THE VALUE OF MPI

MPI DALLAS/ FORT WORTH CHAPTER



AND

THE PEOPLE BEHIND IT

SUMMER ISSUE Q3 2026

DESIGN CONCEPT LAURYN BROWN, VP OF MARCOM

THE VALUE OF MPI

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

ZHANNA ATHERTON 2026 PRESIDENT

As we move into the second half of our chapter year, I've found myself reflecting on what Every Story Matters truly means—not just as our theme, but as the heartbeat of our chapter.
At the beginning of this term, I shared that every member, every volunteer, every partner, and every experience contributes to the bigger story of MPI DFW. Halfway through this journey, that message feels even more real.

My biggest "aha" moment has been seeing how powerful our collective stories become when we create space for them to be shared. Whether through connection at an event, collaboration at a board retreat, or celebration of one another's accomplishments, it's clear that our chapter is strongest when every voice has a place.

This past quarter was filled with meaningful moments, beginning with our May Membership Mixer. A special thank you to Shenaniganz in Rockwall for their incredible sponsorship and hospitality. The energy, engagement, and connections made that evening were a reminder of how important it is to pause, have fun, and simply enjoy being together as a community.

We also recently celebrated one of our most anticipated signature events of the year — our Awards Gala, Standard of Excellence, held at the remarkable National Medal of Honor Museum. There could not have been a more fitting venue or theme for a night dedicated to honoring excellence, leadership, and service within our industry. To all of our finalists and winners across every category: congratulations. Your dedication, innovation, and impact continue to elevate our profession, and we are proud to celebrate your stories and achievements.

As we continue building toward the future, I'm also excited to share that 2027 Board interviews have taken place at the end of this past June. Leadership within MPI DFW is one of the most meaningful ways to contribute your story to our chapter, and I'm looking forward to seeing the passion and talent of those stepping forward.

Thank you for continuing to show up, lean in, and shape this chapter alongside us. The first half of this term has reminded me that while no two stories are the same, together they create something extraordinary.
And that's exactly why Every Story Matters.



MPI 2024 CHAPTER AWARD TOP PERFORMING

THE VALUE & IMPACT OF OUR PAST PRESIDENTS

2000–2001

STEVE KEMBLE

INTRODUCTION

Steve Kemble has long been recognized as a professional who raises the bar for excellence in the meetings and events industry. Through his leadership, creativity, and commitment to delivering exceptional experiences, he has helped shape memorable events while setting a standard that inspires colleagues and peers alike. His contributions continue to strengthen the industry and the professionals who serve it.

As a dedicated member of the MPI Dallas/Fort Worth Chapter community, Steve Kemble has consistently demonstrated the value of service, leadership, and collaboration. His willingness to share knowledge, mentor others, and support industry initiatives has made a lasting impact on both the chapter and the broader events profession.

Few professionals embody the spirit of the events industry as fully as Steve Kemble. Known for elevating event experiences and fostering meaningful connections, he has become a respected leader within the Dallas-Fort Worth meetings community and beyond. His ongoing contributions to MPI and the industry at large reflect a passion for excellence that benefits clients, colleagues, and future generations of event professionals.



MPI | 2024 CHAPTER AWARD TOP PERFORMING

DESIGN CONCEPT LAURYN BROWN, VP OF MARCOM

THE VALUE & IMPACT OF OUR

PAST PRESIDENTS

STEVE KEMBLE
WITH STEVE KEMBLE EVENT DESIGN

2025 HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE



THE PROFESSIONAL VALUE

Professionally, MPI has been instrumental in shaping Steve's career and helping him grow as a meeting and event professional, leader, educator, and industry advocate. Through MPI, Steve has gained access to world-class education, innovative ideas, industry research, and a network of professionals who continually challenge and inspire him to elevate his work.

THE PERSONAL VALUE

MPI has provided Steve with far more than professional connections- it has provided him with lifelong friendships, a sense of community, and a place where Steve truly belongs. Throughout his career, MPI has been a source of inspiration, encouragement, and support during both successes and challenges. MPI has reminded Steve that our industry is built on people first.

SOMETHING UNIQUE DURING STEVE'S PRESIDENCY

The chapter during his Presidency had over 900 active members!
During Steve's term, at every meeting we used an interactive talk-show format (think Fallon, Kimmel, etc.). We had a set built to use for the entire year at each meeting. As the President, Steve sat behind the moderator's desk as the host and had a live band on set at each meeting as well!



THE VALUE & IMPACT OF OUR PAST PRESIDENTS

2015-2016
TONY CUMMINS

INTRODUCTION

Success in the meetings and events industry requires more than operational expertise—it demands strategic vision, adaptability, and the ability to build lasting relationships. Tony Cummins has consistently demonstrated these qualities throughout his career, earning a reputation for professionalism and thoughtful leadership.

Known for his collaborative approach and commitment to excellence, Tony Cummins has successfully guided teams and organizations through an industry that is constantly evolving. His strategic mindset has enabled him to identify emerging opportunities, embrace innovation, and deliver meaningful experiences that meet the needs of clients, stakeholders, and attendees alike.

Beyond achieving business results, Tony has distinguished himself by fostering trust, mentoring professionals, and promoting high standards across the industry. His leadership reflects the understanding that long-term success is built on integrity, preparation, and a willingness to adapt to changing market dynamics.



