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Rejuvenate

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2015

MEETINGS INSPIRATION

40
under
40

MEET
THIS YEAR'S
INSPIRATIONAL
CREW 28

HEATHER LINDSEY, FOUNDER
OF THE WILDLY SUCCESSFUL
PINKY PROMISE CONFERENCE

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Timber Ridge Lodge & Waterpark

Make sure conference attendees bring their swimsuits to family-friendly Timber Ridge Lodge & Waterpark. Less than a mile from its sister property, Grand Geneva Resort & Spa, the lodge is a hidden treasure nestled in the backwoods of Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, making guests of all ages feel like kids again at Moose Mountain Falls, the property's 50,000-sq.-ft. indoor/outdoor waterpark.

Planners can buy out the 225-room lodge for exclusive use of the waterpark and the newly renovated 3,500-sq.-ft. Cascades Ballroom, which overflows into the lobby for prefunction space. One faith-based meeting accommodates its age-diverse group at the lodge each January by setting separate times for adults and children to use the waterpark, says Kevin Karau, general manager, noting that the hotel also converts the lobby and meeting rooms into game areas for children to play in when they aren't swimming.

Two on-site restaurants, Smokey's Bar-B-Que House and Hungry Moose Food Court, serve everything from barbecue ribs to fish tacos, which is "something that really surprises guests when they arrive," says Karau. While some guests may opt to spend downtime at the waterpark, braving two 30-ft. slides or floating along the lazy river, others can head to the nearby stables for horseback rides; play tennis or a round of golf on two nearby courses; explore the nature trail at Grand Geneva Resort; make new friends at the petting zoo; or venture into the city for a tour on one of the last functioning mail boats in the country. In the winter, groups can also go skiing or hop aboard festive sleigh rides. —HP

Insider Tip

Ask about the Pizza Throw Down teambuilding activity, in which attendees can create their own pizzas, design a pizza box with a custom logo and create a 30-second commercial.

MOOSE MOUNTAIN WATERPARK, HILTON



Hilton Anatole

At a property with more than 600,000 square feet of indoor and outdoor event space, 11 ballrooms and 79 meeting rooms, plus 1,608 guest rooms, it could be easy for a group to get lost in the shuffle. Not so at Dallas' Hilton Anatole.

"Eighty percent of our business is 400 peak rooms or less, which is unusual for large properties," says Harold Rapoza, general manager. Due to its space layout, the hotel can stack three or four smaller groups without them interacting with each other, he says.

Rapoza says one popular offering for planners is branding packages, ranging from elevator wraps to social media screens to window shams. "We come up with the design and the packaging," he says. "More and more groups are finding that's one part of this hotel that is unique; it's so big and open that they can do a lot of branding." For example, in January, Hilton Anatole served as headquarters for Ohio State during the College Football Playoff National Championship. The Buckeyes branded the entire hotel with its paraphernalia, adding to the spirit for the team that would go on to win the national championship game.

Recent faith-based groups that have held events at Hilton Anatole include Samaritan's Purse, Bible Study Fellowship and Leadership Training for Christ. And soon there will be even more reason to meet here, as the property has spent about \$150 million on renovations over the last five years, including a major bandwidth upgrade. The next big project is building a \$15 million resort pool, complete with high-end F&B, cabanas, waterslides and a family play area. Once completed around Memorial Day 2016, the pool area will accommodate events of up to 1,000 people. —KO

Insider Tip

Get outside at the property's 7-acre park, which can do events for up to 3,000. "This feature is really unique because we can keep them on-site but have an out-of-hotel experience," notes Rapoza.