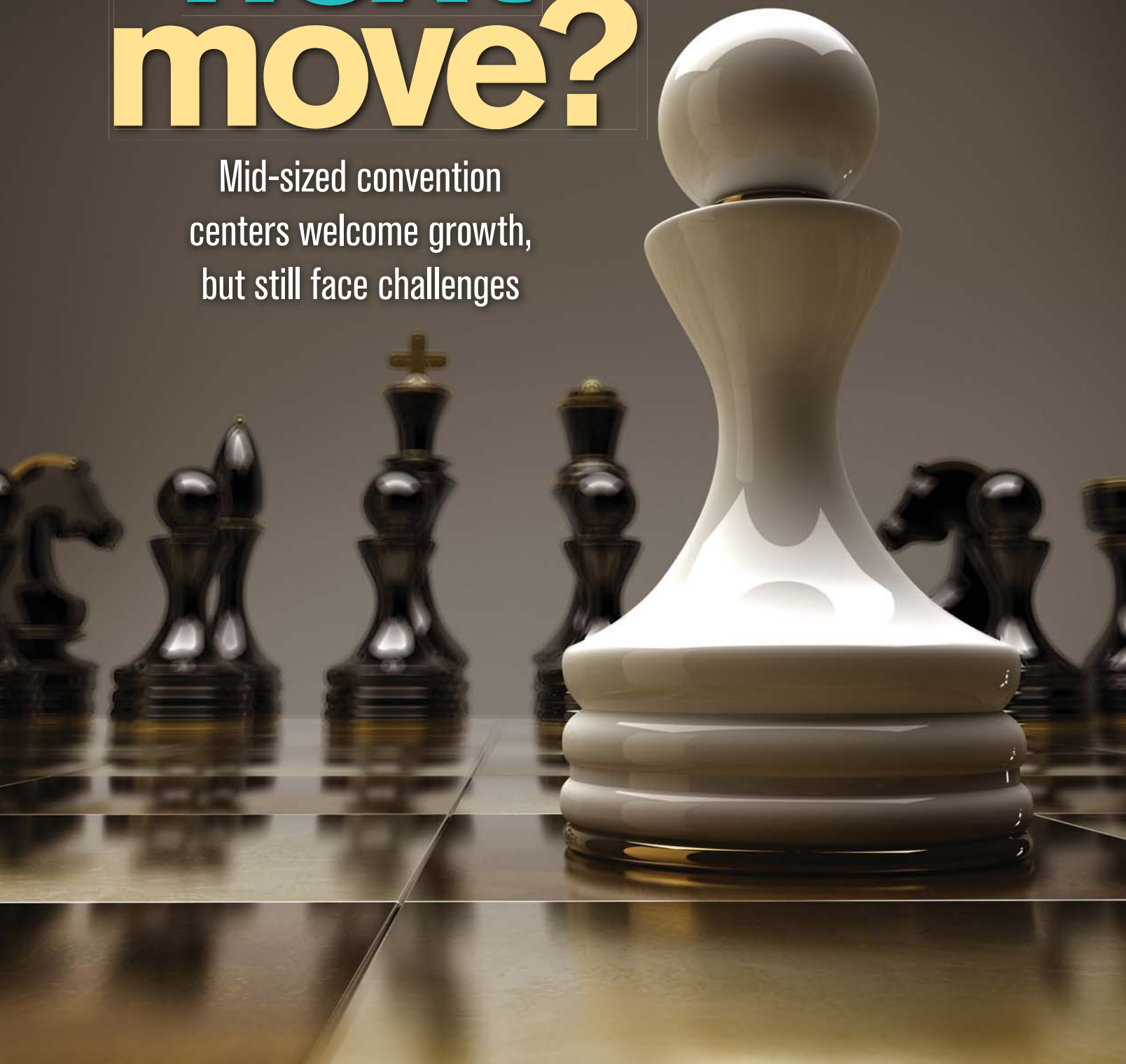


what's the **next** **move?**

Mid-sized convention
centers welcome growth,
but still face challenges



BY SANDI CAIN, News Editor

The 79 mid-sized convention centers in North America have prime exhibit space ranging from 125,000 to 349,999 square feet and comprise 26% of the 305 total convention centers in the region, according to *Trade Show Executive's Annual Report on Mid-Sized Convention Centers*. The largest mid-sized center in North America is the Expo Bancomer Santa Fe in Mexico City with 348,750 square feet.

