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## **Public Affairs Highlights and Initiatives June 2013**

### **Government Affairs:**

1. Airport Director, Mario Rodriguez and Public Affairs Officer, Kerry Gerot traveled to Washington D.C. to participate in the CVB's annual sales mission.
2. Participated in Ontario Airport's Emergency Exercise on May 8.
3. Received California Transportation Foundation's "Aviation Project of the Year" award on May 23.

### **Community Outreach:**

4. Long Beach Airport conducted ten history tours to local school, clubs, and organizations.
5. Participated in Will Rogers Middle School's Career Day on May 17, Aviation History Day at Lindbergh Elementary School on May 20 and Birney Elementary School's International Fun Day on June 7.
6. Participated in Long Beach's Lesbian and Gay Pride Parade on May 19.
7. Held first "Truck'n Tuesday" event of the summer on June 18, with four food trucks participating to help promote awareness of the LGB Cell Phone Parking Lot. Next event will be on Tuesday, July 16 from 11 am to 2 pm.
8. Participated in the Kickoff Extravaganza of Sea Festival June 1 at Marina Green Park.
9. Continued participation at First Fridays in Bixby Knolls, handing out posters and information about the history of LGB.
10. Long Beach Airport had a booth at the Long Beach Unity Festival on June 8, in council district 7; as well as Second Sundays in the Village, on June 9 in council district 8.

11. On our Social Media sites, we currently have 7,379 "Likes" on Facebook, (an average weekly reach of 250,000 people and 3,166 Followers on Twitter. On Yelp, the Airport is maintaining a 4 star rating. LGB has a rating of 4 ½ stars on TripAdvisor.

## **Media & Publicity**

12. Ruhl, Ashleigh (2013, June 13) BUSINESS BEAT: Stroll & Savor; Food Trucks Park At Airport; Petco Celebrates Reptiles; More Business News, The Gazettes
13. Coker, Matt (2013, May 23) Long Beach Airport Fares Remain Lowest in State, Second-Lowest in Country, OC Weekly
14. By Editor (2013, May 22) LGB Continues to Offer The Lowest Fares in California, Second Best in U.S., Everything Long Beach
15. Watt, Brian (2013, May 22) Flying out of Los Angeles is cheaper from Long Beach, KPCC Radio
16. Staff Reports (2013, May 21) Long Beach Airport has lowest fares in state, second lowest in nation, Press Telegram
17. Romero, Dennis (2013, May 21) Some of The Lowest Air Fares in The U.S. Can Be Found in SoCal, LA Weekly
18. (2013, May 7) Airfares Are High, but Still a Consumer Bargain, CNBC.com
19. Parham, Kate (2013, May 5) Regional Guide: California, Long Beach, Connect Meetings Intelligence

## **Advertising and Print Materials:**

20. Placed our garden billboard ad in the Long Beach Business Journal's special supplements for the Aquarium of the Pacific and Leadership Long Beach, and in the Long Beach Map.
21. Ran a new combination billboard/flight map ad in the next issue of the Park, Recreation and Marine *Connection* publication.
22. Our economic impact ad ran in the Park, Recreation and Marine's 2013 Family Entertainment Guide.
23. The Airport fact sheets were updated and reprinted.

## **BUSINESS BEAT: Stroll & Savor; Food Trucks Park At Airport; Petco Celebrates Reptiles; More Business News**

By Ashleigh Ruhl

Editor | Posted: Thursday, June 13, 2013 3:00 am

### **Stroll, Savor**

Belmont Shore restaurant owners are warming up their ovens for the second Stroll & Savor of the summer next Wednesday (June 19) and Thursday (June 20) on Second Street.

Hosted by the Belmont Shore Business Association, participants will have the opportunity to purchase a booklet of tickets in exchange for samples of restaurant fare. Participants can purchase booklets of 12 tickets for \$10 outside of Chase Bank during the Stroll & Savor from 5:30 to 9 p.m. Advance tickets can be purchased one week before the event. The ticket books are sponsored by Glenn E. Thomas Fiat in Signal Hill.

Other Stroll & Savor nights are scheduled on July 17, July 18, Aug. 14 and Aug. 15.