THE VALUE & IMPACT OF OUR

PAST PRESIDENTS

TONY CUMMINS, CMP FELLOW & CMM
THE MEETING DEPARTMENT

2026 HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE



THE PROFESSIONAL VALUE

MPI, as the premier organization in our industry, attracts the best of the best people in our industry. The value for Tony over his many years of membership has been the exposure to and relationships with the exceptional members and leaders of our Chapter and others. MPI D/FW has been instrumental in his professional growth and career satisfaction, but more so, it's made up of the people he holds dear as his industry family. No employer can ever match the ROI one can get from being engaged with the wide cross-section of industry peers as one will find within MPI.

THE PERSONAL VALUE

For former MPI President Tony Cummins, MPI has been far more than a professional association—it has been a community that fostered lifelong friendships, leadership opportunities, and personal growth. Throughout his journey, MPI provided a platform to learn from industry peers, give back through service, and help shape the future of the meetings profession.

SOMETHING UNIQUE DURING YOUR PRESIDENCY

The Event Industry Council's (EIC) Hall of Leaders Award nominees had always been nominated by individuals (other industry leaders, not companies or organizations). During his term, the MPI D/FW Chapter broke the mold on that pattern by being the first organization to submit a nominee's name to EIC (2016).

That nominee was none other than our very own, unmistakenly qualified Colleen Rickenbacher, who went on to be inducted into the Hall of Fame that year.

THE MEETiNG DEPARTMENT®
BEST PRACTICES · BEST RESULTS

THE VALUE & IMPACT OF OUR

PAST PRESIDENTS

TONY CUMMINS
THE MEETING DEPARTMENT

2026 HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE



SOMETHING UNIQUE DURING YOUR PRESIDENCY CONTINUED..

It was Colleen, with extensive administrative support from past member Peg Wolschon, who both worked endless days and nights to pull together the rigorous submission forms and documentation.

In some of the earlier days of what we know as CMP credits for industry education, the 2015-2016 Board of Directors voted to adopt participation in the EIC's CMP Preferred Provider Program to provide "accredited" clock hours and to directly report those credits to EIC on behalf of the attendee.

Attendees were previously required to provide written documentation of their participation and questions arose from one event to another as to its accreditation status.

Due to the additional administrative work this would put on the Board overall, there was some reluctance to participate. However, as one of the all-time outstanding Chapters, MPI D/FW has historically been a leader in adopting and implementing new ideas and this was no exception.

THE HALL OF FAME

Tony Cummins' induction into the MPI 2026 Hall of Fame as a former past president is a fitting tribute to a career defined by vision, service, and an unwavering commitment to advancing the meetings and events industry. Throughout decades of leadership, mentorship, and innovation, Tony Cummin's influence extends well beyond the organizations he has served, leaving a lasting legacy of collaboration, integrity, and industry advocacy. This well-deserved honor celebrates not only an exceptional career but also the enduring impact of a leader whose contributions will continue to benefit future generations of event professionals.

THE VALUE & IMPACT OF OUR PAST PRESIDENTS

2022-2023

SANDRA DYEAK

INTRODUCTION

Sandra Dyeak, CMP, exemplifies the professionalism, creativity, and leadership that continue to elevate the meetings and events industry. Throughout a career spanning more than two decades, she has combined strategic vision with hands-on expertise to create exceptional event experiences across hospitality, restaurants, and the performing arts. Beyond her professional accomplishments, Sandra's dedication to mentoring others, advancing industry standards, and serving through MPI has strengthened the meetings community and inspired the next generation of event professionals.



Sandra Dyeak's commitment to MPI D/FW has been marked by exceptional leadership, service, and a passion for advancing the meetings profession. Over the years, she has chaired two signature gala events, earned numerous chapter honors—including the Spirit Award, Special Event of the Year Award, Rising Star of the Year Award, and two President's Awards—and consistently demonstrated a dedication to excellence. As President of MPI D/FW, her collaborative leadership helped guide the chapter to one of its highest achievements: earning MPI Global's 2023 Overall Chapter Excellence Award, a testament to the strength of the chapter and the vision she brought to its success.

MPI | 2024 CHAPTER AWARD TOP PERFORMING

THE VALUE & IMPACT OF OUR

PAST PRESIDENTS

SANDRA DYEAK , CMP
THE EVENTS PROJECT



SOMETHING UNIQUE ABOUT SANDRA

In 2009, Sandra moved to Los Angeles and founded Bright Red Events, successfully managing dance and theatrical events throughout the area. In 2014, she relocated to Dallas, where she developed structured event programs for restaurants and hotels, including Sissy's Southern Kitchen, Cane Rosso, The French Room, and José. In 2023, Sandra launched her consulting firm, The Events Project, specializing in creating and managing restaurant event programs.

Sandra is a seasoned events professional with over 20 years of experience managing special events and creating event programs for restaurants. After earning her degree from New York University, her career began in Houston where she managed events for Stages Repertory Theatre, Art Attack, and The George R. Brown Convention Center.

Sandra is currently accredited as a Certified Meeting Planner (CMP) and holds additional certifications, including Texas Certified Food Manager, TABC Certified Seller, and Texas Food Allergen Certification.

THE EVENTS PROJECT

IN HONOR & MEMORY OF OUR PAST PRESIDENT JASON WARE 1973-2026

INTRODUCTION

While Jason Ware served as MPI Dallas/Fort Worth Chapter President during 2009–2010, his influence reached far beyond a single term of leadership. He was a visionary, a trusted mentor, and an unwavering advocate for the meetings and events profession whose impact was felt throughout the Dallas-Fort Worth community and across the industry nationwide.