In all, 69 of these facilities (87.3%) are in the U.S., five are in Canada (6.3%) and five are in Mexico (6.3%). Collectively, these convention centers bring the total square feet of prime exhibit space at mid-sized convention centers in North America to 16,092,989 square feet. The largest mid-sized center in the U.S. is Portland Metropolitan Exposition Center in Portland, OR at 333,000 square feet. The smallest of all the North American mid-sized facilities is The Concourse Exhibition Center in San Francisco at 125,000 square feet.

Positive Trends, Short Leashes

Across the U.S., officials at mid-sized convention centers from Cincinnati, Chicago and Seattle said that overall business seems to be picking up, possibly in response to a more positive economic outlook. "National associations are booking further out and consumer shows are generating higher attendance and spending," said Ric Booth, general manager of Cincinnati's Duke Energy Center, which ranks No. 32 on this year's list of mid-sized centers. That facility garners a lot of national association business and stages about 20 consumer shows each year, Booth said.

Michael McQuade, director of sales and marketing for the mid-sized Washington State Convention Center in Seattle, said the center, which ranks No. 17 among mid-sized centers this year with 236,700 square feet of prime exhibit space, has booked more corporate business this year and will host the most medical conventions it has seen since 2005. "Things are good here," he said,

with the city benefitting from a mix of national, state and regional business.

Nevertheless, booking lead times remain short from coast to coast for mid-sized convention centers. "Shorter seems to be the term of the day," said Courtney Dyer, general manager of the Virginia Beach Convention Center, which offers 150,000 square feet of prime space.

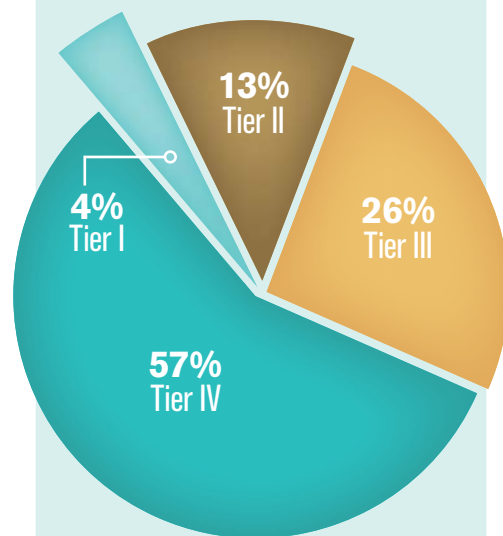
The city's mainstays are amateur sporting events and military events. Dyer said the military sector is booking in a "much shorter window" and that attendance numbers in that sector are down due in part to new restrictions on government participation in trade shows.

Similar patterns are evident in Texas, where Charles Mayer, director of convention sales for the No. 11-ranked Fort Worth Convention Center, said short lead times mean that large groups that used to book three to five years out now book two years out. Government groups are booking even closer to their events, Mayer said. "They're booking 90 to 120 days out — there's a lot of uncertainty," he said.

Mayer said upticks in attendance for the center's core constituents of multi-level marketing group conventions likely will mean the facility still will post solid numbers for this year.

In Long Beach, CA, short-term bookings are a boon for the No. 8-ranked Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center, according to Ellen Schwartz, senior director of sales. "We have excellent short-term bookings with many coming in the year for the year," she said. "That helps fill in gaps."