For tickets or more details, including a list of participating businesses and scheduled live entertainment, visit [www.belmontshore.org](http://www.belmontshore.org) or call 434-3066.

### **Wait, Eat**

Long Beach Airport is inviting people to enjoy fare from food trucks at the LGB Cell Phone Waiting Lot next Tuesday, June 18.

From 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., the Buttermilk Truck, George's Greek Truck, the Grilled Cheese Truck and Kogi BBQ will be serving lunch in the parking lot at the northeast corner of Lakewood Boulevard and Wardlow Road.

Long Beach Airport officials said they plan to host the food truck at the Cell Phone Waiting Lot on the third Tuesday of every month this summer, likely through September.

### **Airport Awarded**

Long Beach has received the California Transportation Foundation's (CTF) 2013 Aviation Project of the Year award for the new passenger concourse at Long Beach Airport.

Long Beach Mayor Bob Foster issued a statement this week in response to the honor: "On behalf of the city of Long Beach, we are extremely proud to have our airport be recognized by the California Transportation Foundation. This award is validation of the hard work, ingenuity and planning that went into the airport's new concourse and made it such a resounding success."

The new passenger concourse opened five months ahead of schedule on Dec. 12, 2012. The 77,850-square-foot facility was designed to preserve the airport's ease of use, while accommodating three million annual passengers, according to a news release.

### **Reptile Rally**

Long Beach's scaly and shell-backed critters are the guests of honor at the fourth annual Reptile Rally at Petco this Saturday.

Those interested in learning more about cold-blooded pets will experience a meet and greet with various reptiles, including the bearded dragon, tortoise and ball python. Also, owners are encouraged to bring their pets to participate in the "Raddest Reptile Contest."

The event takes place from noon to 4 p.m. on Saturday, June 15. For details, visit the Long Beach Petco at 6500 PCH or call 493-6083.

Unleashed by Petco locations at 6331 E. Spring St. and 600 Redondo Ave. will not be participating in the Reptile Rally.

### **Businesses Invited**

Targeting local small businesses, Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses is a management education program that helps small business owners develop the skills they need to grow their business.

Partnering with Long Beach City College, the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses program is accepting applications now from business owners who would like to receive a scholarship to attend the business management education program and get one-on-one assistance from other business professionals. Those who finish the program come away with a custom-tailored business growth plan.

For more details or to apply to participate, visit [www.socal10KSB.com](http://www.socal10KSB.com). The deadline for applications is 5 p.m. June 24.

### **LBTV Awarded**

The City of Long Beach's cable channel, LBTV, received eight government programming STAR awards at the States of California and Nevada National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors annual conference last month.

Established in 1996, the STAR Awards recognize outstanding community television programming produced by jurisdictions serving California and Nevada communities.

"I am very proud of our LBTV staff, who always keep residents well-informed and entertained, by linking City Hall and the community we serve through the great shows they produce," Mayor Bob Foster said in a release.

LBTV can be viewed in Long Beach on Charter Communications' cable channel 3, Verizon's FiOS TV Channel 21, and online at [www.LBTV3.com](http://www.LBTV3.com).

### **Hyatt Recognized**

The Automobile Club of Southern California (AAA) has honored Hyatt Regency Long Beach with a Four Diamond Rating.

As regarded by AAA professional inspectors and AAA members, the achievement recognizes the Hyatt as a premier establishment with "refined, stylish with upscale physical attributes, extensive amenities and high degree of hospitality, service and attention to detail," according to a release from the Long Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau. Fewer than 5% of 31,000 AAA-approved properties achieve a Four Diamond Rating.

“We are very proud of the Hyatt Regency Long Beach for earning this impressive award,” CVB President & CEO Steve Goodling said in a release.

“This accolade is continuing proof that Long Beach is fast-achieving its goal of becoming Southern California’s premiere destination.”

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## Long Beach Airport Fares Remain Lowest in State, Second-Lowest in Country

By Matt Coker

Published Thu., May 23 2013 at 9:00 AM

Average domestic air fares at Long Beach Airport have been the lowest in California and second-lowest in the U.S. for eight consecutive quarters, according to the Department of Transportation. During the fourth quarter of 2012, the average round trip domestic air fare at Long Beach was \$234, while the average domestic air fare among the top 100 airports in the continental United States was \$374.

