

Piece of the Pie

**Mid-Sized Convention
Centers** Provide a Quarter
of North American Space

BY HIL ANDERSON, *senior editor*

The mid-sized convention center landscape remained largely unchanged in the past year with such buildings offering nearly a quarter of the prime exhibit space available in North America.

Mid-sized centers offer between 125,000 and 349,999 square feet (sf) of prime exhibit space and serve the Tier III market niche between the two tiers of elite mega-centers in the major cities and the 174 smaller centers that provide less than 125,000 sf of prime space and make up Tier IV.

Of the 307 convention centers tallied by *Trade Show Executive (TSE)*, 81 fell into the mid-sized category. These buildings had a combined 16,559,313 sf of prime space, or 24% of all of the exhibit space available in the U.S., Mexico and Canada.

Mid-sized convention centers make up 26% of the total number of convention centers in North America with 70 of them located in the United States. Canada offers six such centers and Mexico has five. Mexico is home to the largest building in the category, the Expo Bancomer Santa Fe with 348,750 sf of prime space. The largest such building in Canada is the Palais des congrès de Montréal with 332,369 sf.

The Portland Expo Center in Oregon is the largest mid-sized center in the U.S. with 333,000 sf of exhibit space. The Expo Center was ranked 41st in the *TSE World's Top Convention Centers* rankings.

Moreover, mid-sized buildings are able to host trade shows of moderate size and are often located in and around metropolitan areas that can support regional exhibitions, consumer shows and a variety of corporate and civic events. Mid-sized centers are also known as a good place to turn for show organizers and meeting planners who need to secure space on short notice.

"We present something for everyone and want to build a diversified customer

TRADE SHOW EXECUTIVE SNAPSHOT:

Mid-Sized Facilities (124,000 - 349,000 sf)

The **average (mean)** square footage of exhibit space for mid-sized convention centers in North America is 204,436 sf. The center that best represents the average is the Hawaii Convention Center, which provides 204,000 sf of exhibit space.

For mid-sized convention centers located in the **United States**, the average (mean) square footage is 195,804 sf. Featuring 195,500 sf, Century II Performing Arts & Convention Center is the venue that most closely represents the U.S. average.

The **median (midpoint)** prime exhibit space for North American convention centers is 195,410 sf.

There is no clear **mode** exhibit space for the North American venues as two exhibit space amounts are the most frequently occurring. Four centers feature 160,000 sf of prime exhibit space and four offer 150,000 sf.

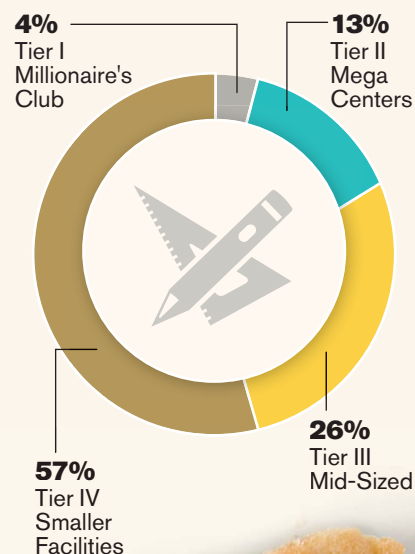
Tier III mid-sized convention centers located in the U.S. account for

13,706,304^{sf}

Convention Centers by Size Classification

Of the 307 North American convention centers with a minimum of 50,000 square feet of prime exhibit space:

■ Tier I	1,000,000+ sf
■ Tier II	350,000 - 999,999 sf
■ Tier III	125,000 - 349,999 sf
■ Tier IV	50,000 - 124,999 sf



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base, for the good of the region's economy," Matthew Rotchford, director of the Portland Expo Center said recently. "And we are always searching for new clients to discover what the center can offer their events."

Most mid-sized centers in North America offer in the neighborhood of 200,000 sf of space. The average size of the buildings surveyed by TSE was 204,436 sf of exhibit space. The Hawaii Convention Center in Honolulu was the closest to that figure with 204,000 sf.

The mean square footage in the U.S. of 195,804 was best represented by the Century II Performing Arts & Convention Center in Wichita, KS with 195,500 sf of exhibit space. California has the most mid-sized centers with 10 followed by Texas with six. Twelve states have at least two mid-sized centers with which to tempt show organizers.

Expansion Potential

With the exception of the Gaylord brand, the majority of mid-sized venues are owned and often operated by city hall. Expansion plans in the early 21st Century are few and far between. The most ambitious plan to add more exhibit space currently in play is in Oklahoma City, where the city is in the planning stages of an entirely new building with 200,000 sf of exhibit space to replace the smaller Cox Convention Center in 2018.

