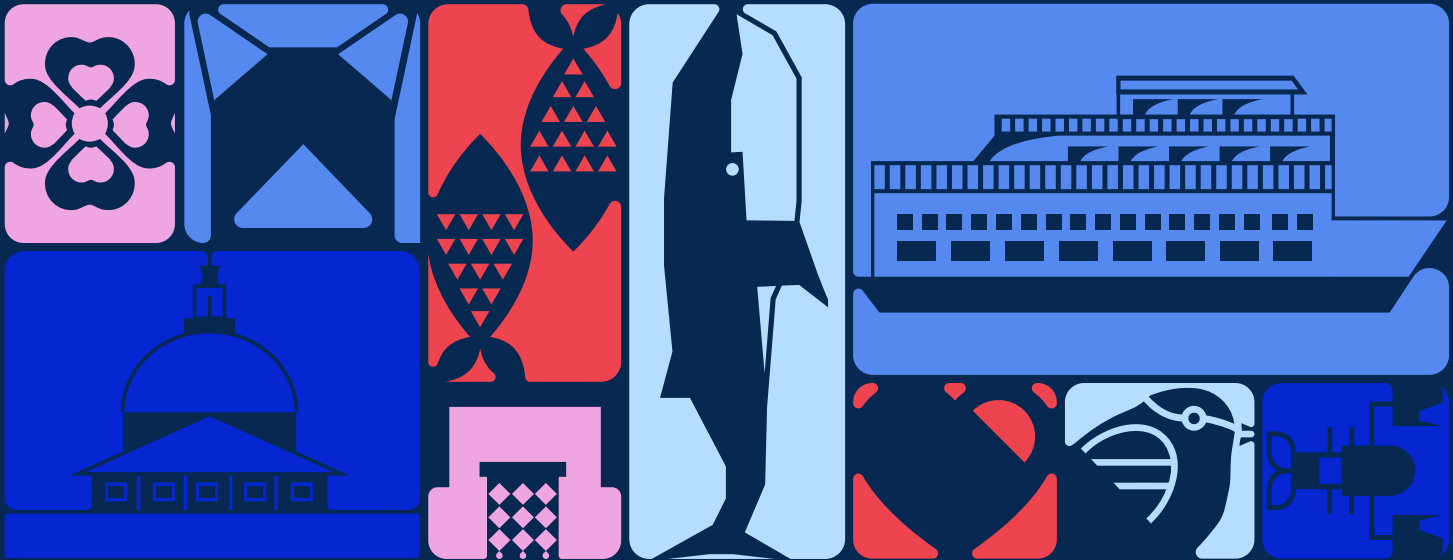
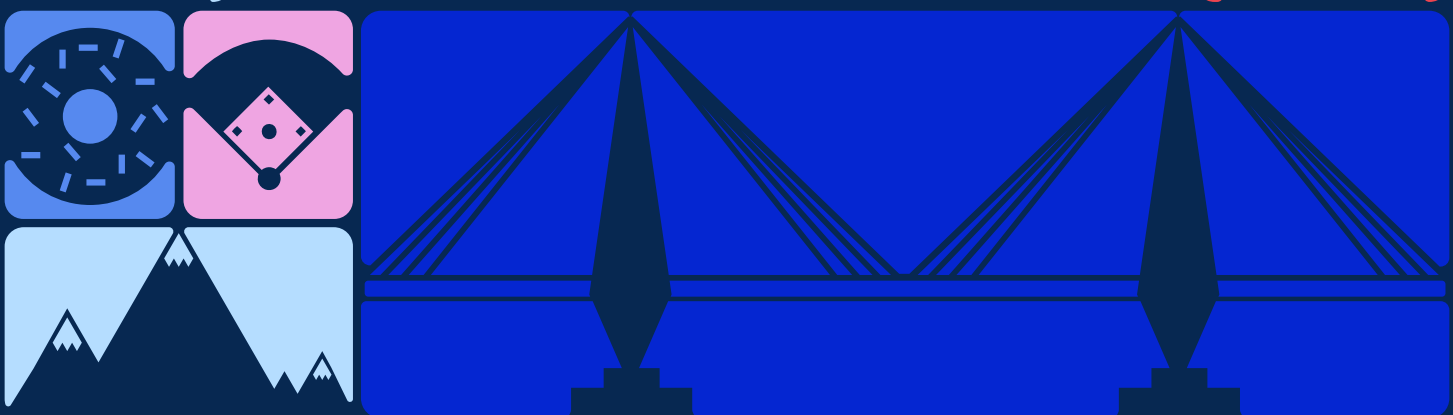


MASSMUTUAL CENTER

TUESDAY, MARCH 18 & WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19, 2025



MASSACHUSETTS
**GOVERNOR'S
CONFERENCE
ON TRAVEL &
TOURISM**



#VisitMA



WELCOME FROM

**GOVERNOR
MAURA T. HEALEY**

Welcome to the 2025 Governor's Conference on Travel & Tourism. It is an honor to gather this year to celebrate the successes of our tourism industry and look forward to the exciting moments ahead for Massachusetts.

This year, we mark the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution. Here in Massachusetts, the heart of this historic movement, we are not simply honoring the past; we are igniting the spirit of revolution for generations to come. Our commemoration will culminate in a national celebration in 2026, and Massachusetts is proud to be at the forefront.

We are thrilled to be joined by bestselling author Elin Hilderbrand, who will share her perspective on the power of Massachusetts storytelling. Her work, rooted in our state's culture and landscapes, exemplifies how our stories continue to inspire visitors and creatives alike, boosting tourism and fueling economic growth.

As we commemorate Massachusetts 250 and look ahead to global events like the FIFA World Cup and Sail Boston in 2026, we are reminded that this is our moment—one to celebrate, reflect, and dream big. Together, we will continue to share the unique stories that make Massachusetts a premier destination for the world.

Thank you all for your dedication, and I hope you enjoy the conference.

Governor Maura T. Healey



WELCOME FROM

LT. GOVERNOR KIM DRISCOLL

Welcome to Springfield and the 2025 Massachusetts Governor's Conference on Travel and Tourism! We are thrilled to gather with you—tourism leaders, partners, and innovators—at this pivotal moment for our industry. Together, we have the opportunity to shape the future of travel in Massachusetts, finding new ways to attract visitors, engage residents, and share our stories with the world.

This year's conference is designed to inspire and equip us with the tools to drive meaningful impact. Expect insightful discussions, powerful networking, and sessions on content creation, international marketing, accessible travel, and agritourism, conversations that will strengthen Massachusetts as a world-class destination.

We also stand at a unique crossroads in our history, with Massachusetts 250 in full swing. From Leslie's Retreat in Salem to upcoming celebrations of Patriots' Day and Bunker Hill, and initiatives like Revolutionary Weekends and Museums 250, visitors can immerse themselves in our past while looking toward the future as we shape the legacy of the next 250 years.

Tourism is more than an industry, it's an economic driver, a cultural bridge, and a catalyst for innovation. Let's celebrate our achievements, learn from one another, and build a vibrant future together!

Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll



WELCOME FROM

SECRETARY YVONNE HAO

Today marks a significant moment for Massachusetts tourism. I am honored to join Governor Healey and Lieutenant Governor Driscoll in welcoming you to the 2025 Governor's Conference on Travel and Tourism. Our administration is dedicated to fostering a thriving tourism industry, collaborating with partners statewide to position Massachusetts as a leading destination.

