AGENDA ITEM\_\_\_I-2\_\_\_



**TO: APA Chapter Board**

**FROM: Kurt Christiansen, AICP**

**Vice President of Conferences**

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

**SUBJECT: 2014 Conference Update**

The Orange Section will be hosting the 2014 Chapter Conference in Anaheim, California, at the Disneyland Hotel and Resort, September 13 - 16, 2014. The 2014 Conference planning is well underway. The Board previously approved Sheri Vander Dussen and Jennifer Lilley as Conference Co-Chairs. The Local Host Committee has been having monthly conference calls. Several of the other committees have also been holding conference calls. The Local Host Committee has more than 50 volunteers with several others offering their time and skills still today. A detailed update from the Conference Host Committee report is attached.

This report outlines the remaining topics needing approval from the APA California Board. The Chapter Board needs to review and approve the proposed registration fees and the final 2014 Conference Budget. Included in this discussion will be the sponsorship goals set by the Conference Host Committee. A tentative schedule for the conference was approved by the Chapter Board at their meeting in October of 2013, however the Board still needs to approve the day and time for the California Planning Foundation Auction, the Consultant's Reception, and the annual Awards Luncheon. This report also includes information regarding the online registration portal.

**Conference Host Committee Update**

Attached is a report from the Local Host Committee detailing the work of the various committees working on the individual components.

**Registration Portal**

In 2013, the Chapter used National APA for registration services. While the Chapter had a good experience working with National on building the conference registration portal, there were some issues with functionality when the portal went live and difficulties try to process registrations expediently on-site. Individuals trying to register multiple people were required to log in separately for each person they registered. We have has discussions with National about trying to solve some of these issues for 2014. A proposal is expected from National APA sometime before the end of the January 2014. We also outreached to private firm regarding out sourcing registration. We had a conference call on January 13, 2014, with Vieth Consulting, a private firm who provides website services for conferences, including conference registration. We walked through a demonstration of how their registration portal works. The registration service offered by Vieth Consulting looks very promising and solves many of the issues we had with the National APA portal. A full proposal will be sent to the Chapter by the end of the January, 2014.

**California Planning Foundation Auction**

The Orange Section has provided the following narrative on the proposed 2014 APA California Schedule related to the California Planning Foundation:

*It has been a discussion in the past that the Auction could benefit from changes to stimulate more participation, greater bidding participation and purchasing of items and increasing the potential for raising funds. As part of the “revamping” theme for the State Conference the Orange Section is the first conference (2014) to be held with the intention of unveiling a “refreshed conference”. As part of this direction from the State Board, the Orange Section discussed and has offered suggested changes to the Conference Programming schedule related to events and activities. One such suggestion relates to the CPF Auction.*

*Feedback from the Conference Attendees has shown that very few members attend the conference and even fewer actually purchase auction items. The LHC had been reviewing this feedback and wanted to work collaboratively with the APA State Board, Local Sections and CPF Board to “refresh” the Auction and encourage greater attendance and participation. The suggestion was made to host the auction at a time when all the conference attendees would be a “captive audience”. The LHC suggests moving the CPF Auction to an afternoon event. This would be combined with the consultant’s reception and follow a great lunch speaker. The silent auction could begin on the first day of the conference and items can even be displayed immediately outside session rooms so that bidding can occur early and often. The live auction can take place during a dessert reception after the lunch and having no other activities or draw outside of the reception/auction and having sessions immediately following will encourage attendees to stay at the event. The LHC will work diligently to have the most attractive and audience drawing panels following the event.*

*With the audience increased to 600 or 1,000 attendees (depending on the overall conference attendance the Auction will have the greatest audience and exposure. Working with our student volunteers the LHC can assist with set up, logistics and any other support CPF requires given this will be a main function at the Conference. All of the consultant’s will also be in the room and available for bidding, Sign on to be a Friend and other donation opportunities.*

*The LHC is passionate about helping the State APA Board and CPF Board meet and exceed sponsorship, auction and donations for 2014. We simply want to provide an opportunity to highlight and spotlight the auction as a “Main Event” at the Conference. However, should the Boards decide that they would prefer to maintain the current Conference schedule for the CPF Auction, the LHC is more than happy to support that decision and work to support the event as always.*

**Budget/Sponsorships**

The Orange Section has provided the following narrative on the proposed 2014 APA California Conference budget:

*The budget for the 2014 conference in the Orange Section provides a budget that is based on recommended estimate for attendance, sponsorship, and programming.*

*Project Attendance: We are assuming* ***900 attendees****. The breakdown of registration includes* ***571 early registrants****. The remaining breakdown is similar to that found in previous conferences. We have shown a projected income based on* ***1100 attendees*** *simply for goal setting and discussion but the LHC is not basing their working budget on these projections. We have focused on the more conservative expectation for attendance.*