Long Beach, which offers 270,000 square feet of prime space, hosts events



Of the 305 convention centers in North America listed in the WTCC:

- 12, or 4% are in the Tier I Millionaires Club (1,000,000+ sf)
- 41, or 13% are Tier II Mega Facilities (350,000 sf – 999,999 sf)
- 79, or 26% are Tier III Mid-Sized Facilities (125,000 sf – 349,999 sf)
- The 173 Tier IV Smaller Facilities (50,000 sf – 124,999 sf) make up the highest percentage, 57%.

such as the *Imprinted Sportswear Show*, *International Salon and Spa Expo* and on the consumer side, the *Progressive International Motorcycle Show* and the *Los Angeles Travel and Adventure Show*.

Government Squeeze

Stringent fiscal guidelines that may further restrict both the number of meetings and attendance at government and military-related events were mentioned as a concern by nearly every mid-sized convention center executive interviewed for this story. One group scheduled for a March convention in Fort Worth still didn't know its new guidelines in mid-January, Mayer said.

"The government and military have been the bread and butter of our center," said Eric Blanc, director of sales, marketing and convention services at the Tampa Convention Center in Tampa, FL, which has 200,000 square feet of prime space. Blanc said one Department of Defense group canceled 45 days out when organizers were told to suspend nonessential travel and training. "With the recent

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turmoil in Washington, that market is more uncertain," he said.

Washington State Convention Center's McQuade said every event has some level of government employee attendees, including a conference on AIDS last year for which some participants had to get approval from their government agencies to attend. "*The Association of Military Surgeons* is coming this year ... (that) will be a good test of the policy," he said.

Over the past decade, convention centers of all sizes have faced a demand for more meeting and breakout space as conventions and trade shows added more educational elements to the mix. Older, smaller and mid-sized convention centers often have been hard-pressed to meet this demand. "Our last expansion was in 2006," said Duke Energy Convention

Center's Booth. "With a crystal ball, we would have added more meeting space then," he said. "We'd likely put meeting space at the top of the wish list for future expansion," he added.

Nevertheless, those who operate mid-sized facilities have bright spots. At Chicago's Navy Pier, operated by SMG, there's been an increase in smaller consumer start-ups and tech/app expos targeted to a younger demographic, according to Tony Camarillo, senior director of sales and events. "We're also seeing a slight increase in market research events such as technology, transportation and new product launches looking for public and private space," he said. Navy Pier ranks No. 43 on this year's list.

Mayer is pleased to see attendance increases in the programs staged by multi-level marketing groups such as Mary Kay Cosmetics that are regulars in Fort Worth. Tampa has seen an uptick in medical events at its convention center which has 200,000 square feet of prime space. "Medical is thriving," said Blanc. "We're looking at targeting partner events with a new medical center training facility," he said.

Green Gauge


Green issues don't appear to dominate the booking conversation at many mid-sized centers, though Tampa's Blanc said about 25% do have some green requirements in their RFPs. Virginia Beach has a LEED gold rating; Washington State has a LEED silver rating, "but it's not the only factor groups consider," Virginia Beach's Dyer said.

McQuade said that's not the case in Seattle, where it is the primary factor for a few groups that meet at the Washington State Convention Center because of its sustainable practices.

State of the Middle

U.S. mid-sized facilities offer an aggregate 13,572,349 square feet, or 84% of North American space. Canada's mid-sized facilities total 1,264,500 square feet — 8% of the total — and mid-sized centers in Mexico comprise 1,256,140 square feet for the remaining 8% of the total.

In addition to Portland Metropolitan Exposition Center and Expo Bancomer Santa Fe, North American convention centers with 300,000 or more square feet of space are: the American Royal Center/Kemper Arena in Kansas City, the David L. Lawrence Convention Center in Pittsburgh, Vancouver Convention Centre in Vancouver, BC and the Baltimore Convention Center.



Stringent fiscal guidelines that may further restrict both the number of meetings and attendance at government and military-related events were mentioned as a concern by nearly every mid-sized convention center executive interviewed for this story.