In 2023, Massachusetts welcomed more than 52 million visitors who spent \$23.6 billion in our state, generating \$2.3 billion in state and local taxes and supporting 154,330 jobs statewide. With initiatives like the Destination Development Capital Grant Program and the Massachusetts 250 Grant Program, we are investing in the future by expanding, enhancing, and reimagining tourism assets to drive lasting economic impact in our state.

Thank you for all you do. May today bring learning, collaboration, and inspiration as we shape our future tourism economy.

Secretary Yvonne Hao
Massachusetts Office of Economic Development



WELCOME FROM

DOMENIC SARNO
MAYOR OF SPRINGFIELD

On behalf of the City of Springfield, I am honored to welcome you to our beautiful city for the Governor's Conference on Travel & Tourism.

Massachusetts is a major travel and tourism destination here in New England. From our historic and cultural landmarks, our various sporting venues, and all of our vacation and entertainment facilities. Massachusetts and our local communities stand ready to tap into the economic opportunities that come from a thriving tourism industry.

Springfield is a vibrant city with a rich history and tradition. Often referred to as 'The City of First' and 'The City of Homes', Springfield hosts numerous local attractions and amenities for all ages. From our Springfield Armory National Historic Site, the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame, MGM Springfield, the MassMutual Center, the Amazing World of Dr. Seuss Museum and the various local iconic restaurants and entertainment venues, visitors will have plenty to do during their visit as they stay in one of the numerous hotels within walking distance of these attractions.

Working closely with the Greater Springfield Convention & Visitors Bureau, led by the talented Mary Kay Wydra and her incredible team, Springfield, and all of our public and private partners, continue to work closely through innovative and successful ventures that build and enhance our local and regional tourism industry. Springfield continues to serve as the economic and cultural hub of Western Massachusetts and is the main driver for our region's economic vitality. We continue to host a number of local, regional and national conventions and events right here in our downtown Springfield.

Tourism plays a significant role not only for our state, but for the communities in Western Massachusetts by supporting local businesses and creating jobs. The revenue generated from local events and attractions helps to support essential services and infrastructure, which in turn enhances the quality of life for our residents and business community.

In closing, I wish you a successful conference and thank you for choosing our city. We look forward to seeing you again soon! Good health and God Bless.

Respectfully,
Domenic J. Sarno, *Mayor*



WELCOME FROM

KATE FOX
MASSACHUSETTS OFFICE
OF TRAVEL & TOURISM

On behalf of the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism, we are thrilled to bring together the visionaries, partners, and storytellers who make our state an incredible destination.

Tourism is about more than places—it's about people. It's about creating connections, sparking joy, and building lasting memories. Whether it's a family exploring historic sites, friends gathering for a Massachusetts Ice Cream Trail adventure, or travelers discovering the hidden gems of our small towns and cities, our state delivers experiences that resonate long after the journey ends.

This year brings exciting opportunities for growth: new flights and expanded markets thanks to our partners at Massport, collaborative efforts with the Department of Agricultural Resources that will build a new Craft Beverage Trail, and a once-in-a-generation opportunity to share our history and untold stories with the world through our Massachusetts 250 commemoration.

Thank you for your dedication to this industry and for the work you do every day to make Massachusetts a place people love to visit. Here's to an unforgettable conference!

Kate Fox
Executive Director, Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism

TUESDAY, MARCH 18, 2025

7:30 AM – 9:15 AM	Registration & Coffee
9:15 AM – 10:00 AM	OPENING PLENARY BREAKFAST Welcome from Lt. Governor Driscoll; Kate Fox, MOTT; Mary Kay Wydra, Explore Western Mass Updates on MA250 and More! LOCATION: Rooms A & B, Floor 2
10:00 AM – 10:10 AM	NETWORKING BREAK: Catch up with your peers and visit our exhibitors!
10:10 AM – 10:55 AM	BREAKOUT SESSIONS
	Creating Memorable Moments: Redefining Marketing Through Experience In today's fast-paced, content-saturated world, traditional marketing strategies no longer cut through the noise. To truly connect with audiences, brands must shift from telling stories to creating unforgettable experiences. This session will explore how experimental marketing can elevate your brand by immersing audiences in experiences that resonate on a deeper, emotional level. From pop-up events to interactive digital campaigns, discover how thinking outside the box can transform your marketing approach and build lasting relationships with your audience. Moderator: Heather Munnell, VDA <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shana Bryant, <i>Shana Bryant Consulting</i>• Maddie Ogren, <i>Access TCA</i>• Rachel Strauss, <i>CSI Boston</i> LOCATION: Rooms 2 & 3, Floor 1
	AI Tools to Explore for Tourism: Work Smarter, Not Harder Ready for a tourism tech update that won't break the bank? Join us for a fast-paced tour of practical AI tools that are transforming destinations. See how artificial intelligence is helping tourism businesses work smarter, not harder. Perfect for the tech-curious who want to stay ahead of the curve while keeping the human touch alive. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tess Vismale, <i>Dahlia + Agency</i> LOCATION: Rooms 4 & 5, Floor 1
	Beyond the Noise: Creating Content that Breaks Through In a world where media channels are saturated with content, how can PR professionals ensure their messages not only rise above the noise but also connect with their audience? This session will explore how to craft PR content that stands out in a crowded media landscape, delivering impactful messages that resonate, build trust and drive action. From media pitches to social media campaigns, learn strategies for creating authentic, relevant and newsworthy content that captures attention, learn how to use storytelling, timing and media relations to your advantage, while navigating the ever evolving digital and traditional media world. Moderator: Sandy Lish, <i>The Castle Group</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kim Knox Beckius, <i>Yankee Magazine</i>• Ryan Hutton, <i>DCR</i>• Angela Prout, <i>Shored Up Digital</i>• David Zimmerman, <i>Spirit Magazine</i> LOCATION: Room C, Floor 2

