

AR Chapter AFS Meeting Minutes
August 11, 2009
1-2pm
Meeting #2: AFS and LRCVB
Re: Bid to host the 2013 Annual Meeting in Little Rock

Attendees

David Russell (Little Rock Convention and Visitors Bureau)
Brian Wagner
Darrell Bowman (President)
Steve Filipek
Mark Oliver
Chris Racey (Secretary; recorded minutes)

Two members of the AR Chapter AFS EXCOM (President Darrell Bowman and Secretary Chris Racey), three Chapter members/AGFC representatives (Brian Wagner, Steve Filipek, and Mark Oliver), and the Director of Sports and Specialty Market Sales for the Little Rock Convention and Visitors Bureau (LRCVB; David Russell) attended a meeting on August 11, 2009 at the AGFC Headquarters in Little Rock to discuss the possibility of the AR Chapter hosting the 2013 Annual AFS meeting and the support that LRCVB can provide for this effort.

The meeting began with Steve Filipek describing how an AFS meeting would run. David Russell responded by asking what are the Chapter's needs specifically from LRCVB. Members indicated that we would need multiple copies of the information packet for the presentation. It was also brought up that we need to add a few days on to the original timeline provided (original timeline: September 8-12 or September 22-26, 2013) to accommodate a handful of earlier activities at the meeting (new timeline: September 5-12 or September 19-26, 2013). David indicated that neither request would be a problem and also noted that room rates and Convention Center charges would most likely be lower if we held the meeting in early-September rather than late-September.

The discussion then focused on meeting room space and lodging. David indicated that a block of rooms at the Peabody Hotel would be approximately 350 rooms. After doing some initial research online, David felt that we would most likely need an additional 250-300 rooms from a secondary hotel or two to accommodate all meeting participants. The secondary hotels could be the Doubletree, Marriott, or Wyndham (in North Little Rock). The hotels would be willing to give us a block of rooms, but not every room they have. It was brought up that many meeting participants would need rooms at the federal per diem rate. David responded that we would be able to negotiate per diem rates, particularly if we were to spend more on extra food and social activities at the meeting hotels. Steve asked if the Convention Center alone had enough space for 19-20 concurrent sessions/meetings. David indicated that we may need to move a handful of the sessions (3-5) to the Peabody during the busiest time periods to accommodate all requests. However, he also indicated that there was the possibility of setting up a few rarely used "meeting rooms" in the Convention Center if attendance for a particular session was light (<20 participants). David also mentioned that there would be plenty of space in the Convention Center for the trade show.

Steve asked David if LRCVB is willing to work with the city of North Little Rock for these sorts of projects, and David assured him that they have a good working relationship. David also mentioned that he can work with any of the bigger tourist draws in Little Rock, such as the Clinton Library or Heifer International should we want to pursue a social at one of those locations. He did indicate that the Clinton Library may be a little small for a social of 1400+ people, but it may work if we utilize the surrounding outdoor spaces and split the group up where half are eating and half are touring at any one time. David can help with organizing all of our offsite activities.

The discussion then turned to registration and projected meeting attendance. After much debate, it was decided that we might expect 1000-1400 meeting participants. However, the group will provide LRCVB with a better estimate after taking a look at Nashville's registration numbers. David indicated that LRCVB could handle online and on-site registration for a cost per attendee. He will get us an estimate for this service. Everyone agreed this would be worth pursuing.

The group then discussed the needs for the upcoming presentation in Nashville. David indicated that he has a PowerPoint presentation on cd with pictures of the sights of Little Rock. He will provide this to Darrell Bowman, who will be making the pitch to host the meeting. Darrell then asked for multiple copies of the informational packet that LRCVB provides during a typical presentation. He will let LRCVB know how many copies of the packet are needed.

Finally, David asked us when we will know if we received the bid for the meeting. Steve indicated that he thought we would know by the end of the Nashville meeting in early September.

Meeting adjourned.