Jason believed that the true strength of our profession lies in the relationships we build and the people we inspire. His passion for bringing people together, commitment to serving others, and dedication to elevating the meetings and events industry earned him the admiration and respect of colleagues, volunteers, and friends alike.

His legacy is measured not only by the achievements of his presidency but by the leaders he mentored, the partnerships he fostered, and the countless lives he enriched through his generosity, integrity, and vision. Jason Ware leaves behind an enduring example of servant leadership—one that continues to inspire future generations of industry professionals.

HIGHLIGHT OF RECENT EVENT

37TH ANNUAL PARTY FEST

BE OUR GUEST

ANNOUNCEMENT



EVENT HAPPENED ON:
Date: July 29th, 2026 |
Time: 11AM-4 p.m.
Location: Dallas Market Hall
2200 N Stemmons Fwy,
Dallas, TX 75207

The 37th Annual Partyfest isn't just another industry gathering—it's a pulse check on the creativity, innovation, and ambition driving the D/FW event scene. In a single, invitation-only day, the region's top event professionals come together to showcase what's next: smarter designs, bolder concepts, and experiences that push celebrations beyond the expected.

What makes Partyfest stand out is its balance of inspiration and practicality. It's not only about dazzling displays—it's about real connections. From exhibitor raffles to live product demonstrations, every moment is designed to spark ideas and build relationships that translate directly into better events.

Whether you're planning a corporate gala, wedding, or community celebration, this is where trends become tools.
At its core, Partyfest reinforces a simple truth: great events don't happen by accident—they're built through collaboration, creativity, and access to the right talent. For anyone serious about elevating their next event, this showcase isn't just useful—it's essential.

HIGHLIGHT OF RECENT EVENT

PARTY FEST- SPEAKERS

CELEBRATE, CONNECT, AND ENGAGE WITH VISIT ARLINGTON, FRISCO, FORT WORTH AND MORE.

THE PEOPLE BEHIND EVENTS

The future of the events industry is being shaped by visionary leaders who embrace innovation while keeping people at the center of every experience. At PartyFest, Cheryl Batzing delivered an inspiring presentation on the future of events, offering attendees valuable insights into the trends, technologies, and strategies that will define the next generation of meetings and celebrations.

Drawing on her industry expertise, Cheryl emphasized the importance of creating meaningful, immersive experiences that blend creativity, technology, and authentic human connection. Her forward-thinking perspective challenged event professionals to adapt to evolving attendee expectations while continuing to deliver memorable and impactful events.

As the events industry continues to transform, presentations like Cheryl Batzing's serve as an important reminder that success lies in embracing change, fostering innovation, and remaining committed to exceptional experiences. Her message at PartyFest left attendees energized, informed, and ready to shape the future of events with confidence.



Cheryl Batzing
Current Board Position: VP Special Events- MPI Dallas/ Fort Worth Chapter
Speaker: Party Fest

HIGHLIGHT OF RECENT EVENT

PARTY FEST- SPEAKERS

CELEBRATE, CONNECT, AND ENGAGE WITH VISIT ARLINGTON, FRISCO, FORT WORTH AND MORE.

THE PEOPLE BEHIND EVENTS

As the meetings and events industry continues to evolve, professionals must stay ahead of emerging trends, embrace innovation, and prepare for an ever-changing landscape. During her presentation on the future of events, Paige Mejia offered valuable perspectives on the forces shaping the industry's next chapter.

Highlighting the impact of emerging technologies, changing attendee expectations, workforce dynamics, and economic influences, Paige emphasized the importance of adaptability and forward-thinking leadership. Through an engaging panel discussion with fellow industry professionals, attendees explored how advocacy is helping drive positive change while examining the opportunities and challenges that event planners face in today's marketplace.



Paige Mejia
Current Board Position: Southwest Regional Chair - MPI Global
Past President: MPI D/FW Chapter

CLEARED FOR TAKEOFF. THE FUTURE IS BOARDING NOW.

MPI DALLAS/FORT WORTH



This August, the MPI DFW Chapter invites meeting and event professionals to gather at one of the world's most dynamic transportation hubs —DFW Airport—for an experience designed to inspire, connect, and prepare us for what's ahead. Aptly titled "Cleared for Takeoff: The Future Is Boarding Now," this signature event is more than a meeting; it's a launchpad for the future of our industry.

Airports symbolize movement, innovation, and endless possibilities. Every day, DFW Airport connects people, ideas, cultures, and commerce from around the globe. That spirit of connectivity makes it the perfect setting for conversations about the evolving meetings and events profession. As technology advances, attendee expectations shift, and new opportunities emerge, our industry continues to reinvent itself.

The gate is open. The destination is opportunity. The future is boarding now—and the MPI DFW Chapter is happy to welcome you aboard for an unforgettable experience at DFW Airport.