10:55 AM – 11:05 AM	NETWORKING BREAK: Catch up with your peers and visit our exhibitors!
11:05 AM – 11:50 AM	<div>BREAKOUT SESSIONS</div> <div> <p>Host Region Spotlight</p> <p>From Concept to Ceremony: How to Create an Outstanding Hospitality Awards Ceremony</p> <p>Want to build brand awareness in your community in a meaningful way? Hospitality awards offer a powerful way to connect your brand with the local community, elevate the tourism industry, and celebrate outstanding front-line hospitality professionals. In this seminar, Explore Western Mass will showcase the success of its 28-year-strong Howdy Awards for Hospitality Excellence and provide a step-by-step blueprint to help you implement a similar program in your market. Learn how to recognize top hospitality talent, strengthen community engagement, and enhance your region’s visitor experience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mary Kay Wydra, <i>Explore Western Mass</i> • Michele Goldberg, <i>Explore Western Mass</i> <p>LOCATION: Rooms 2 & 3, Floor 1</p> </div> <div> <p>Unlocking Global Potential: Strategies for Capturing Your Share of the International Market</p> <p>International tourism to Massachusetts is on the rise, offering incredible opportunities for businesses to attract travelers from around the world. However, targeting this segment requires a strategic approach that goes beyond traditional marketing. In this session, we’ll focus on innovative strategies that you can use to thrive in the competitive global market, learn how to adapt your offerings to different cultural preferences, effectively reach international travelers and position your business to succeed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michele Cota, <i>Discover New England</i> • Amanda Davis, <i>Brand USA</i> • Alyssa Dion Rodning, <i>Marriott Boston Back Bay Hotels</i> <p>LOCATION: Rooms 4 & 5, Floor 1</p> </div> <div> <p>Break Down Silos and Boost Results: Tapping The Power of Connections Between Social, Influencers, and UGC</p> <p>Are your marketing and PR teams stuck in silos, leaving big opportunities untapped? This session with Development Counselors International is your chance to change that. Discover the travel trends reshaping consumer decision-making and learn how to harness them through cutting-edge content creation and social media strategies. This isn’t your typical 101-level session—it’s a game-changer. By the end, you’ll walk away with a practical, action-ready plan to take ideas off the “someday” list and into your refreshed communication strategy. We’ll kick off by diving into today’s most important travel trends, followed by a no-nonsense overview of the state of social media—think daily algorithm shifts, emerging platforms, and more. Then, we’ll get to the core of it all: 5 Things You Tourism Entity Should Do in 2025 to ensure your influencer marketing fully aligns with your brand’s social strategy. Don’t miss this opportunity to elevate your approach and stay ahead of the curve.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laura Cyrille, <i>DCI</i> • Hanna Gbordzoe, <i>DCI</i> <p>LOCATION: Room C, Floor 2</p> </div>

11:50 AM – 1:00 PM	<p>LUNCH & KEYNOTE SPEAKER</p> <p>Kate Fox, MOTT; John Doleva, <i>President & CEO</i>, Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame</p> <p>The Power of Sports in MA!</p> <p><i>Presented By:</i> John David, President & CEO, Sports Events & Tourism Association</p> <p>Discover the transformative impact of sports tourism and gain exclusive insights into the latest trends, all anchored by the groundbreaking findings of the Sports Events & Tourism Association’s State of the Industry Report, crafted in collaboration with Tourism Economics. Led by John David, President and CEO of the Sports ETA, this dynamic session will explore the unparalleled influence of sports tourism, exploring how it can serve as a catalyst for community development, economic impact, and enhanced civic pride.</p> <p>LOCATION: Rooms A & B, Floor 2</p>
1:10 PM – 1:55 PM	<p>BREAKOUT SESSIONS</p> <p>Film Tourism: Exploring the Impact of Screen Locations on Travel & Tourism</p> <p>In this session, the Massachusetts Film Office will explore the dynamic relationship between film and television locations and the tourism they generate. We’ll dive into how towns, cities and iconic sites featured on screen can transform into must-visit destinations, drawing travelers eager to experience the magic they’ve seen on screen. From the impact of iconic scenes to the role of local culture in shaping the visitor experience, you’ll gain a deeper understanding of how to capitalize on the global popularity of film tourism.</p> <p>Moderator: Meg Montagnino-Jarrett, <i>Massachusetts Film Office</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Erica Ashton, <i>MVY Chamber of Commerce</i> • Michael DeKoster, <i>Maritime Gloucester</i> • Taunya Wolfe-Finn, <i>Wolfe Adventures & Tours</i> <p>LOCATION: Rooms 2 & 3, Floor 1</p> <p>AI Tools to Explore for Tourism: Work Smarter, Not Harder</p> <p>Ready for a tourism tech update that won’t break the bank? Join us for a fast-paced tour of practical AI tools that are transforming destinations. See how artificial intelligence is helping tourism businesses work smarter, not harder. Perfect for the tech-curious who want to stay ahead of the curve while keeping the human touch alive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tess Vismale, <i>Dahlia + Agency</i> <p>LOCATION: Rooms 4 & 5, Floor 1</p> <p>The Road to 2026: Leveraging FIFA, MA250, Sail Boston & More</p> <p>As we approach 2026, Massachusetts is gearing up for an exciting lineup of major events that will put the state in the global spotlight. In this session, we’ll explore how these landmark events offer tremendous opportunities for local businesses, tourism and community engagement. Join us as we discuss strategies to harness the economic, cultural and tourism potential these events bring.</p> <p>Moderator: Undersecretary Sarah Stanton</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tricia Fenton, <i>FIFA Boston 2025</i> • Dusty Rhodes, <i>Conventures, Inc./ Sail Boston</i> • Sheila Green, <i>MA250</i> <p>LOCATION: Room C, Floor 2</p>
1:55 PM – 2:05 PM	<p>NETWORKING BREAK: Catch up with your peers and visit our exhibitors!</p>

2:05 PM – 2:50 PM	<div data-bbox="391 128 659 155" data-label="Section-Header"> <h2>BREAKOUT SESSIONS</h2> </div> <div data-bbox="412 218 1154 254" data-label="Section-Header"> <h3>Journey Without Limits: Accessible Travel Solutions</h3> </div> <div data-bbox="412 264 1469 417" data-label="Text"> <p>Join us for an inspiring and informative session on accessible travel. Learn ways to break down the barriers that often prevent people from experiencing the world. In the session we'll dive into practical solutions and innovative technologies designed to make travel more inclusive for all. Learn ways that the travel industry is evolving to meet the diverse needs of travelers.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="412 434 886 464" data-label="Text"> <p>Moderator: Julie Arrison-Bishop, MOTT</p> </div> <div data-bbox="418 468 891 525" data-label="List-Group"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tom McCarthy, DCR • Jessica Doonan, Museum of Fine Arts </div> <div data-bbox="412 539 797 567" data-label="Text"> <p>LOCATION: Rooms 2 & 3, Floor 1</p> </div> <div data-bbox="412 644 855 678" data-label="Section-Header"> <h3>Museums 250: How to Engage</h3> </div> <div data-bbox="412 688 1472 814" data-label="Text"> <p>Museums across our state serve as custodians of our history, they are educators, sources of inspiration. Museums are an economic driver for visitors and tourists alike. Hear how three museums are engaging and embracing our history and inspiring the public with their art, objects and exhibits.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="412 827 816 854" data-label="Text"> <p>Moderator: Sheila Green, MA250</p> </div> <div data-bbox="418 858 951 951" data-label="List-Group"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alexis Goodin, The Clark Art Institute • Lisa Krassner, Concord Museum • Ethan Lasser, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston </div> <div data-bbox="412 963 800 993" data-label="Text"> <p>LOCATION: Rooms 4 & 5, Floor 1</p> </div> <div data-bbox="412 1068 1250 1102" data-label="Section-Header"> <h3>Beyond the Noise: Creating Content that Breaks Through</h3> </div> <div data-bbox="412 1113 1464 1367" data-label="Text"> <p>In a world where media channels are saturated with content, how can PR professionals ensure their messages not only rise above the noise but also connect with their audience? This session will explore how to craft PR content that stands out in a crowded media landscape, delivering impactful messages that resonate, build trust and drive action. From media pitches to social media campaigns, learn strategies for creating authentic, relevant and newsworthy content that captures attention, learn how to use storytelling, timing and media relations to your advantage, while navigating the ever evolving digital and traditional media world.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="412 1379 914 1409" data-label="Text"> <p>Moderator: Sandy Lish, The Castle Group</p> </div> <div data-bbox="418 1413 883 1537" data-label="List-Group"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Angela Prout, Shored Up Digital • Ryan Hutton, DCR • David Zimmerman, Spirit Magazine • Kim Knox Beckius, Yankee Magazine </div> <div data-bbox="412 1547 751 1577" data-label="Text"> <p>LOCATION: Room C, Floor 2</p> </div>
3:00 PM – 4:00 PM	<div data-bbox="391 1648 669 1680" data-label="Section-Header"> <h2>CLOSING PLENARY</h2> </div> <div data-bbox="391 1690 1182 1791" data-label="Text"> <p>A conversation with Governor Maura Healey and Elin Hilderbrand Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism Awards Presentation And more!</p> </div> <div data-bbox="391 1806 784 1835" data-label="Text"> <p>LOCATION: Rooms A & B, Floor 2</p> </div>
5:30 PM – 8:00 PM	<div data-bbox="391 1898 534 1925" data-label="Section-Header"> <h2>RECEPTION</h2> </div> <div data-bbox="391 1936 1239 1965" data-label="Text"> <p>Enjoy a networking reception at the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame</p> </div>