Only Atlantic City International Airport had lower air fares than Long Beach (LGB), according to the department's Bureau of Transportation Statistics.



"Long Beach Airport provides excellent service to a wide range of destinations at a very economical price," Mayor Bob Foster tells City News Service. "LGB is a community asset that makes Long Beach residents proud."

Airport director Mario Rodriguez noted his facility managed to maintain low fares despite recent upgrades to the new passenger concourse. "It is possible to create incredible quality of service without overpricing the customer," he tells the news service.

The Bureau of Transportation Statistics based its findings on the total ticket value, including taxes and fees, at time of purchase. Add-ons, such as baggage fees, were not included.

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## LGB Continues To Offer The Lowest Fares In California, Second Best In U.S.

2013-05-22 · By Editor



For eight consecutive quarters, average domestic air fares at Long Beach Airport (LGB) are the lowest in California, and the second-lowest in the United States, according to the U.S Department of Transportation (DOT).

"Long Beach Airport provides excellent service to a wide range of destinations at a very economical price," Mayor Bob Foster said. "LGB is a community asset that makes Long Beach residents proud."

For the last two years, only one airport – Atlantic City International Airport – has had lower air fares, according to the DOT's Bureau of Transportation Statistics. The average round-trip domestic air fare at LGB was \$234 during the fourth quarter of 2012; the average domestic air fare among the top 100 airports in the Continental United States was \$374.

Long Beach Airport has recently added two new terminals, a garden and concession, and restaurant space, and the result is a resort-like atmosphere.

"Even with the recent upgrades to the airport's new passenger concourse, LGB has been able to retain its reputation of affordable and comfortable travel because our goal was to create a travel experience that we can all enjoy," Airport Director Mario Rodriguez said. "It is possible to create incredible quality of service without overpricing the customer."

Fares were based on the total ticket value including taxes and fees at time of purchase price, but did not include other fees such as baggage fees paid at the airport or abroad the plane. For more information, visit [www.rita.dot.gov/bts/press\\_releases/bts021\\_13](http://www.rita.dot.gov/bts/press_releases/bts021_13).

### About Long Beach Airport

Long Beach Airport (LGB), located in Long Beach, CA, was founded in 1923, making it the

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oldest municipally owned airport in California. Throughout its 90-year history, LGB has been a source of substantial economic activity and business opportunities, as well as a leader in maintaining a sustainable, environmentally responsible operation. LGB hosts four airlines offering non-stop service to 13 U.S. cities and serving over 3 million commercial airline passengers annually while supporting a healthy general aviation community with more than 300,000 annual operations. For more news, pictures, videos and announcements of what's happening, "Like" us on Facebook or follow us on Twitter @LBAirport.



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## The Breakdown

Explaining Southern California's economy

# Flying out of Los Angeles is cheaper from ]

Brian Watt with Ed Joyce | May 22nd, 2013, 10:19am



A Department of Transportation report shows the Long Beach Airport has the second lowest average domestic airfares in the U.S. at \$2

Thinking of flying away this Memorial Day holiday weekend? It could be cheaper out of Long Beach. Re (http://www.rita.dot.gov/bts/airfares/programs/economics\_and\_finance/air\_travel\_price\_index/html/table\_10.html) from the Transportation (USDOT (http://www.dot.gov/)) show the Long Beach Airport has the second lowest average

The USDOT ranked 100 airports by average round-trip fares in the 4th quarter of 2012. But **one-way fares** (http://www.rita.dot.gov/bts/press\_releases/bts021\_13) were included in some instances.

The average domestic airfare at Long Beach was \$234, far below the national average at \$374. Only Atlanta was cheaper at \$157.

"This is a very important number for us, because it actually translates into customer service," said Long Beach Mayor Eric Garcetti.

Rodriguez said the customers breakdown into two groups: air travelers and the airlines that operate at the airport.

"An airline pays less here than in most other airports in California and in the United States," Rodriguez said. "We're a very efficient operation."