DFW AIRPORT EXPERIENCE

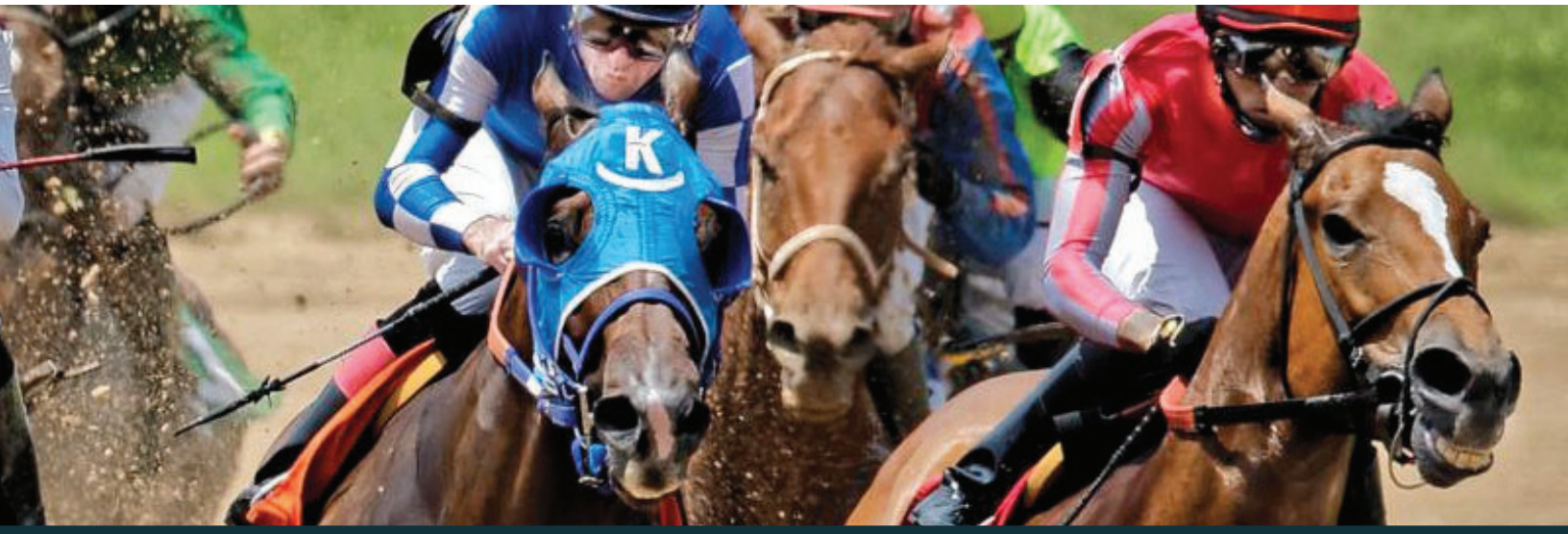
AUGUST 20TH, 2026

WESTIN DALLAS FORT WORTH

MPI 2024 CHAPTER AWARD TOP PERFORMING

OFF TO THE RACES AT GRAND PRAIRIE LONE STAR PARK

MPI DALLAS/FORT WORTH



UPCOMING EVENT: RACING TOWARD THE FUTURE

Each year, the MPI Dallas/Fort Worth Chapter's has a fundraiser. This year, our fundraiser at Lone Star Park is about more than the excitement of horse racing—it's about investing in the future of the meetings and events industry. Under the theme Racing Toward the Future, this September 2026 event celebrates the momentum created when industry professionals come together to support education, leadership development, and the next generation of meeting professionals.

Every sponsorship, ticket, and contribution helps fuel the chapter's mission to provide meaningful educational programs, scholarships, and networking opportunities that strengthen the local meetings community. Just as every race is powered by preparation, teamwork, and determination, the chapter's continued success is driven by members and partners who believe in creating lasting opportunities for professional growth.

As the horses thunder down the track, attendees will also be celebrating the collective progress of an industry built on innovation, collaboration, and connection. Racing Toward the Future is more than an event theme—it is a reminder that every investment made today helps shape the leaders, ideas, and experiences that will define tomorrow's meetings and events industry.

HORSE RACING FUNDRAISER EXPERIENCE

SEPTEMBER 17TH, 2026

LONE STAR PARK, GRAND PRAIRIE

FORT WORTH'S STARRING ROLE IN THE FUTURE OF ENTERTAINMENT

MPI DALLAS/FORT WORTH

Fort Worth is no longer just a backdrop for great storytelling—it is becoming one of the most important production hubs in America. Thanks to Fort Worth native Taylor Sheridan and hit series such as 1883, Landman, Lioness and Frisco King the Dallas-Fort Worth region has emerged as a destination for film, television, and live entertainment production. Productions connected to Sheridan have generated jobs, attracted investment, and brought national attention to North Texas.

The impact extends far beyond the camera. Every production fuels opportunities for local event professionals, hospitality workers, caterers, venues, transportation providers, musicians, and creative talent. As more productions choose Dallas/ Fort Worth, the region's entertainment ecosystem continues to grow, creating a ripple effect that benefits businesses of every size.

Sheridan's commitment to filming in Texas has also helped showcase the unique character of Fort Worth to audiences around the world. From the historic Stockyards and downtown streets, to the region's western heritage and modern venues, DFW offers an authentic setting that cannot be replicated elsewhere. Productions like 1883, Landman, and Lioness have demonstrated that world-class content can be created right here at home.