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19, 2025

9:00 AM – 10:15 AM

OPENING PLENARY BREAKFAST

Massachusetts on the Move:

2023–2024 Economic Impact, Travel Data and Campaign Results

In this session, learn about trends in travel & tourism, what we're seeing in Massachusetts and how we're going to capitalize and grow our market share.

- Mallory Smith, *TripAdvisor*
- Kate Fox, *MOTT*
- Matt Hatfield, *Massport*
- Mia Healy Waldron, *Massport*

And more!

LOCATION: Rooms A & B, Floor 2

10:15 AM – 10:30 AM

NETWORKING BREAK

Catch up with your peers and visit our exhibitors!

10:30 AM – 11:15 AM

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Multicultural Excellence in Massachusetts Travel & Tourism

Massachusetts' rich tapestry of cultures, history, and innovation offers an unparalleled platform for advancing multicultural excellence in travel and tourism. From the Freedom Trail in Boston to the annual Springfield Jazz & Roots Festival and the diverse culinary experiences of neighborhoods like Chinatown and Roxbury, the state thrives as a global destination where culture and community intersect. Our work with Meet Boston and other partners over the past two decades has highlighted the power of cultural inclusion to not only attract visitors but also create lasting connections between communities and the tourism industry. By embracing and celebrating the stories of Indigenous, immigrant, and historically underrepresented groups, Massachusetts continues to redefine what it means to be a world-class destination—one where every visitor feels seen, valued, and inspired.

Moderator: Carole Copeland Thomas, *C. Thomas and Associates*

- Dagny Ashley, *City of Quincy*
- Glenn McGibbon, *Meet Boston*
- Janine Fondon, *Unity First Direct, Inc.*

LOCATION: Rooms 2 & 3, Floor 1

Culinary Corner:

A conversation featuring non-conventional culinary experts that have a big impact on Massachusetts tourism

In this session, the Massachusetts Restaurant Association will moderate a discussion on non-traditional culinary experts from UMass Dining: #1 rated on campus dining by Princeton Review, 8 years running; Aramark Sports and Entertainment: feeding hundred of thousands of sports and cultural fans each year; and White Lion Brewery, Springfield's first ever craft brewery.

Moderator: Steve Clark, *MRA*

- Ray Berry, *White Lion Brewing Company*
- Andrew Mankus, *Dining Services, UMass Amherst*
- Casey Dowling, *Aramark*

LOCATION: Rooms 4 & 5, Floor 1

10:30 AM – 11:15 AM	<div><div>BREAKOUT SESSIONS</div><div><div>Harvesting Success: How Agriculture Drives Tourism</div><div>Agriculture isn't just about crops and livestock – it's a powerful engine driving tourism and economic growth. In this session, learn about how the agricultural sector is playing a key role in enhancing tourism experiences, from farm-to-table dining, to agri-tourism and local festivals.</div><div>Moderator: Ashley Randle, <i>Commissioner MDAR</i><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anne-Alise Pietruska, <i>Eastern States Exposition</i>• Michael Nelson, <i>Franklin County Agricultural Society</i>• Al Rose, <i>Red Apple Farm</i>• Erica Bosse, <i>Gardner Farmers Market</i></div><div>LOCATION: Room C, Floor 2</div></div></div>
11:15 AM	<div>CONFERENCE CONCLUDES</div>

SPEAKER BIOS



ELIN HILDERBRAND

Elin Hilderbrand is a graduate of the Johns Hopkins University and the University of Iowa Writers' Workshop. She is a cohost of the podcast Books, Beach & Beyond with @TimTalksBooks creator Tim Ehrenberg. Hilderbrand is raising four young adult children and likes to spend her free time at the beach and on her Peloton. She is a grateful eleven-year breast cancer survivor.

Photography credit: Beowulf Sheehan



JULIE ARRISON-BISHOP

DIRECTOR OF MARKETING
MASSACHUSETTS OFFICE OF TRAVEL & TOURISM

Duties in this role include building relationships with regional tourism councils and the many businesses, attractions, museums, and historic sites they serve in the Commonwealth; digital and content strategy for the website, social media, and email marketing; performance marketing; paid media; group travel; support for trade-related familiarization tours; cooperative marketing opportunities including SkiMA and Cruiseport; and other roles as needed. Prior to this role, Julie was the founder of MuseumTastic, a consulting firm specializing in small project support for museums and non profits. Julie has also held leadership roles with The House of the Seven Gables and Historic New England. In her tenure, she oversaw a major historic preservation project, led an internal interpretive planning team, changed the dynamics of marketing and public relations, increased engagement in a variety of public program initiatives, and led operational logistics during the COVID-19 crisis. Julie has also worked for the Massachusetts Historical Society, the Thornton Burgess Society, and Boston National Historic Park as an interpretive park ranger. She has also volunteered or held board positions with the Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site, Friends of Fairsted, the Franklin Park Coalition, Historic Salem, Inc., Destination Salem and North of Boston CVB.



DAGNY ASHLEY

DIRECTOR OF TOURISM
CITY OF QUINCY

Dagny's career in tourism & marketing started as the Group Tour Manager for the Southeastern Massachusetts Convention; Visitors Bureau for 14 years, promoting tourism and marketing for all 20 Bristol County communities. She then went on to a position with the Massachusetts Office of Travel; Tourism in Boston as the Group Tour Manager; Conference Manager for 6 years. The position entailed working with tourism stakeholders in the Commonwealth, promoting Massachusetts destinations, marketing travel trade, making connections with national hospitality businesses and meeting with regional tourism leaders throughout the Northeast and Canada. She also managed the Annual Governor's Conference on Travel; Tourism as lead coordinator. She then became the Director of Tourism & Marketing for the City of New Bedford for 7 years, where she implemented a new tourism department, opened a visitor information center, created new branding, and initiated innovative marketing strategies to increase visitation and tourism. In 2020 she joined the City of Quincy as the city's first Director of Tourism.



ERICA ASHTON

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
MARTHA'S VINEYARD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

A wealth of experience and a deep commitment to community engagement, Erica has a distinguished 20+ year career in media and advertising sales. Most recently she has served as VP, Head of Sales at The Arena Group, representing Parade, Sports Illustrated, Men's Journal, and TheStreet. After fulfilling a lifetime dream to live on Martha's Vineyard, she and her husband purchased a home in 2015 and moved to the island full-time in 2019, Erica has been dedicated to giving back to the island she loves. Residing in Edgartown with her husband, Chef Jon Ashton, and their beloved labradoodle, Eleanor Rigby, Erica is passionate about supporting local businesses and enhancing the economic vitality of the community she cherishes.



