



# HOSTING THE ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE SOCIETY OF AMERICAN TRAVEL WRITERS



***SATW is currently seeking proposals for its  
2018-2019-2020 Annual Conventions***

Updated January 2017

### WHO ARE WE?

#### ❑ Destination Marketers Media Opportunity

**Mission:** The Society of American Travel Writers (SATW), founded in 1955, is a nonprofit professional association whose members hail from the United States and Canada. SATW promotes responsible travel journalism and provides professional support and development for its members.

**Members:** SATW's nearly 1,100 members include Actives (working travel journalists, photographers and videographers) and Associates (communications professionals who work within the travel industry). The membership is two-thirds Actives, one-third Associates.

SATW members create accurate, compelling, consumer-friendly information on travel destinations, facilities and services. Their work appears in magazines and newspapers, travel books and guidebooks, radio and TV programs, online and across a spectrum of social media.

Our members are "Travel's Most Trusted Voices."

By hosting an annual convention for this group, travel destinations can shine the spotlight on their locations through the work of these visiting journalists and communicators.

Delegates spend much of their time outside of the convention hotel exploring the destination during day trips and pre- and post-convention tours. Delegates often choose to attend a convention based on the attractiveness and story potential of the destination.

This document explains what is involved in hosting SATW's annual convention and the procedures for submitting your proposal. *We do not require lavish and expensive hosting. What we do need are great stories and photos that we can share with an audience that is increasingly hungry for destinations that have great stories to tell and that offer authentic experiences.*

We contract with destinations two or three years in advance. This gives the host and SATW ample time for planning.



### **❑ Valuable Benefits For The Host Destination**

Positive publicity is priceless, especially when it comes from a credible, professional journalist. In fact, media coverage can be more effective than advertising.

Travel journalism is a competitive business. In order to successfully sell their articles, images and videos, SATW members are constantly searching for what is new, different and unknown about a destination. If your destination is seeking to create a new image in the eyes of travel consumers, hosting an SATW Convention gives you a unique opportunity to network with professional travel journalists and tell the story of your destination.

Our journalist members specialize in many aspects of travel, including adventure, the environment, food, wine, history, golf, cruising, luxury/budget/business travel, camping, spas, sports and youth/family/senior travel. The SATW membership directory contains a complete list of members' special interests and the editorial outlets in which their work appears.

Many SATW travel photographers and videographers also sell to or operate their own stock photography agencies and typically sell images for years after the photos were shot.

About one-third of the SATW membership is made up of those members who represent major travel and tourism destinations, attractions and businesses. Many are also freelance writers/photographers and are active on social media. Associate members pay more to attend conventions and network with Active members. This keeps the rate lower for Actives who are attending.

### **❑ Straight Talk – We'll Work With You to Meet the Challenge**

Hosting an SATW Convention will require a lot of energy, but you will see a good return on your investment. We are flexible in almost every aspect of our convention planning and program development, and we welcome creative approaches to the implementation of our convention.

### **❑ We Are Working Journalists and Communicators**

After each annual convention or regional meeting, SATW members are asked to submit copies of their story(ies), Internet/social media impressions, radio, television and image placements so an electronic report on clips/placements/postings can be compiled.

During the convention, some journalists will begin filing stories and posting to blogs, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter and other social media platforms. After an SATW convention, stories about that destination continue to appear for years afterward.

Because today's media use many formats, our tracking service assesses all forms of publication as "media impressions." Lists of specific publications are available on request. Results are compiled and shared two years after a convention.

## SATW Annual Convention Proposal Details and Guidelines

Here are the results of some recent conventions:

Location	*Core Dates Room Usage	Total Attendees	Media Placements
<b>Wenzhou, China†</b> Pre-tours: Oct 18 - 23 Post tours: Oct 29 - Nov 6	<b>2016</b> Rooms Used at HQ Hotel: Oct 20-22: 19 Oct 23-29: 126	145	Social media activity and clip reports are being compiled. Available by December 2018.
<b>Las Vegas, Nevada†</b> Pre-tours: Sept 30 - 4 Post tours: Oct 9 - 13	<b>2015</b> Rooms Used at HQ Hotel: Oct 4- 9: 195	221	Social media activity and clip reports are being compiled. Available by December 2017.
<b>ReykjavikIceland†</b> Pre-tours: Oct 11 - 15 Post tours: Oct 20 - 23	<b>2014</b> Rooms Used at HQ Hotel: Oct 15-20: 350	355	Total media impressions <b>44.7 million</b>  118 clips produced 41 Print 76 Online
<b>Biloxi, Miss.</b> Pre-tours: Oct 17 Post tours: Started Oct 25	<b>2013</b> Rooms Used at HQ Hotel: Oct 18-25: 319	319	Total media impressions <b>89.5 million</b>  51 clips produced Newspaper/magazine circulation = 1,455,687 Website Unique Monthly Views (UVM) = 87.9 million (87,989,623) + 10 postings to Websites + 2 postings to personal blogs + 1 TV broadcast segment
<b>Indianapolis, Ind.</b> Pre-tours: Sept 5 - 9 Post tours: Started Sept 14	<b>2012</b> Rooms Used at HQ Hotel: Sept 6-7: 4 Sept 8-14: 196	196	Total media impressions <b>30.9 million</b>  Increase in related Facebook posts and likes: <b>36%</b> Increase in tweets and followers on Twitter: <b>23%</b> . Klout score: <b>60</b> Outlets included <i>Outside, Southern Living, Miami Herald, Huffington Post Travel, Washington Post, Detroit Free Press, Cleveland Plain Dealer, San Francisco Chronicle, Fox News</i> and more.
<b>Wellington, New Zealand</b> Pre-tours: Nov 3 - 7 Post tours: Nov 12 - 15	<b>Nov. 7-12, 2011</b> Rooms Used at HQ Hotel: Nov 1-6: 60 Nov 7-11: 350 Nov 12-14: 50	430	Total media impressions <b>179.6 million</b>  264 clips as of 10/2013, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 88 newspaper/magazine articles</li> <li>• 92 blog postings</li> <li>• 64 Internet articles</li> <li>• 1 TV broadcast segment video</li> <li>• 1 video</li> <li>• 2 stock image sales</li> <li>• 1 lecture</li> </ul> Website Unique Views = 138.2 million Combined Print Circulation = 41.4 million Combined Print Value = \$2.5 million

## Does Your Destination Have What It Takes?

SATW welcomes convention proposals as much as three to five years in advance. Proposals for 2018, 2019 and 2020 are usually presented twice a year at the board meetings in the Spring and Fall.

The SATW Sites Committee (volunteer members appointed by the president) reviews each proposal and makes recommendations to the SATW Board of Directors, which then hears face-to-face presentations before making a selection. We pay particular attention to the following criteria:

- **Story potential:** To attract the journalists who are our Active members there must be, *above all*, lots to write about, talk about and photograph.
- **Accessibility:** Members should be able to reach the destination with reasonable ease and cost.
- **Enthusiasm:** It sells. An enthusiastic, organized and committed host marketing team is essential.
- **Organization:** Our conventions are professionally organized. Therefore, we look to see that the potential host understands our needs and can fulfill them with a productive meeting plan.

## Where Has SATW Met Previously?

2016 Wenzhou, China	2006 Santiago, Chile
2015 Las Vegas, Nevada, USA	2005 Las Vegas, Nevada, USA
2014 Reykjavik, Iceland	2004 St. Moritz, Switzerland
2013 Mississippi Gulf Coast, USA	2003 Orlando, Florida, USA
2012 Indianapolis, Indiana, USA	2002 Oahu, Hawaii, USA
2011 Wellington, New Zealand	2001 Bermuda
2010 Leipzig and Dresden, Germany	2000 Cardiff, Wales
2009 Guadalajara, Mexico	1999 Banff, Alberta, Canada
2008 Houston, Texas, USA	1998 Israel
2007 Manchester, England	(More locations upon request)

## SATW Convention Basics

- **Frequency:** Annual
- **Location:** SATW meets in destinations worldwide. SATW headquarters is based outside of Chicago, Illinois.
- **Meeting Dates:** Typically October, although September and early November are options. Proposed meeting dates should avoid:
  - Canadian Thanksgiving (Oct. 8, 2018; Oct. 14, 2019; Oct. 12, 2020)
  - American Thanksgiving (Nov. 22, 2018; Nov. 28, 2019; Nov. 26, 2020)
  - Rosh Hashanah (Sept. 9-11, 2018; Sept. 29-Oct. 1, 2019; Sept. 18-20, 2020)
  - Yom Kippur (Sept. 19, 2018; Oct. 8 and 9, 2019; Sept. 27 and 28, 2020)
  - Halloween (Oct. 31)
- **Duration:** The core convention is typically five days and five nights with pre-post-tours scheduled before and after the core convention dates.
- **Attendance:** Averages between 300-500 delegates.
- **Airfare:** Affordable airfare is critical for building convention attendance. Destinations may or

## SATW Annual Convention Proposal Details and Guidelines

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may not include airfare in their bids, but preference is given to those that do. If a bid includes an air-inclusive option, it should also include a “joiner” option for those delegates who wish to book their own airfare. Destinations may also connect SATW with a strong airline partner with whom the Society can work with.