**JetBlue** (<http://www.lgb.org/travelers/default.asp>) offers the most destinations from the Long Beach Airport (LGB). **Southwest Airlines**, **Delta**, and **Alaska/Horizon** also offer **flights** (<http://www.lgb.org/wherewefly/default.asp>) to Phoenix, San Francisco, and Los Angeles.

For travelers, the airport offers a new **concourse** (<http://www.lgb.org/travelers/amenities.asp>) designed like a hotel lobby with shops and local restaurant vendors that charge street prices "so you don't get gouged because you're a captive customer." The airport also offers a **curb-to-gate** service that can get you from curbside to the gate in 20 minutes.

The airport website features a **video animation and pictures** ([http://www.lgb.org/travelers/terminal\\_modernization](http://www.lgb.org/travelers/terminal_modernization)) of the new terminal.

Iris Himert, executive vice president of the **Long Beach Convention and Visitors Bureau** (<http://www.visitlongbeach.com>), said the airport is a powerful marketing tool as the city tries to land more more conventions.

"It's a huge selling feature for the planners that are coming into our city that are taking a look at us," said Himert.

She acknowledges competition from Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) (<http://www.lawa.org/welcome>). Himert said convention planners often use those airports to reach Long Beach. But when they do, she's seen lower fares.

### How did the rest of the region's airports fare in the rankings?

Burbank's **Bob Hope Airport** (<http://www.burbankairport.com/>) has the country's sixth lowest average domestic airfare at \$234. **San Diego International Airport** (<http://www.lawa.org/welcomeont.aspx>) ranked 23rd with an average domestic airfare of \$338. **San Diego International Airport** had an average domestic air fare \$362. LAX had the 78th lowest average domestic airfare: \$409.

## **Long Beach Airport has lowest fares in state, second lowest in nation**

*Staff Reports Long Beach Press Telegram*

*Posted:*

PressTelegram.com

Domestic fares at Long Beach Airport are the lowest in California, and the second lowest in the nation, according to figures released Monday by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

For the last two years, only Atlantic City International Airport has had average lower rates for flights in the United States. The average round-trip fare at Long Beach's airport was \$234 in the last quarter of 2012; the average fare in the top 100 airports was \$374, according to the figures.

"Long Beach Airport provides excellent service to a wide range of destinations and is also very economical," Mayor Bob Foster said in a statement. "LGB is a community asset that makes Long Beach residents proud. "

The local airport recently added two new terminals, a garden and concession, and new restaurant space. Even with the improvements, the airport has been able to retain a reputation of affordability, said airport Director Mario Rodriguez.

"It is possible to create incredible quality of service without overpricing the customer," he said in a statement.

Figures in the recent report were based on total ticket value including taxes and fees at the time of purchase, but did not include other fees such as baggage fees.



## Some of The Lowest Air Fares in The U.S. Can Be Found in SoCal

By Dennis Romero

Published Tue., May 21 2013 at 12:56 PM



Jet Blue / Facebook

If you're tired of L.A. constantly having the [some of the highest gas prices in the nation](#), there's a small consolation.

If you're the flying type, the area also has some of the most affordable air fares in the entire U.S. of A. That according to a U.S. Department of Transportation domestic air fare survey released this month:

Long Beach Airport ranked as second in terms of being a big-city hub with some of the most-affordable air fares in the nation.

It was beaten out only by Atlantic City. It bested Fort Lauderdale, Las Vegas, and Orlando. Not bad.



## Airfares Are High, but Still a Consumer Bargain

AIRLINES, BUSINESS TRAVEL, BUSINESS NEWS

CNBC.com | Tuesday, 7 May 2013 | 11:38 AM ET

Average U.S. airfares dropped in the fourth quarter of 2012—by a whopping \$1—but are still a relative bargain compared to average consumer prices.

Average domestic fares, adjusted for inflation, dropped 0.2 percent to \$374 from \$375 in the fourth quarter of 2012 from the year-earlier period, the U.S. Department of Transportation's Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) reported, based on [its analysis](#) of airfare data.