RAY BERRY

FOUNDER AND GENERAL MANAGER
WHITE LION BREWERY

Raymond Berry's professional journey includes executive posts with regional nonprofits and quasi-public organizations; the entrepreneurial spirit is what led him to be the founder and general manager of White Lion Brewing Company; the first craft beer company post prohibition to recognize the city of Springfield's as its home. White Lion's portfolio of beers can be found in Massachusetts and Connecticut. White Lion's branding has received national attention, and its creative event White Lion Wednesday was recognized by Food and Wine Magazine as a top beer garden in the country. Its seasonal beer gardens are now community staples in the city of Holyoke, the city of Westfield and the city of Springfield.



ERICA BOSSE

*FOUNDER, GARDNER FARMERS MARKET
OWNER, FLICKER HILL HOMESTEAD*

A passionate advocate for local agriculture and community engagement, actively working in both the tech industry and the agricultural sector. As the founder of the 2024 Gardner MA Farmers Market, she aims to enrich her community by providing access to fresh, locally grown produce. With roots in farming that trace back to her teenage years at the certified organic farm Killdeer in Vermont, Erica brings a wealth of experience in both agriculture and community service. In addition to her role in the farming sector, Erica owns Flicker Hill Homestead, a micro farm specializing in vegetables for Growing Places and unique specialty flowers. While her farm is small, she believes in the powerful connection between agriculture and tourism, emphasizing the importance of educating about sustainable farming practices and the benefits of local produce. At the "Harvesting Success: How Agriculture Drives Tourism" panel, Erica looks forward to discussing how agriculture not only supports our bodies but also enriches our communities through education and engagement.



SHANA BRYANT

*CEO & FOUNDER
COURSE TRIFECTA, MANIFESTED EVENTS (ME)*

A visionary leader and trailblazer in the event planning industry, specializing in community events, nonprofit initiatives, corporate celebrations, and multi-day conferences. Over the last 15 years, she has transformed her natural talent for organization into a thriving boutique agency, delivering seamless and impactful experiences for clients like the City of Boston, TEDxRoxbury, MassVOTE, and Boston While Black.

In addition to producing exceptional events, Shana has mentored over 50 aspiring entrepreneurs and taught event planning courses at Roxbury Community College, inspiring and equipping early-stage planners with the skills to succeed. Her dedication to creativity, community, and excellence makes her a trusted leader and partner.



STEPHEN CLARK

*PRESIDENT AND CEO
MASSACHUSETTS RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION*

Stephen joined the MRA in 2011 and has served prior as Director of Government Affairs, Vice President of Government Affairs, and Chief Operating Officer for the Association. He has nearly twenty years of experience in the non-profit and government sectors. Prior to joining the MRA, Stephen worked as Legislative Staff for the Assistant Majority Leader in the Massachusetts State Senate. He graduated with a B.A in political science from the University of Massachusetts Amherst.



CAROLE COPELAND THOMAS

*PRESIDENT AND CEO
C. THOMAS AND ASSOCIATES*

As an award-winning TEDx speaker, trainer, and global thought leader, Carole Copeland Thomas moderates the discussions of critical issues affecting the marketplace, including global diversity, equity, inclusion, and multiculturalism. Carole keeps her pulse on employment issues and regularly consults with industry leaders. She's spent years cultivating relationships and partnerships with local, national, and international clients and sponsors, including State Street Corporation, Meet Boston, Curry College, Walmart, Amtrak, and Emirates Airlines.



MICHELE COTA

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
DISCOVER NEW ENGLAND

Bringing 20 years of business and tourism experience to Discover New England which is the regional destination marketing agency for six New England states for the global market. Prior background includes federal programs, economic development, workforce and broadband policy as well as working extensively to communicate with business community and municipal leaders during the COVID pandemic.

Her latest role was as the Trade Relations Manager for New Hampshire responsible for international strategy and partnership as well as domestic trade and marketing. Currently Michele serves on the granite State Export Council.



LAURA CYRILLE

DIRECTOR PUBLIC RELATIONS
DEVELOPMENT COUNCILORS INTERNATIONAL

Although she has worked with media and influencers to increase awareness of mega-consumer brands, Laura's heart is in promoting the world's travel destinations - helping to tell their stories in traditional media and through digital influencers on social. Her work to position Western Mass as an off-season getaway over the past two years has resulted in hundreds of print and television placements, along with millions of social media impressions. A life-long New Yorker, culture seeker and foodie, Laura prides herself in connecting destination stories with the right storytellers to motivate consumers to listen and book their trips.



JOHN DAVID

PRESIDENT AND CEO
SPORTS EVENTS & TOURISM ASSOCIATION

With over two decades of experience in the leading trade organization for sports events and tourism industry, John has served as Chief Strategy Officer USA BMX, where he helped double membership, triple revenue, and lead major initiatives, including the Olympic Trials and the development of the USA BMX headquarters and hall of fame.

John has served on the Sports ETA Board of Directors for over a decade and was named one of the most Influential Event Professionals by Northstar Media Group. As a respected leader in sports tourism he continues to drive growth and innovation.



AMANDA DAVIS

SENIOR MANAGER, GLOBAL TRADE DEVELOPMENT
BRAND USA

Global trade development (U.K. & Europe) for Brand USA, the nation's destination marketing organization with the mission of increasing international visitation to the United States, fueling the nation's economy and enhancing the image of the USA worldwide. In this role, Amanda serves as the primary liaison for Brand USA and its partners, prospects, and international representation firms in the U.K. & Europe. She manages the day-to-day trade operations, including in-market activations and co-op marketing, for these markets.

Amanda joined Brand USA in June 2016 as the coordinator for the global trade team, and later became senior coordinator. During this time, she was instrumental in supporting the USA Discovery Program (Brand USA's online training program for international travel agents), MegaFams (large-scale familiarization tours), and trade shows.



MICHAEL DEKOSTER

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
MARITIME GLOUCESTER

His career blends a love for history, maritime heritage, traditional craftsmanship, and community engagement. Growing up on Lake Michigan in a family of furniture craftsmen and farmers, he developed a passion for place-based storytelling through culture and history. After studying African-American, American Social, and Public History in graduate school, he spent over a decade in local and international nonprofit leadership before returning to his love of local maritime heritage and historic sites.



JESSICA DOONAN

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF ACCESSIBILITY
MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS BOSTON

Under the direction of the Senior Director of Community Engagement, Jessica is responsible for ensuring accessibility across all areas of the museum to create a sense of belonging and connection for visitors with disabilities. Prior to working at the MFA, Jessica served as the Chief of Staff for the City of Boston Mayor's Commission for Persons with Disabilities. Jessica holds a Bachelors in Theater and American Sign Language from Northeastern University and a Masters in Global Inclusion and Social Development with a concentration on International Disability Policy from University of Massachusetts, Boston. In her free time Jessica serves in a volunteer capacity as the Co-Director of Integrity at Arts Connect International, a non-profit building equity in and through the arts.



