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NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

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venues that are
smart picks for
planners

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NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

From airplanes and fishing boats to dinosaurs and artifacts, museums in the Northwest are a smart choice for meeting and event planners. BY LINDA HAGEN-MILLER

THINK MUSEUMS ARE BORING AND STAIID? Think again. Here are some Northwest museums that are anything but stuffy, and they're all available to host a party that your guests will be raving about for months to come.



Located on Seattle's waterfront, the Maritime Event Center features fun interactive exhibits plus stunning Elliott Bay views.

Washington Museum of Flight

The Museum of Flight's collection chronicles the history of flight and includes more than 150 historically significant air- and spacecraft, as well as the William E. Boeing Red Barn—the original manufacturing facility of the Boeing Company. The museum's Airpark also includes outdoor displays with the first jet Air Force One, a Concorde airliner and the first Boeing 747 jumbo jet.

To help history come alive, actors depicting famous aviators can pay a visit to your event, or you can let your guests experience the thrill of flight first-hand by renting the museum's flight simulators. A variety of event space is available—from a boardroom and theater to the Great Gallery and Personal Courage Wing—and can accommodate up to 2,500 guests.

Future of Flight

As the birthplace of Boeing, it only makes sense that Western Washington has two museums dedicated to flight. While the Museum of Flight examines its history, the Future of Flight, located in Mukilteo 25 miles north of Seattle, explores present-day innovations.

From the outdoor and tented Strato Deck overlooking Paine Field Airport and Boeing's manufacturing plant, to the museum gallery studded with aircraft fuselages, cockpit models and airplanes suspended from the ceiling, the venue celebrates the aviation industry with hands-on exhibits and interactive learning zones spanning the last 50 years of aviation development. After hours, the center's eight venues can be transformed into festive or business-like meeting space that can accommodate up to 900 people.

Maritime Event Center

In the shadow of Pike Place Market and downtown Seattle, framed by the Olympic and Cascade mountains, the Maritime Event Center communicates

PHOTO COURTESY OF: MARITIME EVENT CENTER.

the quintessential Puget Sound experience. Meeting delegates are wowed by nautical-themed galleries, interactive maritime exhibits and stunning views of Elliott Bay and the Seattle skyline.

Adjacent to Bell Harbor International Conference Center on Pier 66, the Maritime Event Center can accommodate up to 600 for receptions. Forty-foot-high ceilings and second-level catwalks give a feeling of spaciousness to the 20,000-square-foot event center, and more intimate breakout rooms, galleries and small meeting spaces are available as well.

Oregon Columbia Gorge Discovery Center

Overlooking the Columbia River as it makes its way through The Dalles, the Columbia Gorge Discovery Center offers spectacular views of the river, extensive collections of American Indian artifacts and a display of the ice age floods that reshaped the land thousands of years ago. Native vegetation has been restored, attracting songbirds, waterfowl, foxes, raccoons and more.

Four meeting venues provide a variety of options for 22 to 200 people in classroom or dining room layouts. With a wall of windows and stone and timber décor, the River Gallery is a good choice for large meetings. Indoor and outdoor seating is available in the Basalt Rock Café, and the M.J. Murdock Theater seats 140 people.

Oregon Museum of Science and Industry

One of the top science centers in the United States, the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry invites meeting planners to consider interactive entertainment. Delegates can try a little hands-on science, tour a non-nuclear, fast-attack submarine, or gaze at the stars in the planetarium.

More conventional possibilities include river views in the elegant dining hall, a state-of-the-art auditorium and an outdoor courtyard. The museum can accommodate up to 2,500 people, and all events are catered by Bon Appetit.

High Desert Museum

Located in Bend, Ore., the High Desert Museum features Native American and Western art, live animal habitats and artifacts like the DeMoss Stagecoach, which once carried the DeMoss Lyric Bards as they performed throughout the Old West.

Set on 135 acres of pristine natural beauty, the museum has more than 7,000 square feet of event space and can accommodate groups of up to 500 guests.

Idaho Museum of Idaho

Security guard Ben Stiller had a lot more than he could handle when every stuffed, mounted and freeze-dried critter came to life in the movie *Night at the Museum*. You won't have any such problems, however, when you plan a meeting at the Museum of Idaho. Delegates will get a kick out of the giant dinosaur skeleton, Egyptian artifacts and numerous displays of Idaho natural and cultural history.

The entire facility can be rented after-hours for as many as 700 people, and four smaller meeting rooms can accommodate from 60 to 110 people.


Alaska Anchorage Museum

Looking like six-story-tall glass blocks, the Anchorage Museum shimmers in the midnight sun. From humble beginnings in 1968, the museum has grown into an elegant storehouse of over 175,000 historical objects, 2,000 educational artifacts and 350,000 historic photos.

The Atrium's reflective pool and marble staircase set an elegant mood for 150 to 400 people. The sleek Muse restaurant can serve up to 100 diners and the fourth-floor Chugach Gallery offers exclusive rental space with city views. Large meetings and conferences can use the 230-seat auditorium. An on-site caterer provides a variety of menu choices.

British Columbia Gulf of Georgia Cannery

Imagine networking beside the "slime line" or watching a video presentation in a 19th century boiler room. Historic, industrial and fascinating, the Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site in Richmond was a working cannery until a couple of decades ago.

Today the 55,000-square-foot cannery functions as a museum and after-hours meeting venue. "Lane 2" offers space for receptions or dinners for up to 400 people. The outdoor Tank Farm deck hosts barbecues for up to 150 and the boiler house theater seats 55. Richmond is eight miles from Vancouver and home to the Vancouver International Airport. 

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