The average (mean) square footage of prime exhibit space for mid-size convention centers in North America is 203,709 square feet. The closest single facility to that average size is the Hawaii Convention Center in Honolulu with 204,000 square feet. Among the largest events scheduled for that facility in 2013 is the *Honolulu Fest*, which will draw approximately 15,000 attendees and the *American Psychological Association Annual Convention*, which expects 10,000 delegates.

The mean square footage for mid-sized convention centers in the U.S. alone is 196,701 square feet. The Denver Merchandise Mart Complex with 197,000 square feet most closely represents that average. Denver Mart hosts the *Denver Gift Show*, *The Denver Apparel & Accessory Market* and *The Denver International Western/English Apparel & Equipment Market* and other trade and public events.

The median (midpoint) of prime exhibit space for all North American facilities is 195,320 square feet, represented by Cincinnati's Duke Energy Convention Center. That center was built in 1967 — long before green issues were at the forefront of American consciousness — but the facility has taken some green steps such as adding solar panels on the roof that get attention from some groups, Booth said. In 2011, the center hosted *GovEnergy Workshops & Tradeshow*, whose attendees were interested in the solar addition, Booth said.

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TSE SNAPSHOT: TIER III MID-SIZED FACILITIES

26%

of venues in North America are mid-sized facilities, which represent a total of 16,092,989 sf of prime exhibit space.

84%

of mid-sized venues in North America are located in the U.S., which accounts for 13,572,349 sf of prime exhibit space.

16%

of mid-sized venues in North America are located in Canada and Mexico, which accounts for 2,520,640 sf.

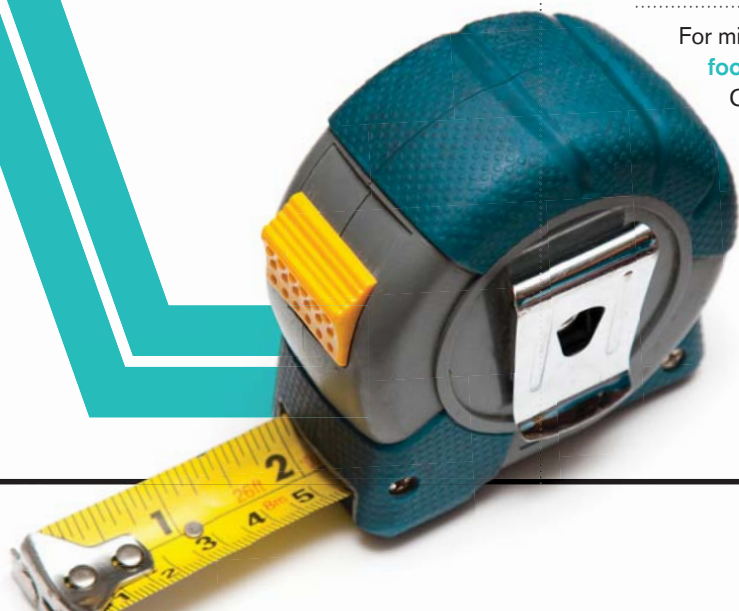
The **largest mid-sized center** in North America is Mexico's Expo Bancomer Santa Fe, featuring 348,750 sf of prime exhibit space. In the U.S., the largest mid-sized facility is Portland Metropolitan Exposition Center with 333,000 sf. Canada's largest mid-sized venue is Vancouver Convention Centre, spanning 311,500 sf.

The **average (mean) square footage** of exhibit space for mid-sized convention centers in North America is 203,709 sf. The facility that best represents the average is the Hawaii Convention Center, which spans 204,000 sf.

For mid-sized facilities located in the U.S., the **average (mean) square footage** is 196,701 sf. Featuring 197,000 sf, Denver Merchandise Mart Complex is the facility that most closely represents the U.S. average.

The **median (midpoint) prime exhibit space** for North American facilities is 195,320 sf. Duke Energy Convention Center in Cincinnati, OH is the only facility to match the median.

A **new convention will soon be added to this report**. Cleveland Medical Mart & Convention Center is slated for completion this Summer. The venue will feature 230,000 sf of prime exhibit space and 90,000 sf of meeting space placing it among the top 20 mid-sized venues in the U.S.