FILM IN FORT WORTH OUR CHAPTER EXPERIENCE

NOVEMBER 5TH, 2026

RENAISSANCE WORTHINGTON, FORT WORTH

MPI 2024 CHAPTER AWARD TOP PERFORMING

Timeless Traditions, Bright Beginnings

HOLIDAY CELEBRATION & 2027 BOARD INDUCTION

MPI D/FW Chapter

Amid the sparkling décor, refined dining, and an atmosphere of festive grandeur, guests will celebrate the season while honoring the relationships and accomplishments that have shaped another remarkable year. The evening's centerpiece will be the induction of the 2027 MPI Dallas/Fort Worth Board of Directors—a distinguished tradition recognizing the visionary leaders who will guide the chapter into its next era of innovation, collaboration, and excellence.

The Holiday Induction Ball is a celebration of the moments that bring us together and the vision that propels us forward. As industry leaders, innovators, and emerging professionals gather for this distinguished evening, the event serves as a tribute to the collaboration, creativity, and excellence that have shaped our chapter throughout the year.

Against a backdrop of timeless elegance and festive sophistication, guests will enjoy an evening of inspired conversation, exceptional hospitality, and shared celebration—culminating in the induction of the 2027 Board of Directors and the beginning of an exciting new chapter for MPI Dallas/Fort Worth.

DECEMBER 8TH, 2026

IGLASS CACTUS AT GAYLORD TEXAN RESORT
1501 GAYLORD TRAIL
GRAPEVINE, TX

MPI 2024 CHAPTER AWARD TOP PERFORMING

EVERY STORY MATTERS

MPI DALLAS/FORT WORTH CHAPTER

MPI DFW 2027 RFP SEASON IS NOW OPEN!

Every Story Matters.

HELP US HOST THE STORIES OF 2027.



Meeting Professionals International Dallas/Fort Worth is now accepting venue proposals for our 2027 chapter event calendar.

As one of the most active MPI chapters, our events bring together planners, suppliers, and hospitality leaders to connect, learn, celebrate, and build business. Hosting an MPI DFW event puts your venue in front of influential decision-makers and creates opportunities for lasting partnerships.

2027 HOSTING OPPORTUNITIES

JAN 14	**Chapter Experience with Michael Dominguez**	100–150 ATTENDEES
FEB 11	**Brand New You / Rock Your Brand** Career-Focused Networking Event	50–75 ATTENDEES
MAR 11	**CMP/CMM Appreciation Breakfast** Colleen Rickenbacher Leadership Award	100–150 ATTENDEES
APR 8	**Education Day**	100–150 ATTENDEES *Location Secured: The Statler Hotel Dallas*
MAY 13	**Membership Mixer & Volunteer Appreciation**	50–75 ATTENDEES
JUN 10	**49th Annual Awards Gala**	150+ ATTENDEES
AUG 12	**Chapter Experience**	100–150 ATTENDEES
SEP 9	**Annual Fundraiser**	50–75 ATTENDEES
NOV 11	**Fall in Fort Worth**	100–150 ATTENDEES
DEC 9	**Holiday Celebration & Board Installation**	100–150 ATTENDEES

WHY HOST MPI DFW?

- Showcase your venue to meeting planners and hospitality professionals
- Build meaningful relationships with future clients
- Gain visibility through chapter promotions and event marketing
- Position your property as a preferred industry partner
- Support the meetings and events community in DFW

WHAT WE'RE SOURCING

- HOTELS
- UNIQUE EVENT VENUES
- PRIVATE DINING SPACES
- EXPERIENTIAL & NETWORKING VENUES

INTERESTED IN HOSTING?

Submit your interest for one or multiple events.

RFP RELEASE	PROPOSAL DEADLINE	SELECTIONS FINALIZED
July 29, 2026	October 1, 2026	November 1, 2026

Submit proposals to:
Michele Byers, Chapter Administrator
chapteradmin@mpidfw.org



MPI DFW reserves the right to accept or decline any proposal. Submission of an RFP reflects interest in hosting an event and does not guarantee selection. Venue selections will be made based on event requirements, venue qualifications, availability, and alignment with the overall attendee experience.

BOARD RETREAT PARTNERSHIP FEATURE

WESTIN STONEBRIAR RESORT HOTEL, FRISCO TX



INTRODUCTION

This year's Mid-Year Board Retreat was made even more impactful thanks to the incredible hospitality of The Westin Stonebriar Golf Resort & Spa, our home for two and a half days of collaboration, strategy, and connection.

From the moment we arrived, the property provided the ideal environment for our leadership team to focus, recharge, and engage in meaningful conversations. The Westin's spacious meeting accommodations, seamless service, and thoughtfully designed guest experience made it an ideal place for a board retreat.

A special thank you to Robert Sanchez, CMP for his partnership and support in hosting MPI DFW. His dedication and attention to detail helped create a productive and memorable experience for our board. For organizations seeking a venue that combines elevated hospitality with strong meeting capabilities, The Westin Stonebriar is truly a standout choice.



BOARD RETREAT PARTNERSHIP FEATURE

VISIT FRISCO & SIDECAR SOCIAL, FRISCO TX

INTRODUCTION

The MPI Dallas/Fort Worth Chapter extends a heartfelt thank you to Visit Frisco for their generous sponsorship and outstanding support of our Mid-Year Board Retreat. Their commitment to creating meaningful experiences for industry leaders was evident in the thoughtful planning and memorable offsite event hosted at Sidecar Social.

The evening provided the perfect opportunity for our leadership team to connect, collaborate, and recharge outside of the traditional boardroom setting. From darts and skeeball to a variety of engaging team-building games, the experience encouraged camaraderie, friendly competition, and stronger connections among our leaders. These unique activities created lasting memories while reinforcing the importance of teamwork and community.