CASEY DOWLING

DIRECTOR OF CULTURAL ATTRACTIONS
ARAMARK

Working within standalone restaurants and restaurant groups for many years, Casey moved into Sports and Entertainment with Aramark in 2013 at Canadian Tire Center, home of the Ottawa Senators. After five years in hockey as a Club Manager and then Premium Operations Manager, she jumped into a baseball venue as Director of Premium Services at Citi Field, home of The New York Mets. Continuing her growth within MLB parks, Casey moved to Boston as Senior Director of Food & Beverage for Fenway Park and Fenway Sports Group's properties. During these years Casey lead broad scale projects such as opening of the MGM Music Hall Fenway, Duke and Dutchess of Wales' Earthshot Awards in 2022 and the 2023 NHL Winter Classic hosting The Boston Bruins v. The Pittsburgh Penguins.



TRICIA FENTON

VICE PRESIDENT OF OPERATIONS
FIFA WORLD CUP BOSTON

Tricia Fenton is the VP of Operations for FIFA World Cup Boston™ where she oversees operational planning, Celebration '26, Fan Operations and Transportation. With over 30 years of experience in the Mega Event industry, Tricia has been instrumental in delivering many major events such as previous FIFA World Cups, Olympics, Super Bowls, European Games, Pan American Games, Commonwealth Games, and many others.



JANINE FONDON

CONSULTANT/CONTENT CREATOR
UNITY FIRST DIRECT, INC.

Award-winning educator and content creator Janine Fondon, MFA, is a skilled communication, digital marketing, and public relations professional with over 15+ years of experience in regional and national markets. By creating impactful strategies that deliver measurable results for organizations and individuals, Janine has helped clients significantly improve brand awareness, audience engagement, reputation, outreach, and ROI. Through UnityFirst Direct, a digital marketing company she co-founded with her husband, Tom Fondon, in 1996, Janine has successfully elevated engagement with untapped audiences by over 90% through custom business-building, audience research, and authentic storytelling. Janine has also created custom events and activities, such as the "Voices of Resilience" art exhibit and the ON the Move Forum, to engage communities through arts/culture, conversational networking, and education. With the 2025 release of the Fondon's new book, "The Journey", she will share hidden or less-known stories from various communities.



HANNA GBORDZOE

VICE PRESIDENT, SOCIAL MEDIA
DEVELOPMENT COUNCILORS INTERNATIONAL

Hanna leads DCI's social media team by crafting and deploying creative content that drives engagement with travel brands. By serving destinations from the U.S. Virgin Islands to the Netherlands, she has her finger on the pulse of both consumer digital marketing trends and what works to reach both B2C and B2B tourism stakeholders. Her foundation in traditional PR allows her to connect the dots across broad, integrated marketing communications programs for travel destinations, attractions and hotels around the globe.



MICHELE GOLDBERG

VICE PRESIDENT
EXPLORE WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS

Michele Brittelli Goldberg is a seasoned marketing professional with extensive experience in destination marketing, public relations, and brand strategy. As Vice President of Marketing for Explore Western Mass, also known as the Greater Springfield Convention; Visitors Bureau (GSCVB), she leads all advertising, marketing, public relations, social media, and communications efforts for the membership-based, nonprofit organization. In this role, she works to promote Western Massachusetts as a premier destination for leisure travel, sports events, meetings and conventions.



ALEXIS GOODIN

ASSOCIATE CURATOR
THE CLARK ART INSTITUTE

A researcher and writer on the collections, develops special exhibitions, and presents her research to the public through lectures and gallery talks. Goodin was integral in planning the reinstallation and interpretation of the American decorative arts collections in the Burrows Gallery of American Decorative Arts (opened February 2017) and the Lauzon Glass Study Gallery (opened May 2017). She served as in-house curator for recent summer exhibitions such as "Edvard Munch: Trembling Earth" (2023), "Rodin in the United States: Confronting the Modern" (2022), and "Nikolai Astrup: Visions of Norway" (2021).



SHEILA GREEN

COORDINATOR

MA 250, MASSACHUSETTS OFFICE
OF TRAVEL & TOURISM

With a wealth of experience in the tourism and hospitality industry, Sheila's recent experience includes Boston Harbor City Cruises, Sail Boston, and Doors Open Minneapolis, among others.

For over 25 years, Sheila has been a relationship builder. She specializes in strategic communications, PR, and marketing. In her career she has delivered customized approaches to creating communications and change management strategies. Her comprehensive expertise spans strategic communications planning, thought leadership, media relations, crisis PR management, social content development and project and event management.



MATTHEW HATFIELD

DIRECTOR OF AIRLINE ROUTE DEVELOPMENT
MASSACHUSETTS PORT AUTHORITY

Overseeing air service for Boston Logan International Airport, Hanscom Airfield and Worcester Regional Airport. As Director, Hatfield is responsible for attracting new airlines while expanding and maintaining Massport's route network supporting passenger and economic growth for the region. His collaborative approach paired with a diversified, tenured aviation background has fostered mutually beneficial relationships with key stakeholders including airlines, governmental agencies, and industry partners. A subject matter expert in capacity planning as well as infrastructure and resource requirements, he is well regarded as a trusted advisor in the aviation community. Previous to this role, Hatfield served as Manager of Airline Route Development, specializing in airport terminal capacity and airline schedule integration. In his 25-year airport career, he has held various positions of increasing responsibility within Massport's Aviation Operations and Aviation Security departments. He earned his Bachelor of Science in Aviation Management from Bridgewater State University.



MIA HEALY-WALDRON

DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF CUSTOMER SERVICE
MASSACHUSETTS PORT AUTHORITY

With 10 years of experience at the Massachusetts Port Authority (Massport), Mia Healy-Waldron currently serves as the Deputy Director of Customer Service at Boston Logan International Airport (BOS). In this role, she leads the customer experience strategy and service team of front-line professionals at the largest airport in New England. As the advocate and voice for over 100,000 passengers who travel through BOS each day, Mia and her team are focused on meeting and exceeding customer expectations today and into the future. In this role, Mia oversees the day-to-day operation and implementation of data-driven solutions and strategic initiatives to enhance the customer experience. She works collaboratively across the Massport enterprise and with airport partners including federal agencies, air carriers, and tenants.

Mia's previous roles at Massport include Senior Manager of Aviation Programs and Policy in which she worked on strategic initiatives related to aviation planning, innovative service solutions, and operations and business management, and Deputy Chief of Staff for the Chief Executive Officer in which she was responsible for liaising between the Executive Administration Office and the Massport Media Relations department, Community Relations and Government Affairs department, and Strategic Communications and Marketing department.



RYAN HUTTON

DIGITAL STRATEGIST
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION

Ryan has worked for the agency since January of 2020. He graduated from the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts in 2006 and worked as a reporter and photographer for the North Adams Transcript, a daily newspaper in northern Berkshire County, from 2006 until 2011. From 2011 to 2012, and attended Boston University and earned a Master's Degree in photojournalism. From 2013 to 2020, he worked as a photojournalist for the Eagle Tribune newspaper in North Andover, MA and spent the last two years of my time there as the Chief Photographer, overseeing the photo operations of the daily newspaper, three weekly newspapers, and four quarterly magazines.