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Geographic Spread

In all, 35 U.S. states and Puerto Rico have mid-sized facilities. States with the most convention centers in this category are: California-10, Texas-6, Florida-5, N.Carolina-5 and Washington-3. Nine states have two mid-sized convention centers.

Of the 10 mid-sized centers in California, seven are in Northern California; three are in the Los Angeles area. Of the six mid-sized facilities in Texas, four are in the Dallas area, with the other two in Austin and San Antonio. Florida's five mid-sized centers include two in Tampa, two in Orlando and one in Fort Lauderdale. North Carolina's five such centers include two in Charlotte along with one each in Greensboro, Raleigh and Concord.

Charlotte this year will showcase the strength of conferences in the medical sector as it hosts four separate nursing association conventions and trade shows

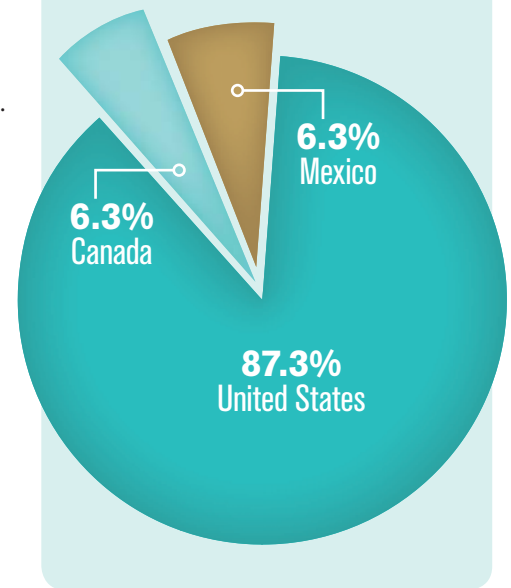
at the convention center, which has 280,000 square feet of prime exhibit space.

Mid-sized centers in Canada are represented by two in Vancouver, British Columbia; one each in Montreal and Quebec City in the province of Quebec; and one in Regina, Saskatchewan. Mexico's mid-sized facilities include two in Mexico City, two in Acapulco and one in Monterrey.

This summer, a new mid-sized convention center will be added to this list. That's when Cleveland's Medical Mart & Convention Center is scheduled to be complete. Its 230,000 square feet of prime exhibit space and 90,000 square feet of meeting space will place it at No. 20 in the current list's rankings.

Reach W. Courtney Dyer at (757) 385-2161 or cdyer@VisitVirginiaBeach.com; Ric Booth at (513) 419-7301 or rbooth@duke-energycenter.com; Ellen Schwartz at (562) 499-7574 or ESchwartz@longbeachcc.com; Charles

The following is a **breakdown of the mid-sized facilities** in the U.S., Canada and Mexico:



Mayer at (817) 392-2735 or Charles.Mayer@fortworthtexas.gov; Tony Camarillo at (312) 595-5057 or tcamarillo@navypier.com; Eric Blanc at (813) 274-7773 or Eric.Blanc@ci.tampa.fl.us; Michael McQuade at (206) 694-5105 or Michael.McQuade@wscc.com