We are grateful to Visit Frisco for helping bring this experience to life and for their continued partnership in supporting MPI D/FW. Their generosity and dedication to creating exceptional experiences truly reflect the spirit of hospitality and collaboration that makes our industry so special.





Frisco

BOARD RETREAT PARTNERSHIP FEATURE

VISIT PLANO & TOMMY BAHAMA

INTRODUCTION

A special thank you to Visit Plano for their generous sponsorship during our Mid-Year Board Retreat and for creating such a memorable offsite experience for our leadership team.

Through their thoughtful coordination, we enjoyed an incredible evening at Tommy Bahama, where great food, meaningful connection, and a fun interactive dessert experience made for the perfect night out.

One of the highlights of the evening was creating our own crème brûlée — a unique and memorable touch that brought everyone together.





"WE ARE GRATEFUL TO THE VISIT PLANO TEAM FOR THEIR PARTNERSHIP, HOSPITALITY, AND CONTINUED SUPPORT OF MPI DFW. EXPERIENCES LIKE THESE ARE A REMINDER OF THE CREATIVITY AND DESTINATION EXPERTISE THEY BRING TO OUR INDUSTRY."

visit Plano

BOARD RETREAT

2026

OUR RECENT EVENT







SPONSOR FEATURE

TANDE TAI, THE COLONY, TX



INTRODUCTION

This past April, our MPI DFW board had the pleasure of gathering at Tande Thai in The Colony for one of our board meetings, and it was truly an unforgettable evening. Known for its vibrant atmosphere, elevated Thai cuisine, and warm hospitality, Tande Thai created the perfect setting for connection, collaboration, and community.

From the beautifully curated space to the incredible culinary experience, every detail reflected the passion and excellence behind the Tande Thai brand. Their commitment to hospitality made our board feel welcomed and cared for, allowing us to focus on meaningful conversations. A special thank you to Karen Truong and Debbie Pasha for their generous partnership and exceptional hosting.

Your support of MPI DFW and the events community means so much, and we are grateful for the opportunity to experience such a remarkable venue.

We encourage our members to visit Tande Thai and experience it for themselves — it's a true gem in The Colony!

LEADERSHIP: MENTOR | MENTEE

Strong professional communities don't happen by accident—they are built through intentional investment in people. The MPI Dallas–Fort Worth Mentor-Mentee Leadership Program is a clear example of what that investment looks like in practice. At a time when the meetings and events industry continues to evolve rapidly, structured mentorship is no longer a "nice to have"—it's essential. What sets this program apart is its dual impact. For mentees, it provides more than advice; it offers access, perspective, and confidence.

Emerging professionals gain real-world insights that can't be found in textbooks or webinars, learning how to navigate challenges, build networks, and lead with purpose. For mentors, the experience is equally valuable. Guiding the next generation sharpens leadership skills, encourages reflection, and fosters a deeper connection to the industry's future. The Dallas–Fort Worth chapter benefits as well. Programs like this strengthen the local professional ecosystem by creating a culture of collaboration rather than competition.

They help retain talent, elevate standards, and ensure continuity of leadership within the chapter and beyond. In a landscape where relationships often determine opportunity, the Mentor-Mentee Leadership Program is more than a professional development initiative—it's a strategic advantage. Its true value lies not just in the connections it creates today, but in the leaders it shapes for tomorrow.



LEADERSHIP: MENTOR | MENTEE

As part of our MPI D/FW Mentor/Mentee Program, we are proud to highlight the inspiring partnership between mentee Matt Watry and mentor Tim Altbaum. Their pairing demonstrated the strength and impact of meaningful mentorship within our chapter.

Tim has brought insight, perspective, and thoughtful leadership to their conversations. He provided a high-level overview of what the events industry looks like, how different sectors interact with one another, and the general outline for the order of operations for creating a business and creating an event.



MENTOR: TIM ALTBAUM



MENTEE: MATT WATRY

Matt shared how his mentorship experience with Tim was incredible. In the Food & Beverage industry, he started at the ground level, entering the program with limited exposure to the events industry. He truly believes that he gained immense knowledge about the events industry through Tim that will help him become more well-rounded in his professional life.

MPI DFW Chapter's Leadership Department believes there is positive and profound professional impact when all professionals connect with a mentor. We are looking forward to showcasing more mentor/mentee pairs throughout the year. We encourage everyone to participate in our Mentor/ Mentee program.



LEADERSHIP: MENTOR | MENTEE

MENTOR & MENTEE OF THE YEAR EXCELLENCE AWARD | 2026



MENTOR: MARIEKE FRANZ



MENTEE: MARIA ALBERTO

The Mentor & Mentee Award of Excellence presented to Mentor Marieke Franz and Mentee Maria Alberto is a meaningful recognition of the power of mentorship, dedication, and shared growth. Their achievement reflects the impact of a strong mentoring relationship built on trust, encouragement, and a commitment to excellence. Marieke's guidance and leadership, combined with Maria's enthusiasm, perseverance, and willingness to learn, exemplify how effective mentorship can inspire personal and professional success. Their award serves as a reminder that when experienced leaders invest in developing others, they help shape a stronger and more capable future for everyone.