*(Read More: [Fees Undermine Fliers' Ability to Compare Airfares](#))*

If you don't adjust for [inflation](#), \$374 was the highest average fare for any fourth quarter since the BTS began collecting airfare records in 1995. But it still costs less to fly in today's dollars than in previous years.

From 2000 to 2012, inflation-adjusted fares declined 16.7 percent, while there was an overall increase in consumer prices of 32 percent, according to the report. In the 17 years from 1995, inflation-adjusted fares actually declined 13.1 percent, compared to a 49.6 percent jump in consumer prices.

Which airports saw the highest and lowest fares, and what role do add-on fees play in the figures? Read on.

### Airport-by-Airport

Airports with the highest average domestic ticket cost in the fourth quarter of 2012 were as follows:

1. Huntsville (\$544)
2. Cincinnati (\$518)
3. Houston Bush Intercontinental Airport (\$501)
4. Washington Dulles (\$493)
5. Newark Liberty (\$484)

*(Read More: [Worst Airports for Connections](#))*

And those with the lowest average domestic ticket price were:

1. Atlantic City (\$157)
2. Long Beach (\$234)
3. Fort Lauderdale (\$267)
4. Las Vegas (\$268)
5. Orlando (\$276)

### What About Add-On Fees?

The BTS data were based on the total ticket value, which consisted of the price charged by the airlines plus any additional taxes and fees levied by an outside entity at the time of purchase. Fares included only the price paid at the time of the ticket purchase and didn't incorporate other add-on fees, such as fees paid at the airport or onboard the aircraft.

*(Read More: Add-On Airline Fees Rise, Get Even More Confusing: Survey)*

While the BTS results didn't show specific add-on fee amounts, the figures did indicate how much revenue an airline make on airfares alone.

Airlines collected 70.7 percent of their total revenue from passenger fares during the first nine months of 2012, down from 1990 when 87.6 percent of airline revenue was received from fares. Add-on fee revenue is a likely contributor to this widening gap. For the full BTS fourth-quarter report, [click here](#).

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MEETINGS INTELLIGENCE



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## Regional Guide: California

By Kate Parham

Third only to Alaska and Texas in size, the state of California is the most populous in the country and somewhere meeting planners won't want to miss. With a plethora of beautiful geographic options—meetings can be held in the mountains, near the beach or in a major city—California's got it all. Hospitality, innovation and varied venues continue to draw planners; did we mention meetings in California tend to break attendance records? It's no wonder it's called the Golden State.

### Long Beach

Twenty-five miles south of Los Angeles sits **Long Beach**, one of the country's prime maritime centers. Iris Himert, executive vice president at the Long Beach Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, says the more than five miles of sandy white beaches and an urban downtown waterfront are big draws. It's also accessible by three major airports, including the Long Beach Airport, which underwent a \$140 million modernization in 2012. This was a huge draw for Keith Schlesinger, director of meetings and conventions for Alliance of Crop, Soil, and Environmental Science Societies, which had more than 4,000 members from 35 countries attend its recent Long Beach meeting. Schlesinger signed a two-year package with Long Beach for 2010 and 2014. "They personalize their services to your meeting, and we had near-record attendance in 2010," he says. Schlesinger's 2014 meeting will be held at the **Hyatt Regency** next to the convention and entertainment center, which recently underwent a \$35 million renovation to provide visitors with a modern experience (think enhanced lobbies, networking pods and LED stage lighting in the 13,600-seat arena). "It offers great savings for those with heavy AV requirements," says Himert.



Billie Robinson, director of meetings and conventions for the Association of Women's Health, Obstetrics and Neonatal Nurses, signed with Long Beach for the group's 2013 committee meeting and 2015 convention after talking with a sales director at the CVB. "They didn't sell me anything, but just allowed me to spend time there and see what I needed to see," says Robinson, who likes that the city is walkable. The group will use many of Long Beach's nearly 5,000 hotel rooms, almost half of which are within walking distance of the convention center. In the past year, \$55 million has been spent on hotel renovations in the city.

