

NEWS

The Convene Green Alliance Reaches 100-Member Milestone and First Canadian Partner

The Convene Green Alliance, a grassroots gathering of associations and industry is celebrating a major milestone by surpassing the 100-member benchmark. "To see the enthusiasm by which the Convene Green Alliance has been embraced by the association and industry communities is very gratifying" – says President and CEO, Jack Sammis. "What's even more exciting is that we've achieved this milestone in six short months".

The Alliance was founded by 16 of America's leading associations who came together in order to help the industry as a whole adopt a greener practices for their events and organizations. Visit www.convenegreen.com.

Members of the alliance help each other by sharing best practices and strategies in order to reduce the environmental footprint of their activities. In addition, the Alliance conducts a series of "Focus Forums" – bringing together experts from industry and the association community in order to share their practices, insights, and strategies with

enthusiastic audiences of industry professionals. Membership in the Alliance is free for associations, as is attendance at the Focus Forum events.

IMN Solutions, an Arlington-based association, foundation and meeting-management company, (see www.imnsolutions.com) administers the ongoing operations of the Alliance. "Our clients came to us looking for the best way to sort through the confusion of the green arena" – says Scott Lindley, Vice President – Marketing, for IMN Solutions. "We had a detailed look at the landscape and decided that what was missing was a forum for associations and industry to come together and help each other with their real world challenges. We realize that our clients and partners possess effective, tangible solutions that can be of great benefit to others, so the Alliance makes great sense."

The Convene Green Alliance received a strong international boost from Canada's Nation's Capital with the arrival of the Ottawa Congress Centre as its first Canadian industry partner. The facility is



Kathleen Matthews, Executive Vice President, Global Communications and Public Affairs, Marriott, presented the company's comprehensive environmental strategy.

presently undergoing a major expansion that will make it one of the "greenest" facilities on the North-American landscape. "We looked at several options before deciding to support the Convene Green Alliance" – says Andrew Beattie, Director of Sales for the Congress Centre (see www.ottawacongresscentre.com). "We support the Convene Green Alliance because its mandate is the sharing of

best practices amongst members and for the industry as a whole – we want to be a part of that."

The Convene Green Alliance has established itself as a major player on the green landscape. If it's a rapid progress thus far is any indication, we can expand big things from them and the year ahead.

AMC Institute Accredits Seven New Association Management Companies

By Melissa Mercer

The AMC Institute, a Philadelphia-based trade association representing the association management company (AMC) industry, has announced that seven new AMCs have earned the AMC Institute accreditation for demonstrating commitment and ability to deliver services to its association and non-profit clients.

For the 2007-2008 fiscal year, the AMC Institute accreditation was awarded to Association Management Group, Inc., McLean, Va.; Association Services Group, LaGrange, Ga.; Bostrom Corporation, Chicago and Washington, D.C.; Drohan Management Group, Reston, Va.; Jaffe Management Inc., New York City; Offinger Management Company, Zanesville, Ohio; and Treeline Associates, Inc., Lake Orion, Mich.

Additionally, four AMCs were re-accredited this year—a requirement that must be met every four years to maintain the certification. This year, AMC Institute awarded re-accreditation to Management Solutions Plus, Rockville, Md.; Executive Director, Inc., Milwau-

kee; King Stringfellow Group, Bel Air, Md.; and Professional Management Associates, Hillsborough, N.J.

To date, only a fraction of the 500-plus AMCs worldwide have achieved the voluntary standard—only 44 AMCs hold the AMC Institute accreditation.

"The AMC Institute accreditation designation is the most demanding and comprehensive program in the AMC industry," said Margo McDonnell, executive vice president of AMC Institute. "The select AMCs that have achieved AMC Institute accreditation are the recognized choice of association and not-for-profit organizations. We commend the newly-accredited AMCs for their commitment to quality service."

The accreditation program was developed in 2002 after the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) approved AMC Institute's Standard—the basis of the accreditation program—and is recognized and supported as the standard for the AMC industry by numerous organizations including the American Society for Association Executives & The Center for Association Leadership.

"We are pleased to achieve accreditation from the AMC Institute," said David Jaffe, principal, Jaffe Management Inc., in an interview with USAE. "This reinforces our commitment to a personal approach for both our national and local New York City clients."

For an organization to successfully complete the program, it has to provide documentation and pass an independent, third-party audit ensuring the implementation of specific financial management procedures, contract and service delivery practices, as well as proper employee recruitment, training and professional development programs.

"We're really excited to be accredited," said Randy Lindbar, CAE, president of Bolstrom, in an interview with USAE. "We view the AMC Institute standard as a very rigorous process and strongly believe that it will continue to enhance our performance at AMC Institute as well as our staff and strengthen our relationships with our clients. We are very committed and very excited to achieve that standard."

William Drohan, CAE, president and

senior account executive at Drohan Management Group (DMG) also told USAE that he is honored to "have accomplished such a comprehensive program."

"The way I see it, there are two major outcomes to this program," Drohan said. "The first is that going through the rigorous process of being accredited helps improve internal operations and fill in any blanks you may be missing. Secondly, the fact that you get to put this award on the wall and in your advertising really rings recognized quality and prestige and could only help your organization."

"It took us a number of months, designating one lead person on a part-time basis and then reviewing things as an entire team on a couple of occasions, but all in all the process was wonderful and really forced us to look at details of being an AMC," said Michael Palmer, president and managing partner, Treeline Associates Inc.

USAE was unable to reach Association Management Group, Inc., Association Services Group, or Offinger Management Company for comment.

Memphis Mayor Dissolves Convention Center Study Committee

By Jonathan Trager

Citing negative media spin about his intentions, Memphis Mayor Willie Herenton has removed his staff from a committee studying the possibility of renovating the Cook Convention Center.

On September 30, Herenton sent out a letter dissolving the committee, which included 16 members appointed by the mayor. The study is costing the city about \$200,000.

Kevin Kane, president & CEO of

the Memphis CVB, applauded the move.

"I think it's better to kind of depoliticize this process," Kane told USAE. "It's going to help us come up with the answers we need to come up with."

A spokesman for the mayor said he was unable to comment before USAE deadline.

Instead of the mayor's staff spearheading the process, Kane said, the committee has been reconstituted under the convention center board of commissioners.

Since the committee was formed at the beginning of the year, it has been dogged by rumors about the mayor's intentions. One such rumor was that the mayor had wanted to auction off part of Beale Street, the main strip in Memphis, to pay for a pre-ordained renovation of the facility.

"There was a lot of speculation that he had already predetermined where he wanted a new center built and negativity that was derailing the process," Kane said.

The committee isn't under a deadline to produce a report. But Kane said it will probably have one ready to present to local officials by spring 2009, including a recommendation for raising any additional funds for a potential renovation.

The last renovation of the Cook Convention Center cost about \$100 million and was completed in 2003, said Kane. It included a new ballroom, performing arts hall, breakout meeting rooms, and a 35,000-square-foot exhibit hall.