

Corporate & Incentive Travel

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Who's Best For The Meetings Business?

Industry Leaders Cast Their Vote

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Eco-Friendly Centers Get The "Green Light"

When it comes to green meetings, convention centers in the Pacific Northwest know how to do them right.

The 255,000-square-foot **Oregon Convention Center** (OCC) in Portland was the first convention center to receive LEED-EB certification from the U.S. Green Building Council. LEED stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, and the "EB" tag refers to existing buildings. It is also the first convention center to be awarded Salmon-Safe certification in recognition of its efforts to protect water quality and the habitat of Pacific Salmon.

The OCC implements a variety of green initiatives that range from recycling programs to the use of natural vegetation in landscaping to minimize the "heat island" effect of asphalt and concrete. For the center's food service, Aramark offers sustainable menu selections, and condiments are served from large containers instead of in individual



Photo courtesy of Oregon Convention Center

The Oregon Convention Center.

and managed by Columbia Hospitality Inc. The 100,000-square-foot center recently earned a four-star rating from EnviroStars, a program launched by the government of King County, WA, to recognize businesses that reduce hazardous materials and waste. The ratings are designed to give consumers an objective way to identify organizations that employ sound environmental practices.

Bell Harbor uses only environmentally friendly cleaning products and takes special care to ensure that any hazardous products such as fluorescent lamps are discarded properly. Its composting program has already diverted 40 tons of waste, and in May, the center began selling its kitchen grease to Standard Biodiesel for conversion to biodiesel fuel that is used to power the Port of Seattle's vehicles.

The environmentally sound practices employed by the hotels, resorts and convention centers of the Pacific Northwest not only benefit the communities and visitor populations they serve. They also benefit the regions' other residents — the salmon, Orca whales and other wildlife that depend on clean air and water to survive.

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Photo courtesy of the Washington State Convention & Trade Center

The Washington State Convention & Trade Center.

packets. Organically grown products are used as often as possible, and food waste is composted. The OCC also purchases wind power through Pacific Power's voluntary Blue Sky Block program.

The **Washington State Convention & Trade Center's** "Recycle, Reduce, Reuse" strategies include new and more efficient lighting and water-use systems and fixtures, and the recycling of paper, wood, plastic and metal products. The kitchen composts food waste and donates surplus food to area food banks. The environmentally friendly architectural style of the building blends into the community and surrounding landscape. The WSCTC also recently introduced the nation's first 100 percent compostable water bottles available to convention center clients.

In Seattle, the **Bell Harbor International Conference Center** is a waterfront facility owned by the Port of Seattle



Photo courtesy of The Bell Harbor International Conference Center

The Bell Harbor International Conference Center.