

Tacoma Ranked #1 Destination in Country for Conventions up to 1,000 Attendees *MeetingSource.com Credits Weather for Tacoma Taking the Top Spot in 2018*

January 11, 2018—Tacoma, Washington - MeetingSource.com has released its 2018 list of best convention cities in the country, and Tacoma has taken the top spot for conventions of up to 1,000 attendees. The report compared 163 cities throughout the United States, based on six factors which included affordability, ease of access, safety, walkability, promotional appeal and weather.

Tacoma ranked fourth in the 2017 report, which did not include weather as a factor, and the Pacific Northwest's mild climate and ideal summers helped boost Tacoma to the top of the list for 2018.

"We had quite a few cities enter the ranking for the first time since weather was added as a key factor in convention site selection," said John Horchner, the study's author. "Taking this additional factor into consideration, Tacoma rose a notch to take the top spot on our list for smaller conventions. All of its numbers remained relatively high."

Tacoma's compact, walkable downtown core, proximity to Seattle-Tacoma International Airport and outstanding hotel values all contributed to the city's extraordinary high ranking two years in a row. Six major museums and a free-to-ride light rail system within walking distance of the Greater Tacoma Convention Center contributed to a high score for promotional appeal, which includes factors attendees use when deciding whether to attend a meeting or convention.

"Tacoma is fortunate to have the stunning waterfront, cultural attractions, convenience and affordability that create an authentic, unfiltered Northwest experience for meeting planners and attendees," said Bennish Brown, President and CEO for Travel Tacoma + Pierce County. "It seems fitting that our mild Pacific Northwest weather and picture-perfect summers put us at the very top. The feedback from those who have planned or attended meetings in Tacoma and Pierce County is being heard on a bigger stage, and we're honored to receive this recognition."

"We are excited to learn that Tacoma's first-rate amenities and genuine hospitality sets the standard for convention destinations nationally," stated Kim Bedier, City of Tacoma's Director for Tacoma Venues & Events. "This recognition is testament to our teams at Travel Tacoma + Pierce County and the Greater Tacoma Convention Center, alongside all the thriving creative and entrepreneurial businesses throughout Tacoma. We look forward to continued growth with the construction of the Convention Center hotel."

The Greater Tacoma Convention Center hosts an average of 220 events annually with more than 125,000 attendees. Over 19,000 room nights are confirmed through 2022, for an estimated \$25 million in economic impact over the next five years. The construction of a 4-star, 300 room Convention Center hotel under the Marriott brand is underway now with completion anticipated in 2020.

MeetingSource.com is a resource for meeting and event planners to find and compare convention destinations. Launched in 1996, MeetingSource.com was one of the first meeting and convention site selection directories on the internet.

Travel Tacoma + Pierce County is the official destination marketing organization for Tacoma + Pierce County, Washington. Accredited by Destinations International. For more information, visit www.TravelTacoma.com.

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