

LAKE COUNTY, OHIO OFFERS RELAXED COASTAL VENUE FOR MEETINGS

Just as destinations have competition, so too, now meetings have competition and challenges.

Besides the economy, webcasts, and digital meeting options, meetings in the same locations year in and out, might affect attendance and enthusiasm.

With hospitality taxes plus miscellaneous meeting charges on the rise, meeting planners might consider a fresh destination like Lake County, Ohio.

Lake County is next to Cleveland, off I-90, not in a remote, hard to reach area. Lake County has a plentiful range of meeting product, priced right, with a hospitality community that appreciates meeting business.

Lake County can accommodate medium conference attendance – especially smaller, regional seminars, board meetings and retreats in a coastal, country setting with nearby urban amenities.

In June, 2008, Lake County hosted the 128th County Commissioners and County Engineers Associations of Ohio Annual Summer Conference.

Mary Jane Neiman, Conference Coordinator and CCAO Public Relations Associate, called the event “one of the most successful in the history of the organizations... We received many rave reviews and many asked when the next conference would be hosted in Lake County.”

Ms. Neiman continued, “The choice of Lake County’s Chalet Debonné Vineyards for the conference opening event wowed our registrants and showcased one of the most successful wineries in the Midwest.”

Hosting meetings in fresh venues can lead to a more productive, better attended and relaxed function.

Meeting planners should be aware of Lake County’s meeting facilities inventory.

For larger functions, Lake County offers a major golf resort and hotels; \$17 million renovated Quail Hollow Resort with 176 rooms, 15,000 square feet of meeting space, with 22 meeting/event room options, located on 700 acres, plus a new Quail Hollow Country Club clubhouse featuring two 18-hole championship designer courses plus meeting facilities.

The totally renovated, executive Holiday Inn Express Hotel & Suites LaMalfa in Mentor, is a multi-functional facility with 60,000 square feet of meeting space, 84 luxurious suites and seven penthouse suites. The \$1.7 million renovated Radisson Hotel & Suites Cleveland/Eastlake, offers 18,000 square feet of meeting space, with a 5,644 square foot grand ballroom totaling 11 meeting room options with 148 rooms and 8 suites.

The Ramada Plaza offers 194 rooms and 10,000 square feet of exhibit space.

The 50 room Lawnfield Inn & Suites is a charming hybrid B&B/Boutique hotel with meeting space. Wildwood Mansion in Lake County’s largest city, Mentor, was designed by President Garfield’s relative and is nestled in a park setting for restive meeting.

Stadium suites, covered picnic plazas, terrace and party decks and banquet service are available at the \$27 million Classic Park, where the Lake County Captains Class A Cleveland Indians team plays.

New hotels like the Hampton Inn (next to LaMalfa) and Baymont Inn & Suites (next to Quail) offer nearby overflow options.

Lake Metroparks offers an array of scenic meeting and special event settings, from Lake Metroparks Farmpark to the renovated Pine Ridge Country Club and Golf course.

Holden Arboretum, one of the USA's largest, features a new meeting room with a glass wall vista onto the gardens. Holden's Lantern Court Mansion has a just renovated atrium setting for meetings and events with gardens and patio settings, all with catering options.

Mooreland Mansion, also recently renovated, is a grand mansion with state-of-the-art conference and catering facilities on the tranquil campus of Lakeland Community College in Kirtland. Lake Erie College in Painesville, also offers numerous facilities such as the Mathews House Mansion.

Chalet Debonné, Ohio's largest estate winery, Grand River Cellars and nearby Ferrante Winery & Retorante all feature refined meeting rooms amidst a Napa Valley setting.

Quite a bit of business, as well as relaxation, happens on the links and in the clubhouse. Lake County has the largest concentration of designer/championship courses in Ohio. Some stunning courses include Quail Hollow Country Club, Little Mountain Country Club, Manakiki Golf Course, Lake Metroparks Pine Ridge Country Club, and Thunder Hill Golf Club, with a renovated Lake House, which can sleep 15 guests. Most have meeting facilities and catering available. Lake County even has the USA's only youth regulation course, Little Thunder in Madison, geared so youth and family can play at their own pace.

Lake County's distinctive restaurants, including Gavi's, Molinari's Bistro 70, Pickle Bill's on the Grand River, John Palmer's, Rider's Inn and the Willoughby Brewing Company, offer private meeting rooms and dining options.

Several years ago, one of Cleveland's most elegant hotels chartered several Lake County Lake Erie Charter Captain boats to reward and conduct a quarterly sales meeting.

Lake County registrants have the opportunity to bring their families for coastal and nature based recreation. Lake County has Ohio's largest beach, largest estate winery, golf, the Lake County Captains; Holden, one of the largest arboretums in the USA, Lake Metroparks Farmpark and shopping.

Mixing up meeting locations in scenic locations like Lake County can be beneficial for success.

For additional copies of the Lake County Area Facilities Guide or more information, e-mail: ask@lakevisit.com, visit www.lakevisit.com or call 800-368-LAKE (5253).