option, and everyone one appreciated having APA President **Bill Anderson, FAICP attend our conference**. Areas for refinement / improvement: The keynote speakers were not well received and the closing speaker was a no show. We got many complaints about the size of the bags. Many comments were received about the limited space at the Marriott and having to use other hotels in the area. Complaints were received about having the Exhibitors in the hall ways. leading to congestion between sessions

Programs/Sessions

On–line Submittal of Presentations (Sessions): While they were some glitches with the on-line submittals, overall, this system has made the selection of sessions and providing the required information to National APA for continuing maintenance easier. A suggestion for future on line submittal forms is to include the session moderator’s phone number (there were occasions in which the Programs Committee sent emails to session moderators with important conference information that required responses which went unanswered by the session moderator). Also, session moderators did not keep the Programs Committee abreast of contact information changes for their panelists. A continuing session submittal issue requiring better coordination is submittal by Board members of their “Mandatory” session during the call for presentations.

A solution to these continuing problems is that during “Call for Presentations” a member of the Programs Committee work closely with and coordinate the various State Board members, individuals or organizations that are granted “mandatory sessions” to submit their sessions during the “Call for Presentations”. This pro active approach by the Local Host Committee ensures on time submittal of the “mandatory sessions” and assists Laura with submitting the sessions for CM approvals.

Mobile Workshops

The selection of mobile workshops was reduced from the original thirteen to seven in response to demand and the Federal Government Shut down. Three of the mobile workshops needed to be canceled because they were in some way related to a National Park or National Forest and the Federal government was still shut down due to budget issues. The most popular mobile workshop was the Downtown Visalia Trolley and Walking Tour, showcasing the revitalization of the Visalia Downtown. It was unfortunate that the 2 Planning in the Park mobile workshop in the Sequoia National Park needed to be canceled, as both were close to selling out.

Volunteers

Volunteers are an integral part of a successful conference and this year was not different. Both student and non student volunteers assisted with the golf event, mobile workshops, registration, sessions, and general assistance where needed. While small stipends were provided to qualifying volunteers, it was not a make-or-break enticement for most of those who helped out. The volunteers were happy to provide service to their colleagues, make some contacts and gain the experience of participating in a Chapter Conference. The stipend should be continued, however, the Local Host Committee is especially grateful for those who volunteered for the sake of volunteering. Training of volunteers continues to require refinement, in particular those assisting at registration.

Conference Registration Summary: Taken from Registration Forms & Profit & Loss Statement

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Registration Category** | **Registrants per Category** |
| Members - Full Conference | 399 |
| Members - One Day | 33 |
| Member - Chapter Only | 23 |
| Non-members - Full Conference | 48 |
| Non-members - One Day | 5 |
| Young Planners Full Conference | 27 |
| Young Planner One Day | 3 |
| Life - Full Conference | 12 |
| Students - Full Conference | 20 |
| Students - One Day | 1 |
| Speakers - Full Conference | 86 |
| Speakers - One Day | 7 |
| Student Comps/Student free day | 26 |
| Full Comps | 6 |
| Badge Only | 4 |
|  |  |
| **Total** | **700** |

The actual number of paid registrations totals 690. Beginning in 2010, conference speakers were required to pay to attend the conference. All speakers, APA members or non-members were provided a reduced registration (full or one day).

In comparing budgeted to actual registration categories, registration exceeded projections significantly. The projections for registration were very conservative due to location. When all told, actual/budgeted registration revenues were up by $ 123,663, approximately 179% of projections.

Sponsorships

We budgeted very conservatively in the Sponsorship line items. The Local Sponsorship chair did an amazing job obtaining many local sponsors. Sponsorship revenue exceeded budget projections by $15,771, or 128% of projections.

Sustainability Efforts: Conferences continue to implement sustainability guidelines adopted by the State Board; however the extent to which conference sites have sustainability practices varies with each Conference venue. The 2013 LHC worked closely with Visalia Marriott to fulfill sustainability ideas by serving locally grown food (when possible), eliminate plastic water bottles, and minimizing waste.

Carbon Footprint

This was the third year registrants were provided an opportunity to make a carbon foot print donation and attendees were provided several methods to contribute a carbon foot print donation-on line registration or at the conference. Fewer attendees donated money to the carbon foot print off-set, but $81 more dollars were received over last year.

Carbon foot print donation

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Contribution Amount | Number | $$$ |
| $10 | 25 | $250 |
| $5 | 31 | $155 |
| $2 | 7 | $14 |
| **Total** | **63** | **$419.00** |

Fiscal Impact: Included herein is the accounting for the 2013 Conference.

While attendance at the conference was slightly down over the previous year, conference profit exceeded the projection and profit from the previous year. This conference was helped by the beginning of a recovering economy. We projected attendance to be down due to the location not being near an urban hub.

2013 APA Conference Survey results-recap

Conference attendees were notified by email to complete the survey monkey. There were 116 conference attendees who responded. The survey results are attached. Below are some highlights of the survey results:

Conference

-Attendees were comfortable asking questions of conference hosts, staff or volunteers

-Conference information was clearly presented by the LHC

-Overall the conference was very organized

-Conference content was “Better than expected”

-Total number of sessions was “right amount”

Session Presenters

* Overall very knowledgeable, provided right amount of discussion and q/q
* MW were well organized and informative

Background of attendees:

Those responding to survey-City/County government (66%), consulting firms (33%), students 1%

Sustainability Measures –Respondents felt sustainability efforts are an important of conference planning and implementation

-Carbon footprint offset was purchased by 35.8% of respondents

-Wish to continue offering carbon footprint offset at future conferences

-Integration of locally grown food into the meals was overwhelmingly welcomed and respondents would like to see this continued

-Transportation: drove alone (54%), carpooled (43%), Train (1%), Airplane (2%)

- Favored smaller dimensioned print program

-Continue the mobile app

Overall individual comments:

Sessions-responses ranged from great to weak and too basic.

Both Plenary Speakers received many negative comments

Suggestions

Revisit the conference bag size, but like opt out option

Remember the vegetarian options

Offer more tech sessions

Overall Conference Suggestions:

* Continue offering MCLE opportunities
* Require submittal of “Mandatory Sessions” during call for presentations and assign a Programs person to follow up
* Set realistic conference budget and expectations, reflective of the economic conditions and location of conference.
* Improve coordination between Student Rep and LHC regarding Student Poster session and decide if this to be a required conference element and who should take lead, i.e. CPF
* Continue use of mobile app, however, requires budgeting for mobile app, via sponsorship opportunity or conference budget. Also assign LHC member mobile app responsibilities and coordination with Francine
* Overhaul the Conference Survey. Conference Survey and CM survey should both be electronic via survey monkey and mobile app. This saves paper, allows for automatic calculating of responses.
* Update Conference Manual per suggestions
* Create a mobile workshop information sheet for each workshop that provides a destination map, contact information and special protocols or rules, as necessary, which can be shared with the bus driver, host, volunteers and host committee’s mobile workshop chair to make sure everyone has the necessary information on the day of the tour
* See if there is a way to link mobile app to National CM input

Attachments:

Profit and Loss-CCAPA 2013 Conference-final provided to Board upon receipt of final/bookkeeping and audit