- **Hotel and room block:** One hotel is preferred, but multiple hotels are an option. Delegate arrival/departure patterns vary and are flexible. Typical room block: 350 rooms, including 100 double and 250 single rooms. Room rates for the core convention (typically five nights of lodging), are built into the convention registration fee. Special convention room rates should be available for two days prior to and two days following the core convention. Early/late arrivals who take advantage of these rates pay for those room nights separately. Preferred hotels are those that are adjacent to convention centers or have their own extensive meeting space. This space should be flexible, with a variety of room set-ups and audio-visual capabilities. Many sessions are combined with meals, so catering capabilities are essential.
- **Pre-Post tours:** Designed as photo and story-gathering opportunities, these tours may run three to five days and may require a registration fee in addition to the regular convention fee. SATW will work with the host and nearby destinations to organize these tours.
- **Board of Directors meeting:** A three- to four-day SATW Board of Directors meeting precedes the core convention. Typically, this is in a location convenient to the core convention or in the same city (max travel time: 60 minutes). This can be used to showcase a smaller destination or hotel property that is too small to consider hosting the larger Society meeting. Block: 25-30 hotel rooms.
- **Site inspections:** The host city will underwrite appropriate site inspections to review all day tours and pre/post trip itineraries.
- The Society of American Travel Writers will not meet in a facility that discriminates against any group on the basis of race, religion, national origin, gender or sexual orientation.

### What You Need to Know

#### Pricing

We ask that potential hosts give a *per-person* (same for single or double) package price to include:

- Five nights' lodging
- Most meals (lighter and on-your-own meals and box lunches may be scheduled as appropriate)
- Half- and full-day tours offering unique storytelling opportunities with English-speaking guides
- Meeting space and audio-visual, as required
- All ground transportation, including airport transfers
- Internet service in guest and meeting rooms
- Taxes and tips for group activities (Members receive tipping instructions for individual services such as housekeeping, bell service and day tours.)
- If your country requires tourist visas, please explain how these would be handled.

#### Negotiable Aspects of the Convention

- Printing of program and other promotional materials
- Production of a convention website
- A golf tournament as one day-tour option
- Airfare is not expected for domestic destinations, but is often a critical component of international conventions. Preference is given to international destinations that do offer either included or discounted airfare.

### The Proposal Price

- Although SATW members do not expect to be hosted at no cost, a good price plays a strong role in choosing a winning proposal and often translates to a higher delegate turnout.
- Please consider any likely currency fluctuations when putting your proposal together because the time between acceptance and the convention can be as long as 24-36 months. Use realistic tour pricing.
- Remember to consider costs for the Board of Directors meeting.
- The proposal price indicates the total amount SATW will be contracted to pay. There is no "ceiling" for pricing and SATW is mindful of the realities of the current economic climate. If the host decides to include airfare, be sure the pricing with these partner(s) reflects realistic costs.
- As a guide to the per-delegate rates (paid by SATW to the host in US dollars), here are the prices of recent SATW conventions. Unless otherwise noted, the fee included five convention days: rooms, all meals, audio/visual, ground transportation, sightseeing and air from delegates' gateway airport:

○ Wenzhou, China 2016	\$1,095	Discounted air offered
○ Las Vegas, Nevada 2015	\$225	No air/discounted hotel separate
○ Reykjavik, Iceland 2014	\$2,260	Air included (\$1,400 without air)
○ Miss. Gulf Coast 2013	\$550	No air offered
○ Indianapolis, Ind. 2012	\$875	No air offered
○ Wellington, NZ 2011	\$1,300	Air included (\$800 without air)
○ Germany 2010	\$1,300	Air included (\$800 without air)
○ Guadalajara 2009	\$1,300	Air included (\$900 without air)
○ Houston 2008	\$750	Air included (\$550 without air)
○ Manchester 2007	\$1,250	Air included (\$800 without air)
○ Chile 2006	\$1,200	Air included (\$800 without air)
○ Las Vegas 2005	\$950	Air included (\$650 without air)
○ Switzerland 2004	\$1,200	Air included (\$800 without air)
○ Hawaii 2002	\$1,200	Air included (\$800 without air)

### Air transportation

- SATW members live in communities across North America. If the host is capable of offering an airfare component, it is critical to establish partnerships or negotiate group fares with at least one major carrier.
- It is SATW's preference that air transportation is provided from all members' home gateways, but is open to proposals for air transportation from specified gateway cities, provided there is ample coverage of all areas of the U.S. and Canada to international destinations. If the host chooses not to include air in its proposal, SATW will have the option of negotiating a group rate with any airline to offer its members.