OUR MOST RECENT EVENT

AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE GALA

NATIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR MUSEUM ARLINGTON, TX

INTRODUCTION

Excellence took center stage as MPI DFW celebrated its prestigious Awards of Excellence at the remarkable National Medal of Honor Museum in Arlington, Texas. Set within a venue dedicated to courage, service, and extraordinary achievement, the evening provided an inspiring backdrop for honoring the meeting and events professionals whose creativity, leadership, and innovation continue to elevate our industry.

Surrounded by stories of purpose and perseverance, the celebration recognized not only outstanding accomplishments but also the lasting impact of a community committed to shaping unforgettable experiences and advancing the future of hospitality and events.

The MPI DFW Awards of Excellence celebrated the very best of the meeting and event planning industry, recognizing the professionals whose innovation, leadership, and dedication continue to raise the standard of excellence. Hosted at the inspiring National Medal of Honor Museum in Arlington, Texas, the evening brought together the region's finest to honor outstanding achievements, meaningful collaboration, and the lasting impact of the events profession.

More than an awards ceremony, it was a celebration of a vibrant industry driven by creativity, resilience, and a shared commitment to delivering exceptional experiences.





AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE GALA

NATIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR MUSEUM ARLINGTON, TX

OUR MOST RECENT EVENT











OUR MOST RECENT EVENT

AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE GALA

NATIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR MUSEUM ARLINGTON, TX













AWARDS GALA

STATLER HOTEL DALLAS, TX



OUR RECENT EVENT









AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE GALA

NATIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR MUSEUM ARLINGTON, TX



OUR RECENT EVENT











AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE GALA

NATIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR MUSEUM ARLINGTON, TX

















PLANNER OF THE YEAR EXCELLENCE AWARD |

HONORING THE RECIPIENT



STEPHANIE EVANS CMP,CWP

Stephanie B. Evans' recognition as Planner of the Year celebrates an exceptional professional whose creativity, dedication, and leadership continue to elevate the meetings and events industry. Through her work with WED, Stephanie has built a reputation for delivering thoughtful, innovative, and memorable experiences while bringing a strategic vision and personal touch to every event she creates. Her commitment to excellence, client success, and industry engagement reflects the qualities that define outstanding event professionals. This well-deserved honor recognizes not only her achievements but also the positive impact she continues to make within the events community.

Beyond the events she produces, Stephanie's influence is reflected in the relationships she builds and the inspiration she provides to fellow professionals. Her ability to blend creativity with operational expertise has positioned WED, as a trusted partner for clients seeking meaningful and impactful experiences. This recognition honors not only her accomplishments but also her continued dedication to advancing the standards of event excellence and contributing to the future of the industry.

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR EXCELLENCE AWARD |

HONORING THE RECIPIENT

NICOLE CHATTIN CMP-FELLOW. CMM



Nicole Chattin, CMP-Fellow, CMM, has spent more than two decades setting the standard for excellence in strategic event leadership. As an accomplished professional, she has successfully delivered high-impact conferences, meetings, incentive travel programs, and global events for B2B enterprise organizations, consistently blending innovation with measurable business results.

While her professional accomplishments are impressive, it is Nicole's commitment to giving back that makes her truly exceptional. Her selection as Volunteer of the Year recognizes the time, expertise, and passion she has devoted to strengthening the events community and supporting the success of others. Whether mentoring industry professionals, contributing to MPI DFW, or helping advance best practices, Nicole leads with generosity and purpose.

Nicole Chattin's Volunteer of the Year Award is a fitting tribute to a leader whose influence extends far beyond the events she produces. It celebrates a professional whose dedication, expertise, and service continue to inspire colleagues and strengthen the industry.

AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE GALA

NATIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR MUSEUM ARLINGTON, TX

OUR MOST RECENT EVENT











SUPPLIER OF THE YEAR EXCELLENCE AWARD | MARSHALL LEAK III DIVERSIFIED MEDIA PRODUCTION GROUP

HONORING THE RECIPIENT



DMPG
Diversified Media
Production Group

The Supplier of the Year Award of Excellence honors individuals who go above and beyond in service to the industry, and Marshall Leak III has done exactly that. His passion for innovation, dedication to quality, and relentless pursuit of excellence continue to enhance the experiences of clients, attendees, and fellow professionals alike.

Whether managing complex audiovisual productions, collaborating with planners, or solving challenges behind the scenes, Marshall has established himself as a trusted partner whose professionalism and expertise elevate every event he touches. His attention to detail, innovative mindset, and commitment to delivering seamless event experiences have set a standard of excellence within the industry.

Marshall has earned this distinguished honor through an unwavering dedication to production excellence and event enhancement. Throughout his career, he has consistently demonstrated that exceptional production is not simply about technical execution—it is about creating memorable experiences that inspire audiences, strengthen brands, and leave lasting impressions.

HONORING THE RECIPIENT

RISING STAR OF THE YEAR EXCELLENCE AWARD |

SANDY DREGER: A RISING STAR WHOSE TALENT LIGHTS UP EVERY PRODUCTION

In an industry where success is measured not only by what audiences see but by the countless moving parts they never notice, Sandy Dreger has built a reputation for excellence. Her recent recognition with the Rising Star Award is a well-deserved acknowledgment of a professional whose creativity, leadership, and unwavering commitment to quality continue to raise the standard for event production and television.

Behind every memorable live event or seamless event production is someone who understands that exceptional experiences don't happen by chance—they are carefully planned, expertly managed, and flawlessly executed. Sandy Dreger embodies that philosophy. Her ability to transform complex productions into polished, engaging experiences has earned the respect of colleagues, clients, and audiences alike.