### Ontario

There's a reason **Ontario** has been dubbed the gateway to

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Southern California: It's conveniently centered between L.A.'s skyscrapers, the desert, mountain ski resorts and wine country, allowing for easy accessibility via three major freeways. But perhaps the best reason to hold your next meeting in Ontario is affordability. "The biggest draw here is that we're very economical with a

wide range of cost-effective properties," says Michael Krouse, president and CEO of the Ontario CVB. "Not only are our 5,300 rooms affordable, but nearly 4,000 of them are within walking distance of the convention center, which is very rare for a destination of this size." Krouse recommends the DoubleTree, the largest hotel in the city, for traditional meetings. It's adjacent to the convention center, which has many outdoor settings. "What other convention center offers basketball and tennis courts and a park right there?" asks Krouse.

Jim Anderson, president and CEO of the California Society of Association Executives, has held his group's board of directors meeting in Ontario for the past four years. "The convention center is an outstanding facility with lots of space and windows to maximize the light, giving it a bright and airy feel," he says, adding that the catering and service is also first-rate. Punky Fristrom, senior convention coordinator at the California Association of Teachers of English, says the group needed an exhibit hall, dining hall, rooms for receptions and 15 breakout rooms. "Not all convention centers can supply these as well as Ontario does," Fristrom says.

Also of note is the 11,000-seat **Citizens Business Bank Arena**. Krouse says it is great for intimate events, and larger groups can use the 20,000-sq.-ft. floor space. An off-site, outside-of-the-box venue is the **Auto Club Speedway**, which hosts NASCAR and Indy races, where Krouse says attendees can step foot on the speedway and infield.

## San Diego

It's known for the highly visited **San Diego Zoo**, the world's first and only **Legoland water park**, 70 miles of beaches and plenty of sunny weather, but **San Diego's** accessibility is where it really shines. The San Diego International Airport is just 10 minutes from downtown, which planners will get an aerial view of, as well as **Balboa Park** and the San Diego Bay, from the moment their planes descend into the city.



It's a breeze getting to any of the city's hotels and event facilities, including the **San Diego Convention Center**, which has 615,701 square feet of exhibit space. The LEED Silver-certified convention center has two 40,000-sq.-ft. ballrooms, the 90,000-sq.-ft., column-free, glass-enclosed Sails Pavilion, and almost 185,000 square feet of outdoor terrace space. More than 11,000 hotel rooms are less than two miles away, accessible by San Diego's bright red trolley or light-rail system. On the bay is the **Sheraton San Diego Hotel and Marina**. The dual-tower, nautical-inspired property is the largest green hotel in Southern California, with Gold Level certification from the Green Seal Environmental Standard for Lodging Properties. It has 124,000 square feet of flexible meeting space between the two towers, including the Bay Side Pavilion, which accommodates up to 2,000, and an array of water activities to keep attendees entertained after meetings. Nearby in San Diego's historic Gaslamp



Quarter—its most notable downtown hotspot—16 blocks of restaurants, bars, shops, galleries and hotels await. The **Westin Gaslamp Quarter** recently completed a \$25 million renovation, making it the first hotel in the nation to debut the brand's updated look. This included the remodeling of all 450 guest rooms, refreshment of its 35,000 square feet of meeting and event spaces, a redesigned fitness studio and new Italian-style restaurant and bar. The updated lobby and lounge area features a vertical garden to improve air quality, reinforcing the Westin's focus on wellness. If the fresh air or spa don't have you feeling rejuvenated, you can head next door to **Horton Plaza** outdoor mall for some retail therapy. —*Lesley Grissum*

### San Francisco



The perks of being the second-most densely populated area in the country include tourist-worthy landmarks, a diverse culture and an eclectic mix of restaurants, to name a few. For meeting planners, this means record-breaking attendance. Cynthia Tomei, meeting manager at Blue Cross Blue Shield Association, appreciates **San Francisco's** accessibility.

"There are multiple airports, and once you're in the city, getting around is easy by foot, cab, trolley and train." Tomei used **The Westin Millbrae** for a recent meeting and says the hotel staff was accommodating, and the food and AV top-notch.

