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## CONFERENCE FACT SHEET AND QUESTIONNAIRE

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### **OWAA FACTS**

Since its inception in 1927, OWAA has become the largest and oldest association of professional outdoor communicators in the United States. OWAA's mission is to improve the professional skills of its members, set the highest ethical and communications standards, encourage public enjoyment and conservation of natural resources and mentor the next generation of professional outdoor communicators. The national headquarters is located in Missoula, Mont.

OWAA is comprised of nearly 1,000 professional communicators and industry professionals with special interests in outdoor recreation, conservation of natural resources and recreation travel. Individual members include newspaper writers, editors and columnists; freelance magazine writers; magazine editors; book authors; radio and TV broadcasters; still, film and video photographers; artists; and professional lecturers.

### **ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

Attendance over the past several years has averaged approximately 250 conference goers per year; they include outdoor communicators, as well as representatives from outdoor industries and related associations and agencies from every section of the country. We are accepting bids for a three-day conference in 2019, opening on either Friday or Saturday morning, and concluding on the evening of either Sunday or Monday, with two days of pre-conference meetings to be held prior to the opening of conference. OWAA's annual conference has traditionally been held in June or July; however, we will entertain bids in shoulder-seasons that will attract the best value for our membership.

### **HOST CITY SPONSORSHIP**

Our annual conference provides your city the opportunity to showcase its outdoor recreation, education and travel opportunities, and we request that the host city provide sponsorship for a portion of our conference. You may choose to provide funding for marketing/attendance to potential conference attendees from your area, or another feature of our conference in which you feel your city will get the best return for your dollar. Host cities also traditionally sponsor a welcome dinner for attendees. All events are facilitated by OWAA. Past concession packages have included monetary sponsorship, as well as in-kind donations of transportation, facilities rental, welcome festivities, etc. We have provided you with a sample sponsorship package from a recent conference proposal.

### **ECONOMIC BENEFITS**

Direct economic returns to the site city have reached almost \$200,000 in recent years. More importantly, the long-term economic benefits can be millions of dollars resulting from stories, photographs, artwork, films, radio programs and videos produced by attendees on the rich outdoor opportunities offered by your location. See the attached sheet for information on the economic advantages of hosting OWAA.

### **THE CONFERENCE SITE**

The preferred conference site will be rich in varied outdoor activities – not just hunting and fishing. Members attending are largely the “working press” who must justify their participation with story material and images of regional outdoor-related subjects. For this reason, cooperation of state and/or regional Departments of Natural Resources; Fish, Wildlife and Parks; and Tourism Bureaus is imperative. This cooperation helps in arranging pre- and post-conference story-gathering trips and providing news making sessions to our members. Bids through city or regional convention and visitors bureaus receive the most serious consideration, as we require a working relationship with the CVB to best fulfill our needs in your city. Until a site is chosen, we prefer not to work directly with hotel or resort properties.

The conference requires:

- 150-200 sleeping rooms
- Approximately 5 hospitality suites per night;
- Meeting space totaling approximately 20,000-30,000 square feet;
- Space for hallway displays for supporting groups, agencies and businesses (for three days);
- One banquet room capable of comfortably seating up to 250 (theater style and rounds of 10);
- Three to four meeting rooms with seating capacity of 75+ (theater style) each to run concurrent sessions; and
- Three to four additional smaller meeting/press/interview rooms with a minimum capacity of 25.

Meetings may be held in the headquarters hotel facilities (preferred) or at a separate convention/civic center within **short** walking distance of the headquarters hotel.

Activities on one full day or two half days may be conducted off-site. Two half-day sessions are dedicated to current supporting groups, as well as any local groups wishing to participate. These sessions consist of displays for groups to demo products for review by our working press membership. One of these half-day sessions focuses on the shooting sports industry, while the other is for other outdoor-related hard goods. See pages 5-6 on the enclosed questionnaire for detailed description of requirements

An OWAA member who resides or works near the conference city normally serves as the local conference chair. This person should be involved in presenting the bid, and is the primary liaison between OWAA and the host city. Among other duties, the local conference chair is responsible for working with the host city to arrange pre- and post-conference activities for attendees. You may contact OWAA headquarters for a list of local members who may be willing to serve in this capacity. OWAA can also assist in finding this person for cities that make the short list.

#### **THE BID PROCESS**

OWAA selects the site of its conference two to three years out. We are accepting proposals for our 2019 event.

**Your completed bid package must be received by OWAA by Wednesday, August 31, 2016. After preliminary review by OWAA, a site inspection may be scheduled.**

After reviewing the bids, two to three locations will make the “short-list,” at which time more information may be requested to help in the decision-making process and a site visit will likely be scheduled to see the facilities in person.

OWAA’s conference planner and executive director are responsible choosing for the location of future conferences. The final decision will be made public following presentation to the OWAA Board of Directors at our annual mid-winter Board meeting, typically held in January. You will be notified immediately of our decision. Acceptance of a bid by OWAA will supersede all other contracts.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Thank you for your interest in hosting OWAA’s annual conference. I look forward to receiving your bid and working with you to bring this mutually beneficial event to your city!

Sincerely,



Jessica Seitz  
Membership & Conference Director

## **SITES OF PREVIOUS & FUTURE CONFERENCES**

OWAA members are located in all fifty states, Canada, the U.K, and New Zealand. In the past, conferences have been held in a different region each year. The following are cities that have hosted our organization over the past 40 years:

1979 Albuquerque, New Mexico	1999 Sioux Falls, South Dakota
1980 Rapid City, South Dakota	2000 Greensboro, North Carolina
1981 Louisville, Kentucky	2001 St. George, Utah
1982 Spokane, Washington	2002 Charleston, West Virginia
1983 Wichita, Kansas	2003 Columbia, Missouri
1984 Traverse City, Michigan	2004 Spokane, Washington
1985 Phoenix, Arizona	2005 Madison, Wisconsin
1986 Harrisburg, Pennsylvania	2006 Lake Charles, Louisiana
1987 Kalispell, Montana	2007 Roanoke, Virginia
1988 Marco Island, Florida	2008 Bismarck, North Dakota
1989 Des Moines, Iowa	2009 Grand Rapids, Michigan
1990 Salt Lake City, Utah	2010 Rochester, Minnesota
1991 Niagara Falls, New York	2011 Salt Lake City, Utah
1992 Bismarck, North Dakota	2012 Fairbanks, Alaska
1993 Portland, Oregon	2013 Lake Placid, New York
1994 Orono, Maine	2014 McAllen, Texas
1995 Chattanooga, Tennessee	2015 Knoxville, Tennessee
1996 Duluth, Minnesota	2016 Billings, Montana
1997 Haines City, Florida	2017 Duluth, Minnesota
1998 Redding, California	2018 Fort Wayne, Indiana



## Outdoor Writers Association of America

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### OWAA Conference Economic Impact

*Estimated based on 2012-2016 averages*

Sleeping Rooms	\$ 60,000
Hospitality Suites	\$ 3,000
Catering	\$ 30,000
Equipment (Displays, Off-site Events, Speakers)	\$ 7,000
Misc. Expenses (250 attendees @ \$300/person)	<u>\$ 75,000</u>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$175,000</b>

***Please Note:*** Past conference sites have estimated substantial worth of free editorial ink in the first year following the conference. Magazine articles usually follow in the second year and continue for several years. Hosting an OWAA conference can have a lasting effect on the site's economy as far as travel and recreational visitors are concerned.

For a portfolio of past conference-generated tear sheets, contact OWAA's Conference Services Director at 406-728-7434, [jseitz@owaa.org](mailto:jseitz@owaa.org).