What distinguishes Sandy is her combination of creative vision and operational expertise. She understands the art of storytelling while mastering the logistics that bring ambitious ideas to life. Whether coordinating large-scale live events, managing television productions, or overseeing the countless details that ensure every cue is perfectly timed, she approaches each project with professionalism, precision, and enthusiasm.



Her leadership style is equally noteworthy. Sandy fosters collaboration, inspires confidence among production teams, and creates an environment where creativity and efficiency thrive together. Those who work alongside her recognize not only her technical knowledge but also her calm demeanor under pressure—a quality that often separates good producers from exceptional ones.

OUR MOST RECENT EVENT

AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE GALA

NATIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR MUSEUM ARLINGTON, TX













AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE GALA

NATIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR MUSEUM ARLINGTON, TX



OUR RECENT EVENT











AWARDS GALA

STATLER HOTEL DALLAS, TX



OUR RECENT EVENT









AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE GALA

NATIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR MUSEUM ARLINGTON, TX

















AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE GALA

NATIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR MUSEUM ARLINGTON, TX













AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE GALA

NATIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR MUSEUM ARLINGTON, TX













AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE GALA

NATIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR MUSEUM ARLINGTON, TX













RECENT PAST EVENTS

WORLD EDUCATION CONFERENCE

Meeting Professionals International (MPI) is the largest meeting and event industry association worldwide. Founded in 1972, MPI provides innovative and relevant education, networking opportunities and business exchanges, and acts as a prominent voice for the promotion and growth of the industry.

MPI has a global community of 60,000 meeting and event professionals, including more than 17,000 engaged members and its Plan Your Meetings audience. It has more than 70 chapters and clubs in 75 countries worldwide. This is the first time MPI WEC will be in San Antonio.

MPI WEC 2026 in San Antonio is more than just a conference—it's a global stage, and this year, our Meeting Professionals International DFW Chapter has a powerful opportunity to show up, stand out, and represent our region as a world-class destination for meetings and events.

MPI WEC 2026 Showcases the Strength of the Meetings Industry

The success of the MPI Global World Education Congress (WEC) 2026 in San Antonio, Texas, is a powerful reminder that the meetings and events industry continues to thrive through collaboration, innovation, and professional development. Hosted at the Henry B. González Convention Center from June 2–4, WEC welcomed nearly 1,800 meeting and event professionals from around the world. More than 49% of attendees were meeting planners, reinforcing the conference's role as a premier destination for education, networking, and industry advancement. Equally encouraging was the presence of 686 first-time attendees, highlighting the continued growth of MPI and the bright future of the profession.

Beyond the impressive attendance, WEC 2026 created meaningful opportunities for learning, relationship-building, and discovering new ideas that will shape the future of meetings and events. San Antonio provided an outstanding backdrop, offering world-class hospitality and a vibrant cultural experience that complemented the conference's dynamic programming.

As the industry continues to evolve, MPI World Education Congress remains a cornerstone event that inspires professionals to lead with creativity, embrace innovation, and strengthen the global meetings community. WEC 2026 was more than a conference—it was a celebration of an industry that continues to connect people, ideas, and opportunities.

RECENT PAST EVENTS

WORLD EDUCATION CONFERENCE

MPI World Education Congress in San Antonio was an incredible gathering of meeting professionals from around the globe, and this year's conference delivered unforgettable moments, meaningful connections, and powerful education at every turn.

The week kicked off with an unforgettable Texas-themed Opening Night, where the spirit of hospitality and collaboration was on full display. In partnership with the three Texas MPI chapters, we were proud to help welcome attendees from around the world and showcase the energy and creativity of our region.

A special highlight was our "MPI Welcomes the World" installation, which became a popular and engaging centerpiece throughout the conference. A heartfelt thank you to our incredible partners — Visit Plano, Visit Frisco, Visit Grapevine, Visit Fort Worth, Visit Arlington, Visit Irving, and Event Lounge — for helping bring this vision to life.

MPI WEC 2026 Showcases the Strength of the Meetings Industry

Beyond the celebration, WEC was filled with impactful educational sessions, a dynamic marketplace filled with innovation and industry partners, meaningful Regional Council meetups, and memorable networking moments like the Presidents Dinner. From the iconic River Parade to the countless opportunities to learn and connect, WEC reminded us why this industry is built on relationships, creativity, and shared experiences.

San Antonio set the stage for an exceptional WEC, and we are proud to have represented MPI DFW on such a global platform.



SPONSORSHIP

HONORING OUR ANNUAL PARTNERS

A MESSAGE FROM SPONSORSHIP

THE VALUE & IMPACT OF SPONSORSHIP

Sponsorship with MPI offers more than logo placement—it creates a direct pathway to meaningful engagement within the meetings and events industry. Through sponsorship, businesses gain access to a network of decision-makers, planners, and industry leaders who are actively seeking trusted partners. It's an opportunity to move beyond traditional marketing and instead build authentic relationships—ones that often translate into long-term collaborations and repeat business.

Equally important is the credibility that comes with association. Being seen as a supporter of professional development and industry growth positions your organization as invested, reliable, and forward-thinking. It signals that you're not just participating in the market—you're helping shape it.

In an era where connections drive success, MPI sponsorship is not just a promotional tool—it's a strategic investment in visibility, reputation, and lasting business growth.