John Reyes, executive vice president and chief customer officer at the San Francisco Travel Association, says people want to go to San Francisco because "there's an intrinsic comeback." He says turnout and attendee satisfaction offset the cost of hosting a meeting in a world-class city. Martin D. Balogh, director of meetings and travel at the American Bar Association, held his group's annual meeting in San Francisco a few years back and is returning this summer because it was so well-attended. "It's one of a handful of cities in the U.S. that within three years has added enough new attractions, restaurants, venues and museums that attendees can get a whole new experience." Though Balogh's group will mostly use the **Moscone Convention Center**, he also plans to use City Hall again. "It's a spectacular setting across the street from our opening assembly at **Louise M. Davies Symphony Hall**."

Notable is the 35,000-sq.-ft. **SFJazz Center**, which is LEED certified and offers an array of customizable services. For teambuilding activities, visit the **House of Air**. With more than 8,000 square feet of indoor trampoline parks and 22,000 square feet of floor space, a 49-person breakout room and food service, DJ booth and a 23-ft. movie screen, it's a unique option for groups looking to shake things up.

### Santa Barbara

Situated between the Santa Ynez Mountains and the Pacific Ocean is the American Riviera, also known as **Santa Barbara**. "The city offers the relaxed ambiance of a picturesque small town with the convenience and connectivity of a cosmopolitan destination," says Jaime Shaw, communications associate at the Santa Barbara CVB.



Although there is no designated convention center, **Earl Warren Showgrounds** has 35,000 square feet of interior meeting space and 31,000 square feet for outdoor events. The downtown **Canary Hotel** has more than 7,300 square feet of meeting

space, seven meeting rooms and catering provided by Coast Restaurant, with a rooftop that makes a perfect setting for outdoor receptions. The Hampton Inn Santa Barbara/Goleta in the education district offers 98 guest rooms and a recently renovated boardroom for up to 10 people. Prefer to be on the water? Try **Fess Parker's DoubleTree Resort**, where Clifford A. Burg, executive director of Painting and Decorating Contractors of California Inc., held his association's convention in January. "It's the perfect fit for our size, about 125 attendees," he says. "They gave us a great rate, and you don't have to walk far to get anywhere."

Martin W. Haskell, conference chair for the Association of Former Agents of the United States Secret Service, also used the Fess Parker for a recent meeting. "It offered immediate access to the bay and marina for [water sports and beach games], a spacious registration area, and the staff, from the valets and bellmen to the general manager, were absolutely wonderful," he says. His group enjoyed visiting the city's many venues, including wineries in the Solvang and Los Olivos areas, and **The Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum**. Haskell was particularly impressed with the **Santa Barbara Airbus transportation service**, which took his group around the city.

### Santa Clara



The San Francisco 49ers will play home games at Santa Clara Stadium starting in 2014.

Located in the heart of the Silicon Valley, **Santa Clara** is well known for its many high-tech companies that call the city home. "The city has an innovative, big-idea vibe," says David Andre, vice president of marketing and communications at the CVB. "It's an exciting place to be where creative energies abound and new ideas begin." The award-winning convention center, high-quality major brand hotels, year-round

sunshine, and myriad off-site venues don't hurt either, and the San Jose International Airport is only 20 minutes away.

"Santa Clara's central location makes it an easy commute," says Joanne Ireland, president of Ireland Presentations Inc., a meeting, conference and event planning company that recently produced a four-day annual conference for 1,200 attendees in the city. Her group used California's **Great America theme park**, which has a more than 10,000-seat amphitheater, in-house catering and theaters that can house more than 2,000 guests. "Although many would think of this as mostly focused on family and kids, Great America has the facilities and programs geared toward events, including teambuilding programs that they will help you facilitate and a picnic [in their Pavilion]," says Ireland.

For something more traditional, try the convention center, which is connected to the 501-room **Hyatt Regency**. Tom Anderson, director of conferences and events for the Technology Services Industry Association, recently held a meeting for more than 800 people there, citing the venues as user-friendly with strong brands and great people who were flexible and responsive to his group's needs. Anderson also recommends the Tech Museum for interactive private dinners and explorations. Andre suggests taking a picture in front of the nearby Facebook or Google signs. "It's an opportunity to see high-tech up close."

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