*Sponsorship: Our LHC has a budget of* ***$188,000*** *for sponsorship income. This is significantly higher than in previous years. The LHC believes that this venue offers unique sponsorship opportunities that allow an opportunity for greater income dollars. Disney has offered the ability to display vendor logos/graphics on the water display during the World of Color private show. This is a “once-in-a-lifetime” marketing opportunity. Our sponsorship committee has begun approaching potential sponsors with this unique opportunity and has already had two commitments for sponsorship from firms that have not sponsored APA in the past. In addition to this unique opportunity there is a potential to sponsor the private opening of the Carsland event. This would again allow sponsors a unique opportunity to be connected to Disney in their marketing. The LHC has targeted a budget of raising* ***$70,000*** *in sponsorship dollars directly related to the Opening reception. These dollars are not projected to be in competition, or detracting from the typical sponsorship dollars. This target would allow the extra activities related to the proposed Opening Reception being funded through sponsorships rather than the costs related to the attendees. These sponsors are not typically prone to support APA and are solely interested in this opportunity given the unique marketing opportunity that is being offered. Should the sponsorship level not be realized the extra activities proposed by the LHC would be reduced to reflect the reduced income level. This would ensure the extra costs associated with this budget for the Opening Reception as sponsored rather than hitting the bottom line of the conference, the State profit projection or the local sections.*

*Typical sponsorship levels are found throughout the remainder of the income portion of the budget. The sponsorship income budget without the specific opening reception budget is* ***$118,000****. This income would be realized by a revised and refined sponsorship package being offered. We have developed a plan that will allow: Advertising, Sponsorship, and Exhibitors. Package and “cafeteria” options are available. The proposed sponsorship package allows small firms and individuals an opportunity for marketing and advertising through the State conference as well as large firms to have diverse exposure.*

*Opening Reception: The LHC has proposed three options for the opening reception. The preference of the committee is to have the approval to move forward with the reception including a full reception on the lawn of the Disneyland Hotel. This would include activities, dinner and entertainment. This reception would be kid friendly and allow for families to attend as well as our attendees. Following the dinner reception, the guests would be escorted into California Adventure (after the park is closed to the public) and would be treated to a private showing of the World of Color followed by entrance into Carsland and access to rides and activities in that section of the park. The reception as proposed is in excess of our typical budget for an opening event. The LHC appreciates this fact and would not want the attendees, the State or the Local Sections bearing the burden of this event. Our budget has proposed that sponsors would cover up to* ***$80,000*** *for this highest option. The rational is that should the sponsorships not be realized the extra activities would be reduced to reduce the costs.*

*The second option is a scaled down version of the dinner reception eliminating some of the extra activities and events planned during the dinner reception. This would reduce the costs by* ***$30,000****. The decision to implement this option would be based on the sponsorship income. The LHC is sensitive to the budget, the costs and perception of attendees and other various factors and has taken all of this into consideration when proposing the options for this reception. The LHC also believes that this venue presents a unique and memorable experience that cannot be found elsewhere. The value to the members beside a terrific and memorable event is the experience that will “market” future conference and potentially increase attendance at future conferences.*

The Orange Section is proposing a very aggressive and ambitious sponsorship program, as noted above in their budget narrative. The Sponsorship Committee is working on finalizing the Exhibitor/Sponsorship packages and solicitation brochure. As noted above, the Orange Section is planning on dedicating $ 80,000 specifically for offsetting the cost of the Opening Reception. Typically consulting firms select a program or event to sponsor, and we acknowledge them during that event or program with signage, verbally from the podium, and with the use of a looped power point presentation. The sponsorship dollars go into a pooled account to help offset conference costs.

It should be noted that conference profits were significantly down in 2009 and 2010 due to the conferences being held during the height of the most recent economic recession. Attendance and sponsorships were low due to companies, cities, counties, and agencies greatly reducing or eliminating entirely monies for conferences. Another point that should be highlighted is the change in sponsorship packages that took place in 2011. Prior to 2011, sponsorships and exhibit booths were separate income areas. In response to input from consulting firms, a new system of sponsorship packages were developed. This new sponsorship method was initiated in 2011, combining exhibit booths with sponsorship packages, at a greatly reduced cost. Since the sponsorship package changes made in 2011, and due to the major economic downturn in 2009 and 2010, the Chapter Board has taken a very conservative approach to setting sponsorship goals for conference budgeting. An average of 92.2% of conference profit can be attributed to sponsorship dollars raised. The low was last year with 50.4% of the profit attributed to sponsorships

The following table shows the budgeted and actual sponsorship revenues for the previous eight (8) conferences, including differences and conference profit.

 **Budgeted** **Actual** **Difference Conference Profit**

2013 - Visalia $ 60,250 $ 76,021 + $ 15,771 $ 150,828

2012 – Rancho Mirage $ 93,500 $ 120,650 + $ 27,150 $ 140,950

2011 – Santa Barbara\* $ 62,550 $ 81,900 + $ 19,350 $ 107,991

2010 – La Costa\* $ 172,000 $ 56,390 - $ 166,370 $ 76,866

2009 – Squaw Creek\* $ 208,300 $ 82,750 - $ 125,550 $ 52,590

2008 – Hollywood $ 227,800 $ 173,300 - $ 54,500 $ 141,289

2007 – San Jose $ 186,300 $ 158,450 - $ 27,850 $ 216,216

2006 – Garden Grove $ 210,800 $ 174,840 - $ 35,960 $ 174,546

The proposed budget, with alternative scenarios is attached for review and discussion.

**Proposed Registration Fees**

The 2014 Conference budget proposes an increase in conference registration fees for most registration categories. See attached table below for proposed registration fees as compared to 2013 registration fees.

*Registration fees for the 2013 Chapter Conference:*



*Proposed Registration fees for the 2014 Chapter Conference and comparison to 2013:*