Tier III Exhibition Facilities: United States

*Tied in amount of space

Exhibition Facility	Prime Exhibit Space (sf)	Location	Web Site
1. Portland Metropolitan Exposition Center	333,000	Portland, OR	www.expocenter.org
2. American Royal Center/Kemper Arena	325,000	Kansas City, MO	www.kemperarenakc.com
3. David L. Lawrence Convention Center	313,000	Pittsburgh, PA	www.pittsburghhcc.com
4. Baltimore Convention Center	300,000	Baltimore, MD	www.bccenter.org
5. Moscone West	296,092	San Francisco, CA	www.moscone.com
6.* Charlotte Convention Center	280,000	Charlotte, NC	www.charlotteconventionctr.com
7.* TD Convention Center (formerly Carolina First Center)	280,000	Greenville, SC	www.tdconventioncenter.com
8. Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center	270,000	Long Beach, CA	www.longbeachcc.com
9. Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center	264,000	Nashville, TN	www.gaylordhotels.com
10. Oregon Convention Center	255,000	Portland, OR	www.oregoncc.org
11. Fort Worth Convention Center	253,226	Fort Worth, TX	www.fortworthconventioncenter.com
12. Cow Palace	248,000	San Francisco, CA	www.cowpalace.com
13. Austin Convention Center <i>See our ad on page 57</i>	246,097	Austin, TX	www.austinconventioncenter.com
14. San Jose Convention Center	245,000	San Jose, CA	www.sanjose.org
15. South Towne Exposition Center	243,000	Sandy, UT	www.southtowneexpo.com
16. Greater Philadelphia Expo Center at Oaks	240,000	Oaks, PA	www.phillyexpocenter.com

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Tier III Exhibition Facilities: United States

*Tied in amount of space

Exhibition Facility	Prime Exhibit Space (sf)	Location	Web Site
17. Washington State Convention Center	236,700	Seattle, WA	www.wsccl.com
18. Fairplex/Sheraton Fairplex Hotel & Conference Center	235,000	Pomona, CA	www.fairplex.com
19. The Park Expo & Conference Center	224,000	Charlotte, NC	www.ppm-nc.com
20. Birmingham-Jefferson Convention Complex	220,000	Birmingham, AL	www.bjcc.org
21.* Dallas Market Center	214,000	Dallas, TX	www.dallasmarketcenter.com
22.* Suburban Collection Showplace	214,000	Novi, MI	www.suburbancollectionshowplace.com
23. Piers 92/94	210,000	New York City, NY	www.piers9294.com
24. Hawaii Convention Center	204,000	Honolulu, HI	www.hawaii.convention.com
25. CAL EXPO/California Exposition & State Fair	203,000	Sacramento, CA	www.calexpo.com
26.* Kentucky International Convention Center	200,000	Louisville, KY	www.ky.convention.org
27.* Tampa Convention Center	200,000	Tampa, FL	www.tampa.conventioncenter.com
28.* Wisconsin Exposition Center	200,000	West Allis, WI	www.wisstatefair.com
29. Greater Fort Lauderdale/ Broward County Convention Center	199,526	Fort Lauderdale, FL	www.ftlauderdalecc.com
30. Denver Merchandise Mart Complex	197,000	Denver, CO	www.denvermart.com
31. Century II Performing Arts & Convention Center	195,500	Wichita, KS	www.century2.org
32. Duke Energy Convention Center	195,320	Cincinnati, OH	www.duke-energycenter.com
33. CenturyLink Center Omaha (formerly Qwest Center Omaha)	194,000	Omaha, NE	www.centurylinkcenteromaha.com
34. San Mateo County Event Center	191,000	San Mateo, CA	www.sanmateoexpo.org
35. Delta Center (formerly Frontier Airlines Center)	188,695	Milwaukee, WI	www.deltacenter.com
36.* Florida State Fairgrounds	180,000	Tampa, FL	www.floridastatefair.com
37.* Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center	180,000	National Harbor, MD	www.gaylordnational.com
38.* Gaylord Texan Resort & Convention Center	180,000	Grapevine, TX	www.gaylordhotels.com
39. Gaylord Palms Resort & Convention Center	178,500	Kissimmee, FL	www.gaylordhotels.com
40. Greater Richmond Convention Center	178,159	Richmond, VA	www.richmondcenter.com
41. Allen County War Memorial Coliseum & Exposition Center	177,000	Fort Wayne, IN	www.memorialcoliseum.com
42. John B. Hynes Veterans Memorial Convention Center	176,000	Boston, MA	www.advantageboston.com
43. Navy Pier	170,100	Chicago, IL	www.navypier.com
44. Albuquerque Convention Center	166,546	Albuquerque, NM	www.albuquerquecc.com
45. Orlando World Center Marriott	165,000	Orlando, FL	www.marriottworldcenter.com
46. Mercedes-Benz Superdome (formerly Louisiana Superdome)	162,434	New Orleans, LA	www.mbsuperdome.com
47. DeVos Place	162,000	Grand Rapids, MI	www.devosplace.org
48.* Alamodome	160,000	San Antonio, TX	www.alamodome.com
49.* Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum & Sports Arena	160,000	Los Angeles, CA	www.lacoliseumlive.com

