

and Leson says that it was mostly at the behest of the city's hotel operators who began witnessing a loss of business due to the Center's relatively small size. "It was the hotels who pushed for the expansion and putting a bond measure on the ballot allowing for a two percent increase to the Transient Occupancy Tax to finance the project. And due to the expansion, we've been able to continue to grow with our clients' needs. We were even able to attract some of the groups that we had lost."

The Palm Springs Convention Center is owned by the City of Palm Springs, but is managed by SMG, the worldwide entertainment and convention management company, which also manages the Palm Springs Bureau of Tourism, the marketing arm for the city of Palm Springs and the Convention Center. The Center has 30 full- and part-time employees and sub-contracts for audio/visual, catering, and security personnel.

Approximately 75 percent of the Center's business comes from associations – both California and nation-

ally-based. Leson explains that most of the corporate businesses that come to Palm Springs tend to hold their events at one of the area's resort hotels because they offer more amenities, such as golf and tennis; although for the millennial generation, Leson believes that these amenities are less important than their desire for immersion in Palm Springs' local culture.

The Center, itself, is physically attached to the Renaissance Palm Springs Hotel, which offers an additional 30,000 square feet of meeting space and 410 guest rooms. "Because of our ability to offer sleeping rooms and meeting space in one building, we've become a very strong 'association house,'" Leson explains. "It makes it very easy for groups that are looking for a lot of meeting space and hotel rooms that are under one roof. We are kind of the perfect, first step for those groups that are struggling with outgrowing hotels and now have the need to move into a convention center." Because of our demographics, our Center does not do a lot of consumer shows, "like you would see in big cities; we don't have the population to support that here," Leson says. "This is one of the main reasons why con-

