

Meeting of the 2013 NYS Conference Committee

(November 14, 2012)

Attendees: Mickey Dietrich, Eric Herman, Bill Johnson, Verne LaClair, Al Leidner, Susan Nixson, Bruce Oswald, Lindi Quackenbush, Tom Sears, Julie Tolar

Items discussed:

- 2012 Conference the lowest attendance ever
 - 26% were first timers
 - Reasons for losing attendees – Location – Syracuse is always a tough draw, Travel restrictions because of bad economy, conference held in spring vs. fall, new format – did not solicit volunteers to do presentations (some couldn't come because they couldn't justify their attendance as presenters)
- Different locations for hotels, conference center, and workshops was not popular
 - The major disconnect was the location of the workshops versus the rest of the conference
- Demo Theater – 60% of attendees didn't attend them, attendees couldn't hear speakers as they were afraid to use the mikes and disturb others in the vendor area;
- There was a suggestion to put the apps in a "session track".
- Good marks on the tri-fold brochure that was used for the first time.
- Exhibitors were happier as more traffic came their way.
- The most fun event was the impromptu gathering at the Dinosaur Barbeque
- Could we have regional booths and mini presentations from the regions or could this be emphasized in a return to the State of the State presentation
- Shortened 2012 conference ended up feeling like 2 half days. Committee wants 2 full days with first day starting at 8:30 a.m. Vendors setting up the day before. A continental breakfast and coffee would be held in the vendor area the first day.
- Workshops
 - Workshops were too long - Should continue with workshops but shorten them to 2 hours only,
 - Price of the workshops should be included in the overall registration cost
- Suggested format

- Designated presentations i.e. the special spatial spotlights, exciting keynote speaker, but include invitation for volunteer presentations with possibly “crowd sourcing” their themes.
 - A session similar to this past year’s on emergency response should be included on Sandy
- Networking – the agenda at first glance seemed like it included too much networking time, but, in the end, it was extremely valuable. (Note – we must not make the agenda look like it’s too light on valuable topics by providing the networking opportunities). The networking at the end of the conference didn’t work well for a number of reasons.
- Room blocks – Numbers in RFP seem way too high – this needs to be discussed with Cindy Delaney and see what her recommendations are. No rooms 2 days ahead, lower the number for the night before the conference, but see if arrangement can be worked out where rooms are “released” ahead of time and Association is not required to pay for unused rooms. Committee was in favor of buying more food versus rooms if that was required.
- The Committee was asked what would entice you to go to the 2013 Conference?
 - Ability to learn new information/something that you see for the first time.
 - Listen to a “leading edge” keynote speaker
 - Hear the State of the State
 - Find out the latest in technology
 - Find out creative approaches to using existing technology
 - Learn about the latest mobile apps
 - Have an “app swap”

Conclusions:

- Consistent problem with people not knowing what events were going on where and when (technology petting zoo, app garden, demo theater, etc.
 - Need an Emcee to alert people (on a regular basis) to events going on and their location
 - Possibly better and more signage
 - Possibly one or more rolling PPT’s showing each day’s agenda and room location for events
- Conference should be held on Tuesday/Wednesday or Wednesday/Thursday.
- 2013 conference should be a “hybrid” model of the 2012 conference – 2 full days with the first day starting at 8:30 and vendors setting up the night before. Also, possibly a less formal networking get together the night before.
 - Plenary session would include a welcome with directions on the conference highlights (also consider rolling PPT’s with those highlights for each day), high quality keynote, State of the State, etc.
 - Chosen presenters for the Special Spatial Spotlight track

- Workshops (2 hours in length)
- Evening reception
- Volunteered presentations on the second day