

Successful MEETINGS

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ATLANTIC CITY
MAUI
FLORIDA'S EAST COAST
ARUBA

One of this year's award winners,
Kristen Hurley, senior event
manager, Massachusetts
Convention Center Authority

Super SERVICE

From hosting the President to bringing
order to WrestleMania, the 2010
Convention Service Managers of the Year
Award recipients have done it all

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Every year, *Successful Meetings* joins with the Association for Convention Operations Management to recognize the unsung heroes of the meetings and events industry: convention services managers. This year, Sheila Mires of Visit Baltimore, Dianne Liberty of the Hyatt Regency Dearborn, and Kristen Hurley of the Massachusetts Convention Center Authority take home the industry's top prize.

By Andrea Doyle

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As corporate meetings and events budgets go, so goes the economy of the United States. *By Andrea Doyle*

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A good destination management company can help you save far more than it costs. *By Agatha Gilmore*

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Cover Story



From left: Sheila Mires, associate director of convention services, Visit Baltimore; Kristen Hurley, senior event manager, Massachusetts Convention Center Authority; and Dianne Liberty, convention services manager, Hyatt Regency Dearborn

THE ENVELOPE PLEASE

Going above and beyond is de rigueur in the world of an award-winning convention services manager

“**U**nsung hero” is the way many planners would describe a convention services manager (CSM). These professionals help plan phenomenal meetings, conferences, and trade shows without a lot of fanfare.

That has changed for the winners of the 2010 Convention Services Manager of the Year Award, sponsored by *Successful Meetings*, in conjunction with the Association for Convention Operations Management (ACOM) that honors a top CSM at a convention and visitors bureau, convention center, and hotel. The award

recognizes a CSM who best exemplifies positive service, effectiveness as a meeting partner, and the ability to go above and beyond to ensure the success of a client’s event.

Sheila Mires, associate director of convention services at Visit Baltimore; Dianne Liberty, convention services manager for the Hyatt Regency Dearborn; and Kristen Hurley, senior event manager for the Massachusetts Convention Center Authority (MCCA), were recognized for their achievements at the 33rd Annual CSM of the Year awards ceremony on January 8 in Las Vegas.





CVB

Sheila Mires Associate Director of Convention Services

Visit Baltimore

Sheila Mires joined Visit Baltimore more than five years ago as associate director of convention services, and is responsible for all citywide conventions with 600 peak room nights or more. As soon as a contract is signed, Mires connects with the meeting planner and gets busy.

"I'm the liaison between the meeting planner and the city," she explains. "I plan site visits, recommend hotels and restaurants, handle shuttles, and more." President of the Chesapeake Chapter of the Professional Convention Management Association, Mires is extremely proud that she became a certified meeting professional (CMP) in 2001.

One of the most memorable conventions she helped plan in Baltimore was the 2010 CMP Conclave for the Convention Industry Council. More than 450

certified meeting professionals were on hand to discuss the latest industry trends.

From planning the opening reception at Camden Yards during a Baltimore Orioles game to arranging after-parties and amenities, Mires was integral to the success of this conference.

"Sheila is a dedicated CSM who understands the meetings, events, and exhibition industry. Her knowledge and commitment to the customer is shown during each aspect of the planning process. The 2010 Certified Meeting Professional Conclave was a success in large part due to Sheila and her hard work. Sheila's professionalism and dedication reflect positively on herself and for the City of Baltimore," says Christina Buck, program director for the Convention Industry Council.



HOTEL

Dianne Liberty Convention Services Manager

Hyatt Regency Dearborn, Dearborn, MI

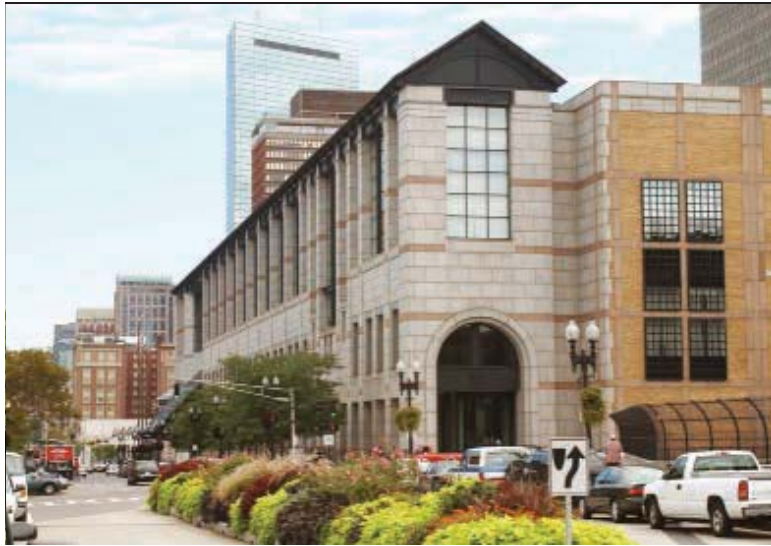
Dianne Liberty started with Hyatt Hotels & Resorts in 1977 as a breakfast server. She worked her way up through the food and beverage department to her current position in convention services in 1996. She has worked all over the country for Hyatt and met her husband while working at the Hyatt Regency Waikoloa in Hawaii. The two moved to Michigan in 1994 when she joined the Hyatt Regency Dearborn. She was transferred to the Hyatt Regency O'Hare and then to the Hyatt Regency Scottsdale but found her way back to Dearborn, where she has been based since 2009.

"From the variety of people I meet, to the things I learn, to the friendships I develop long after the conferences are over, I just love what I do," she says. "I find the business partnerships I form often develop into

friendships."

Two of her most memorable career moments were hosting the Seattle Seahawks for Super Bowl XL in 2005 and working on WWE WrestleMania in 2007, although she gives all the events she services the same level of attention.

Just ask Terri Murphy, special events planner for the Michigan Municipal League, based in Ann Arbor, MI. "Our registrations were down, so our budget was in a bad place. Dianne worked with us to bring together the level of excellence expected by our attendees cost effectively," says Murphy. "My third-party vendors loved her and that never happens. I have worked, for many years, with convention services managers at every major facility in Michigan, and Dianne is hands down the best I've encountered."



CONVENTION CENTER

Kristen Hurley
Senior Event Manager

Massachusetts Convention Center Authority

Kristen Hurley joined the Massachusetts Convention Center Authority (MCCA) as an event coordinator after graduating from college in 2004, and has since moved her way up to event manager and now senior event manager.

“Coming out of college I

wasn’t sure what I wanted to do. I majored in marketing and women’s studies and had aspirations of becoming a teacher. After being exposed to the convention industry I was captivated,” says Hurley. “I loved that I got to tackle new challenges and situations with

each event. Whether I was working with a client who was holding a meeting for 20 people or a conference for 12,000, I always have the same overall goal: to make sure that my clients and their attendees have the best experience possible.”

One of the most memorable experiences she has had at the convention center was working with the Secret Service to host President Barack Obama as a keynote speaker last fall.

“Kristen is truly a profes-

sional, with a keen understanding of the relationship between meeting planner, convention center, and volunteers and client contact people. Through the year that she worked with us, I was consistently impressed by her level of service, her creativity, and her willingness to take the time to develop solutions to challenges in the planning process,” says Janee Pelletier, vice president of Annapolis, MD-based Conference & Logistics Consultants. **SM**

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 “THEY JUST GAVE ME TOO MUCH
 PERSONAL SERVICE”?**

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