Tier III Exhibition Facilities: United States

**Tied in amount of space*

Exhibition Facility	Prime Exhibit Space (sf)	Location	Web Site
50.* Memphis Cook Convention Center	160,000	Memphis, TN	www.memphisconvention.com
51.* University of Phoenix Stadium	160,000	Glendale, AZ	www.universityofphoenixstadium.com
52. New Jersey Convention & Exposition Center at Raritan Center	155,277	Edison, NJ	www.njexpocenter.com
53. Puerto Rico Convention Center Pedro Rosselló	152,700	San Juan, PR	www.prconvention.com
54. MGM Grand Hotel & Casino	152,000	Las Vegas, NV	www.mgmgrand.com
55. Georgia International Convention Center	151,000	College Park, GA	www.gicc.com
56.* Greensboro Coliseum Complex	150,000	Greensboro, NC	www.greensborocoliseum.com
57.* Iowa Events Center	150,000	Des Moines, IA	www.iowaeventscenter.com
58.* Raleigh Convention Center	150,000	Raleigh, NC	www.raleighconvention.com
59.* Virginia Beach Convention Center <i>See ad below</i>	150,000	Virginia Beach, VA	www.vbconventioncenter.com
60. Saint Paul RiverCentre	145,182	St. Paul, MN	www.rivercentre.org
61. Cobb Galleria Centre	144,000	Atlanta, GA	www.cobbgalleria.com

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Tier III Exhibition Facilities: United States

Exhibition Facility	Prime Exhibit Space (sf)	Location	Web Site
62. Connecticut Convention Center <i>See our ad on page 61</i>	140,000	Hartford, CT	www.ctconventions.com
63. Sacramento Convention Center	134,000	Sacramento, CA	www.sacramentoconventioncenter.com
64. Grand Sierra Resort & Casino	131,000	Reno, NV	www.grandsierraresort.com
65. Cabarrus Arena & Events Center	130,000	Concord, NC	www.cabarrusarena.com
66. Mississippi Coast Coliseum & Convention Center	129,000	Biloxi, MS	www.mscoastcoliseum.com
67. Hilton Anatole	128,595	Dallas, TX	www.hiltonanatole.com
68. Von Braun Center	125,700	Huntsville, AL	www.vonbrauncenter.com
69. The Concourse Exhibition Center	125,000	San Francisco, CA	www.sfvenues.com

Tier III Exhibition Facilities: Canada

Exhibition Facility	Prime Exhibit Space (sf)	Location	Web Site
1. Vancouver Convention Centre	311,500	Vancouver, BC	www.vancouverconventioncentre.com
2. Place Bonaventure	298,000	Montréal, QC	www.placebonaventure.com
3. B.C. Place	247,000	Vancouver, BC	www.bcplace.com
4. Evraz Place	223,000	Regina, SK	www.evrazplace.com
5. Centre de foires de Québec	185,000	Québec City, QC	www.expocite.com

Tier III Exhibition Facilities: Mexico

Exhibition Facility	Prime Exhibit Space (sf)	Location	Web Site
1. Expo Bancomer Santa Fe	348,750	Mexico City, DF	www.expobancomer.com
2. Cintermex	282,876	Monterrey, NL	www.cintermex.com
3. Acapulco International Center	244,169	Acapulco, Gro	www.centrointernacionalacapulco.com
4. Expo Mundo Imperial	242,187	Acapulco, Gro	www.expoimperial.com
5. World Trade Center Mexico City International Exhibition & Convention Center	138,158	Mexico City, DF	www.exposwtc.com



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