KIM KNOX BECKIUS

TRAVEL & BRANDED CONTENT CREATOR
YANKEE MAGAZINE

As Travel & Branded Content Editor for NewEngland.com and Yankee Magazine, the most-read travel periodical in New England with 1.8 million readers and a 90-year track record of award-winning storytelling and devoted readership, Kim Knox Beckius steers both editorial coverage of the six-state region and content-marketing partnerships. Based in Connecticut, Kim also freelances as a writer, editor, and PR/marketing consultant with a focus on businesses in the hospitality sector. She co-authored the 2024 edition of Frommer's New England. Kim is a member of the Society of American Travel Writers (SATW) and makes frequent media and public-speaking appearances. She is likely the only person who has hugged both Art Garfunkel and a baby moose.



LISA KRASSNER

DIRECTOR
CONCORD MUSEUM

Providing strategic leadership and direction for the Museum. Prior to joining the Concord Museum, Krassner spent over 20 years as a senior executive at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the American Museum of Natural History, and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. She most recently served as the Chief of Operations for the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, where she oversaw frontline operations and service delivery to five million visitors a year and led a team of 400 staff and 1000 volunteers. Prior to joining AMNH, Krassner was the Chief of Member and Visitor Services at The Metropolitan Museum of Art where she directed service excellence for more than seven million visitors annually and rebranded and grew the membership base to be the largest art museum membership program in the world. Krassner was the Senior Director of the Visitor Experience at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston from 1999-2012 where she led the Visitor Services, Security, and Membership teams and grew audience engagement strategies to bolster the MFA's mission.



ETHAN LASSER

JOHN MOORS CHAIR OF THE ARTS OF THE AMERICAS
MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON

Leading the curatorial team responsible for the Museum's renowned collection of paintings, sculpture and decorative arts from across North, Central and South America, ancient to modern. A curator, scholar and convenor, Lasser has contributed to exhibitions and publications on a range of American art topics. His most recent show, Hear Me Now: The Black Potters of Old Edgefield, South Carolina considers the enslaved artists who led the ceramics industry across the 19th-century South. Lasser has also curated exhibitions of Philip Guston, Winslow Homer, and 19th century African-American art (with artist Theaster Gates, Jr.). Prior to the MFA, he held curatorial positions at the Chipstone Foundation in Milwaukee and the Harvard Art Museums. He received his PhD from Yale University, and graduated from Williams College, where he is currently a Trustee. In 2023, President Biden appointed Lasser to serve on the Committee for the Preservation of the White House.



SANDY LISH

PRINCIPAL, CO-FOUNDER
THE CASTLE GROUP

Sandy has helped clients grow and sell companies, acquire firms, improve valuation / stock price, gain market share, manage crises, perfect presentation skills, launch products and the list goes on. When she is not working directly with clients, she is growing Castle — developing partnerships, identifying marketing opportunities and building new client relationships. And when she is not doing that, she's out in the marketplace, representing Castle and our clients through our dedication to the community.



THOMAS MCCARTHY

DCR

Tom has been committed to providing integrated recreational experiences in the outdoors for people of all ages and abilities and their friends and families, for more than thirty years. With his professional expertise as a Landscape Architect, Tom incorporated a broad overview of public outdoor recreation with the importance of design to create an affinity between the natural and built environments. In 1995, his creation of the Department of Conservation and Recreation's Universal Access Program (UAP) reflected the broader scope of outdoor recreation needs for people with disabilities through the combination of Universal Design, assistive programming and providing adaptive recreation equipment. Tom consults on accessibility projects throughout the state and has presented nationally and internationally on the importance of planning for inclusive outdoor recreation activities for all. His work, along with the dedicated UAP staff, in the blending of accessible site design and programmatic accessibility strategies has made outdoor recreation more accessible to people with disabilities and their families and friends that they may enjoy the beauty of DCR's parks together.



ANDREW B. MANKUS

DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS
DINING SERVICES, UMASS AMHERST

Andrew Mankus is a distinguished hospitality executive with extensive experience in dining services operations, strategic leadership, and team development. With a proven track record in higher education food service, he has successfully overseen multimillion-dollar budgets, optimized operational efficiencies, and led high-performing teams. Currently serving as the Director of Operations for Dining Services at the University of Massachusetts, Andrew manages an extensive operation that serves over 50,000 meals daily, overseeing a \$120 million budget and a workforce of 700+ staff members.

Andrew's accomplishments include being named an IFMA Next Gen Exec, Business West 40 Under Forty recipient, and a Food Service Director Magazine 30 Under 30 recipient. Under his leadership, the University of Massachusetts has consistently ranked #1 for Best Campus Food by the Princeton Review for eight consecutive years.



GLENN MCGIBBON

DIRECTOR OF WEB AND DIGITAL MARKETING
MEET BOSTON

Glenn McGibbon's background includes over two decades of marketing communications and agency work across various industries including: Travel & Hospitality, Arts & Entertainment, Education, Publishing, Retail, and Consumer Expositions & Festivals. Committed to helping shape the global perception of the Greater Boston region, Glenn has worked at Meet Boston for the past 8 years as the Director of Web & Digital Marketing while also serving on Meet Boston's Multicultural Committee. He oversaw the redesign of MeetBoston.com in 2023 and the development of AllinclusiveBos.com, a microsite of a culturally inclusive tourism campaign initiated by The City of Boston in partnership with CPC Communications, Proverb Agency, and Meet Boston.



MEG MONTAGNINO-JARRETT

DIRECTOR
MASSACHUSETTS FILM OFFICE

Meg is an American film producer and media veteran of the motion picture industry who was hired as the new Director of the Massachusetts Film Office; TV in December 2023. Renowned for her exceptional career in film production, Meg brings over three decades of industry experience to this pivotal role. Her impressive credits include iconic films like Good Will Hunting and The Departed. As Film Liaison for Gloucester, Rockport, and Cape Ann for over two decades, She was instrumental in growing the region's film industry. A respected Producers Guild of America and Massachusetts Production Coalition member, Meg brings a wealth of experience to her new role. Her deep understanding of the film industry and its impact on tourism will be invaluable as she promotes Massachusetts as a premier destination for visitors and filmmakers alike.



MICHAEL NELSON

PRESIDENT
FRANKLIN COUNTY AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY

The Franklin County Agricultural Society, owns and operates the Franklin County Fairgrounds in Greenfield. The Fairgrounds is the largest event venue in the county and the site is managed entirely by a team of volunteers. The Society hosts the annual agricultural Franklin County Fair which is now in its 176th year. Under Michael's leadership the Fairgrounds has seen nearly \$2 million dollars in infrastructure investments and a five-fold increase in events at the facility in just the past four years. Michael is the workforce training coordinator at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health's Office of Preparedness and Emergency Management. He holds an MBA from Fitchburg State College (now University).



HEATHER MUNNELL

DIRECTOR OF CLIENT EXPERIENCE
VDA

Expert in Experiential Event Design & Industry Thought Leader
Seasoned events professional with over 20 years of experience delivering innovative and impactful experiences for Fortune 500 companies. Her expertise spans a wide range of event types, including corporate leadership meetings, trade shows, sales incentive programs, and permanent installations.

A combination of creativity and strategy that helps clients achieve their goals through tailored event design. Known for her dynamic approach, meticulous attention to detail and ability to bring ideas to life, she has earned a reputation as a trusted leader in the industry.

