

Subscribe today FREE!

Where do you plan?

We're there with dynamic regional coverage and comprehensive resources.



Subscribe today for free to get the latest regional trends and best practices by visiting meetingsmags.com

meetings + events media group

editor's LETTER

SELLING MINNEAPOLIS

IT'S NOT MY JOB TO SELL MINNEAPOLIS AS AN EVENT DESTINATION, but I must say, there are worse jobs to have. Don't take it from me. Consider this resume:

- No. 1 (Mpls./St. Paul) Healthiest City in the U.S. (American College of Sports Medicine)
- No. 1 City for Parks in the U.S. (The Trust for Public Land)
- No. 1 (Mpls./St. Paul) Cleanest City in the U.S. (*Travel + Leisure*; 2012)
- No. 1 (Mpls./St. Paul) Most Intelligent People (*Travel + Leisure*; 2012)
- No. 2 Most Bike-Friendly City in the U.S. (Bicycling.com)
- No. 4 (Mpls./St. Paul) Quality of Life in the U.S. (*Travel + Leisure*; 2012)
- No. 5 Hottest Travel Destination (*Travel + Leisure*; 2012)
- No. 8 (Mpls./St. Paul) U.S. Travel Destinations (*Lonely Planet*)
- No. 9 Most Walkable City in the U.S. (*Walk Score*)
- No. 9 Most Inventive City in the World (*Forbes*)

Sold yet? Of course those of us who work and live in the Minneapolis area don't need to see the honors on paper to know what a unique and special city it is. But pulling in visitors from other areas is crucial to the local meetings and events scene. Enter President and CEO Melvin Tennant and his Meet Minneapolis team. Selling the city as an events destination is their job, and they do it well. Minneapolis, combined with St. Paul, had 27.9 million visitors in 2012 that spent \$6.9 billion, a 5 percent increase from 2011. Meet Minneapolis is shooting to increase that number of visitors by 10 million by 2017.

That's a realistic goal considering the CVB helped lure some huge events to Minneapolis in 2014, including Major League Baseball's All-Star Game, Meeting Professionals International's World Education Conference and Shriners International's Imperial Session.

Not to diminish the achievements of Meet Minneapolis, but Minneapolis isn't exactly a tough sell these days. The first-class tourist experience starts when guests arrive at the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport, rated America's Best Airport by *Travel + Leisure* in 2012, with tons of meeting space and the newly renovated G Concourse with shops and trendy eateries (page 18).

Speaking of which, with some of the most talented chefs, caterers and new restaurants (and don't forget food trucks), Minneapolis is on the cutting edge of the national foodie scene (page 39). And when the daunting cold weather strikes, you still have access to all the hot eats via the city's skyway system (page 24).

The perks of meeting in Minneapolis are no secret. Thanks to Meet Minneapolis and all the wonderful people who work in the local tourism, events and hospitality scene, the word will continue to spread and the industry will continue to thrive. Selling Minneapolis is easy. All we really have to do is continue to nurture a city that sells itself.

Bobby Hart, Editor
Bobby.hart@tigeroak.com