### Accommodations

- It is most convenient (and usually less expensive for the host) to have all convention delegates housed at one hotel. The next best situation is to provide rooms in a cluster of hotels within walking distance. In the case of several hotels, one hotel or a convention center should be the primary location where most meetings and activities are held.

### Meeting space

- Flexible meeting space is essential. General business meetings are typically conducted in a theater-style arrangement. Professional development seminars, panel discussions and workshops vary from theater-style rooms of 100-250 to small Board of Directors room-style meetings for smaller groups. All rooms should offer full multi-media capabilities including networked laptop computer, LCD projector, DVD player and microphones. Should we say

## SATW Annual Convention Proposal Details and Guidelines

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Wireless Internet connectivity is essential. Direct access to the Internet is essential.

- A large open space is necessary for Marketplace, an event in which most members participate. Audiovisual expenses are the responsibility of the host.

### Dinner around the city

- An important component of each convention is an evening experiencing local restaurants. Convention delegates break into groups and dine at restaurants throughout the host city. This gives them the opportunity to experience the same meal anyone visiting the destination might have. This program is not mandatory but is a good way to showcase the cuisine and multiple restaurants of your city or country.
- Although many hosts cover the cost of these meals with the cooperation of the hosting restaurants, a voucher program has also been employed whereby delegates choose from a selection of restaurants (with various price points) and pay for their own meals.
- Regardless of which option is chosen, hosts should not promise participating restaurants that they will receive media coverage, although it often happens.

### Sponsorships

- SATW recommends the host arrange sponsors and/or partnerships to offset some or all of the hosting costs. Typically, host sponsors are related to the destination and to the transportation providers. Often they cover the costs of major meal functions.
- SATW also has a limited number of sponsors that are usually associated with the travel industry. The convention chair/co-chairs will work with the host to avoid any duplication of effort.

### Convention programming

- SATW is responsible for all professional development programming at the convention. However, hosts are encouraged to make suggestions about programming and speakers related to their destination.

### Your proposal

- Each potential host will prepare a written proposal. Proposals should contain as much detail as possible about how a destination would create and manage the convention.
- The proposal should include the per-person price (same for single or double), proposed dates, a profile of the region, a description of the host hotel, a suggested day-by-day schedule with half- and full-day tours, a list of potential story opportunities, and pre- and post-convention trip possibilities. If airfare is offered, details of participating airlines should be included.
- Proposals should also include a one-page document giving five to ten primary reasons SATW should choose your destination.
- Samples of previous successful proposals so that you may use them as guides in preparing your proposal are available upon request.

### Details on what a winning proposal will include:

1. Statements from destination officials (minister of tourism, governor, mayor, etc.) indicating the destination's authority to propose for the convention and the expected level of participation. **No proposal or binding agreement can be submitted or signed solely with a DMC.**
2. The proposal information form at the end of this booklet, completed in its entirety.
3. An outline of potential story ideas for travel writers, photographers and broadcasters.
4. Suggested dates and alternate dates. These dates should not conflict with major religious or U.S. and Canadian national holidays. October is the preferred month with September or early November as alternates. Please avoid Jewish holidays, U.S. Thanksgiving, Canadian Thanksgiving and Halloween.
5. Include a map of the city and/or country, highlighting key sites. Also provide information about

## SATW Annual Convention Proposal Details and Guidelines

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the weather during the proposed convention period.

6. Description of the convention center or hotel(s) where meetings and functions will be held.
  7. Description of the host hotel(s) and accommodations. One hotel is preferred, but if you have more than one hotel, please designate the suggested headquarters hotel.
  8. Proposed core convention day-by-day itinerary. We understand that all itineraries are subject to change as planning progresses.
  9. Proposed Board of Directors meeting site – may be held in core convention city at hotel.
  10. Proposed half-day and full-day tours – Tours should include activities at an easy, moderate and active participant level and must be duly noted as such when finalizing the tours.
  11. Proposed pre- and post-trip itineraries and possible pricing. Trips should range from three to five days. Trips focusing on specific activities, such as cultural, historical, golf, hiking, scuba diving, photography, cruising, etc. are encouraged.
  12. Per-delegate package prices for the core convention (Be sure to stipulate whether airfare is or is not included.)
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### **SAMPLE CONVENTION SCHEDULE**

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#### **Thursday (before the core convention)**