The public share of the project, which also included provisions for a new convention hotel, was approved by the voters in 2009, but the recession and its chilling effect on municipal spending has left Oklahoma City leaders asking the now-familiar questions about the growth prospects for the events market and whether stepping up into the mid-sized tier remains a wise investment.



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Tier III Exhibition Facilities: United States

*Tied in amount of space

Exhibition Facility	Prime Exhibit Space (sf)	Location	Web Site
1. Portland Expo Center	333,000	Portland, OR	www.expocenter.org
2. CenturyLink Field Event Center	330,000	Seattle, WA	www.centurylinkfield.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	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.gaylordopryland.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 43</i>	247,052	Austin, TX	www.austinconventioncenter.com
14. South Towne Exposition Center	243,000	Sandy, UT	www.southtowneexpo.com
15. Greater Philadelphia Expo Center at Oaks	240,000	Oaks, PA	www.phillyexpocenter.com
16. Washington State Convention Center	236,700	Seattle, WA	www.wsccl.com
17. Fairplex/Sheraton Fairplex Hotel & Conference Center	235,000	Pomona, CA	www.fairplex.com
18. Cleveland Convention Center	225,000	Cleveland, OH	www.clevcc.com

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Tier III Exhibition Facilities: United States


Exhibition Facility	Prime Exhibit Space (sf)	Location	Web Site
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. Suburban Collection Showplace	215,000	Novi, MI	www.suburbancollectionshowplace.com
22. Dallas Market Center	214,000	Dallas, TX	www.dallasmarketcenter.com
23. Piers 92/94 New York	210,000	New York City, NY	www.piers9294.com
24. Hawaii Convention Center	204,000	Honolulu, HI	www.hawaiiconvention.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.kyconvention.org
27.* Tampa Convention Center	200,000	Tampa, FL	www.tampaconventioncenter.com
28.* Wisconsin Exposition Center	200,000	West Allis, WI	www.wistatefair.com
29. Greater Fort Lauderdale/ Broward County Convention Center	199,526	Fort Lauderdale, FL	www.ftlauderdalecc.com
30. Denver Mart (formerly 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	194,000	Omaha, NE	www.centurylinkcenteromaha.com
34. San Mateo County Event Center	191,000	San Mateo, CA	www.sanmateoexpo.org
35. Wisconsin Center (formerly Delta Center)	188,695	Milwaukee, WI	www.wisconsincenter.org
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	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
50.* Memphis Cook Convention Center	160,000	Memphis, TN	www.memphisconvention.com
51.* University of Phoenix Stadium	160,000	Glendale, AZ	www.universityofphoenixstadium.com

*Tied in amount of space

Exhibition Facility	Prime Exhibit Space (sf)	Location	Web Site
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 (Hy-Vee Hall, Community Choice Credit Union Convention Center, Wells Fargo Arena)	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 our 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
62. San Jose Convention Center	143,000	San Jose, CA	www.sanjose.org

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Tier III Exhibition Facilities: United States

Exhibition Facility	Prime Exhibit Space (sf)	Location	Web Site
63. Connecticut Convention Center	140,000	Hartford, CT	www.ctconventions.com
64. Sacramento Convention Center	134,000	Sacramento, CA	www.sacramentoconventioncenter.com
65. Mississippi Coast Coliseum & Convention Center	133,000	Biloxi, MS	www.mscoastcoliseum.com
66. Grand Sierra Resort & Casino	131,000	Reno, NV	www.grandsierraresort.com
67. Cabarrus Arena & Events Center	130,000	Concord, NC	www.cabarrusarena.com
68. Hilton Anatole	128,595	Dallas, TX	www.hiltonanatole.com
69. Von Braun Center	125,700	Huntsville, AL	www.vonbrauncenter.com
70. 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. Palais des congrès de Montréal (Convention & Exhibition Centre)	332,369	Montréal, QC	www.congresmtl.com
2. Vancouver Convention Centre	311,500	Vancouver, BC	www.vancouverconventioncentre.com
3. Place Bonaventure	298,000	Montréal, QC	www.placebonaventure.com
4. B.C. Place	247,000	Vancouver, BC	www.bcplace.com
5. Evraz Place	223,000	Regina, SK	www.evrazplace.com
6. Le 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.expomperial.com
5. World Trade Center Mexico City International Exhibition & Convention Center	138,158	Mexico City, DF	www.exposwtc.com



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