**All Day** - Board of Directors arrive for board meeting

**All Day** - Pre tours begin

#### **Monday-- Core Convention Day 1**

**10 a.m.** Registration opens

**10 a.m.** Hospitality/Media room open

**All Day** Delegates arrive/pre trips arrive

**1:30 - 4 p.m.** Sightseeing tours

**5 - 6 p.m.** First-timers reception

**6 - 9 p.m.** Opening reception

#### **Tuesday -- Core Convention Day 2**

**7 a.m.** Hospitality/Media Room open

**8 - 9:30 a.m.** Opening breakfast with speaker

**10 - 11 a.m.** Opening ceremonies

**11 a.m. to noon** SATW business meeting

**12:30 - 2:15 p.m.** Awards lunch

**2:30 - 5:15 p.m.** Marketplace

**6:30 - 9 p.m.** Evening dinner event

#### **Wednesday -- Core Convention Day 3**

**7 a.m.** Hospitality/Media Room open

**7:30 a.m. - 9 a.m.** Chapter breakfasts

**9:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.** Full-Day Tours/Golf Tournament

**7 - 9:15 p.m.** Dine around at pre-selected restaurants

#### **Thursday -- Core Convention Day 4**

**7 a.m.** Hospitality/Media Room open

**7:30 - 9 a.m.** Council breakfasts

**9:15 a.m. - 12 p.m.** Professional Development Workshops

**12:30 - 5:30 p.m.** Half-day tours including lunch

Evening on your own

#### **Friday -- Core Convention Day 5**

## SATW Annual Convention Proposal Details and Guidelines

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7 a.m.	Hospitality/Media Room open
8- 9:15 a.m.	Breakfast/New Board meeting
9:15 a.m. – 12 p.m.	Professional Development Workshops
12:30 – 5:30 p.m.	Half-day tours including lunch
6 - 10 p.m.	Gala closing banquet

### Saturday -- Core Convention Day 6

Breakfast in hotels

**All Day** -- Delegate departures for home and Post Tours begin

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### YOUR NEXT STEPS

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1. Indicate your interest in proposing an SATW Convention by contacting the SATW Executive Director, Marla Schragger, [mschragger@satw.org](mailto:mschragger@satw.org).
2. Determine the meeting year you intend to submit a proposal. Currently, SATW is seeking proposals for fall 2018, 2019 and 2020 but will consider proposals for other years.
3. Work with Marla to get all the answers to your questions and be sure to seek her advice on points for which you need clarification. You may request copies of previous proposals and convention registration materials and visit the websites of previous conventions.
4. Solidify your funding by contacting prospective partner airlines, tourist boards, hotels, restaurants and tour operators as early as possible to gauge the level of interest and sponsorship potential.
5. Prepare proposal as indicated above.
6. Submit the first draft of your proposal electronically (MS Word or PDF format: NO PowerPoint) to SATW Executive Director, Marla Schragger by **April 30, 2017**. After the committee reviews the proposal and makes suggestions for improvements, you may prepare your final proposal.
7. You will be instructed on when to submit your final proposal, which will be distributed to the SATW Board of Directors for review. The final proposal should include funding for at least one pre-decision site visit for up to three SATW representatives including air, accommodations, meals and other activities. Costs to SATW for site trips should be shared in advance of the visit. (Only the top only finalists will be visited).
8. Be prepared to present your proposal to the board of directors by Skype at a future date TBD.
9. The successful host city for the SATW annual convention is expected to sign a one-page Letter of Agreement within 60 days of the final Board of Directors' vote (which would take place after the site visits). The Letter of Agreement includes basic information presented in your written proposal and any additional agreements made subsequently. Typically this document stipulates meeting dates, pricing, air arrangements and hotels. We are happy to send you a sample Letter of Agreement for your review.

**Note:** If you think your destination is too small or does not have the resources to host SATW's Annual Convention, you may wish to consider a smaller SATW chapter or council meeting, which range from 20 – 150 attendees. For more information, contact Marla Schragger, [mschragger@satw.org](mailto:mschragger@satw.org), 312-420-6846.

**SATW CONVENTION PROPOSAL FORM**

(To be submitted with detailed written proposal)

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Government or destination entity making the proposal:

Partners who have guaranteed cooperation:

Airline partners, if any:

Dates of core convention:

Alternate dates:

Location of core convention (city):

Core convention hotel(s):

Where general sessions and workshops will be held:

- Primary hotel
- Convention center

Price per delegate for core convention (same for single or double occupancy): US\$

Price per delegate for core convention including airfare (optional): US\$

Suggested site for SATW Board of Directors meeting:

Does your country charge entry/visa fees? If so, how much? How would these be obtained?

**For more information, contact Marla Schragger, SATW Executive Director,  
[mschragger@satw.org](mailto:mschragger@satw.org), 312-420-6846.**