Sharing expertise at top industry conferences, including IMEX, RainFocus, Connect, BizBash, PCMA, WEC, Southwest Showcase, and MPI. A focus on experiential design, sustainable solutions, AI tools, immersive experiences, and gamification, she inspires audiences to embrace innovation and elevate the events. Passionate about pushing boundaries and the future of event design that will continue to drive innovation and support the next generation of planners.



MADDIE ORGEN

VICE PRESIDENT CLIENT SERVICES
ACCESS TCA

Bringing over 15 years of experience in the events industry, Maggie has a deep expertise in event strategy and execution, dedicated to helping clients achieve impactful, results-driven experiences. Her extensive background in tradeshow marketing and client management has made her a trusted leader in the field. As a Certified Tradeshow Marketer (CTSM), Maddie's commitment to industry best practices and her passion for continuous learning set her apart in the ever-evolving event landscape.



ANNE-ALISE PIETRUSKA

INTERIM DIRECTOR OF MARKETING
EASTERN STATES EXPOSITION

Co-owner of Mellowship, an entertainment company specializing in talent buying, program management and marketing for live events. Through her role, she works with several Top 50 Fairs and serves as Director of Marketing for Eastern States Exposition, home of The Big E.



ANGELA PROUT

CO-FOUNDER
SHORED-UP DIGITAL

Angela's marketing journey began in corporate marketing with positions at BBDO New York, HUGE and Product (RED), where she developed a fascination with how brands creatively engage consumers and build meaningful online connections. Eventually, Angela sought more personal client interactions and combined her entrepreneurial spirit with her creative expertise to pivot into a career as a barber hairstylist—all while continuing to support small businesses with their marketing efforts on the side.

After almost a decade living on Martha's Vineyard, where she co-founded the boutique marketing agency Shored Up Digital in 2018, she relocated to Cape Cod, bringing her entrepreneurial drive to the mainland. Angela's expertise in branding and client focused strategies positions her as a leader in helping businesses enhance their digital presence and foster authentic connections.



ASHLEY RANDLE

COMMISSIONER
MASSACHUSETTS DEPT. OF AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES (MDAR)

Ashley was born and raised on a fifth-generation dairy farm, Indian Acres, in South Deerfield, Massachusetts, where her passion for agriculture and advocacy was first sparked. Ashley obtained her B.S. in Applied Economics & Management and Animal Science from Cornell University in 2011, and her Juris Doctorate from Western New England University School of Law in 2014. She is a licensed Massachusetts attorney.

Upon graduating from law school in 2014, she launched her career in government with the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, tasked with the research and development of a sustainable recognition program for the Maine farming community. Prior to joining the MDAR team, Ashley worked for the Northeast Dairy Producers Association (NEDPA) and served as Member Services Director, engaging in public policy work for the dairy industry and building relationships among industry members. Ashley began her career at MDAR in 2018, serving as Deputy Commissioner/Legislative and Policy Director.



DUSTY RHODES

PRESIDENT
CONVENTURES, INC./SAIL BOSTON

Founded in 1977 Dusty has been its President since its formation. Under her leadership, Conventures has earned its reputation as New England's leading events company through innovation, creativity, knowledge of the community, and total commitment to producing first-class events. Producing meaningful events for constituents large and small, local and international, indoors and out; from festivals for millions, to receptions for dozens, Dusty's vision, attention to detail, drive, and high standards bring excellence to every event she touches. Her leadership in attracting and managing major events has helped shine a global spotlight on Boston, its people, and its businesses. From bringing the World Cup to Boston in 1994 and organizing the bicentennial of the USS Constitution, to her management of annual corporate conventions, fundraising events, and public festivals, her work drives enormous economic impact for the region. She's managed logistics for various Heads of State's visits to Boston, she invented the Boston Marathon Expo, created the Boston 10K for Women, and is the driving force for Sail Boston 1992, 2000, 2009, 2017, and 2026, which has brought millions of visitors to Boston across its occurrences.



ALYSSA DION RODNING

DIRECTOR OF SALES
MARRIOTT BOSTON BACK BAY HOTELS

Alyssa is a seasoned hospitality professional with a passion for bringing the world to New England, having grown up living in four of six of the states. After graduating from Smith College with a degree in Economics, she embarked on a career that has spanned sales, events, and strategic account management across various sectors. She currently serves as the Director of Travel Industry & Transient Sales for Marriott International's Back Bay Hotels in Boston, MA, where she leads sales efforts for over 3,000 rooms at four premium and luxury hotels. Under her leadership, her team achieved 39% growth in transient revenue over the last two years, reaching \$38 million annually.



AL ROSE

OWNER
RED APPLE FARM

Al Rose received degrees from Boston and Cornell Universities. His Master of Science degree in Agricultural Economics thesis is titled, "The Family Farm and Direct Marketing: Adapting to an Urbanizing Environment". After a stint working for Frito-Lay, Al and his wife, Nancy, and their children returned to his family's now diversified and predominantly retail farm operation, Red Apple Farm, in 2001. The operation includes a year-round, on-farm retail store with a cidery and Brew Barn, two retail winter locations at Wachusett Mountain Ski Area, and a downtown store at the year-round, indoor Boston Public Market. Al, Nancy and their 4 kids represent the 4th and 5th generation to work at the farm. Al serves on the boards of the Massachusetts Fruit Growers Association - as past President, UMass Cold Spring Orchard, Heywood Healthcare, Care Central VNA; Hospice, Mount Grace Land Trust, Vice Chair of the Massachusetts Board of Agriculture, and past Chairman of Visit North Central Massachusetts Tourism Association.



MALLORY SMITH

SENIOR CLIENT PARTNER
TRIPADVISOR

Having been at TripAdvisor for 13 years, Mallory has been covering the Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, Ohio and Florida panhandle regions. Currently working with national digital sales team for TripAdvisor, Mallory has collaborated to meet and achieve sales goals from 2012 through today in an intelligent, fast paced and analytical environment. Mallory started her media sales career with ESPN International, where she managed the international digital advertising sales for the US team. Through her management, the International digital sales team had exponential growth with current clients as well as many new acquisitions. She is passionate about driving destination impact for partners.



SARAH STANTON

UNDERSECRETARY OF ECONOMIC STRATEGIES
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

Sarah Stanton is responsible for the state's tourism and international trade sectors through the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism and the Massachusetts Office of International Trade and Investment. She also leads the office's efforts on the cross-secretariat Workforce Skills Cabinet and helps coordinate federal opportunities.

Ms. Stanton has held several key roles in local government over the past 18 years—including Town Manager of Bedford, Budget Director for the City of Cambridge, Finance Director/City Auditor for the City of Salem, and other municipal leadership roles in the Town of Ipswich, City of Woburn, and City of Haverhill. She is an adjunct professor in the graduate programs for city planning, political science, and public administration at Boston University, Merrimack College, and Northeastern University. Ms. Stanton holds an undergraduate degree in Political Science from Plymouth State University, and a master's degree in Public Administration from Northeastern University.



RACHEL STRAUSS

DIRECTOR OF SALES
CSI BOSTON

Rachel has been in the Boston special events industry for over 9 years. With experience in business development and account management, Rachel has grown within the CSI brand and now leads the sales team as Director of Sales. With Rachel at the helm, the New England office sits as the largest and most profitable CSI office across the company and her efforts helped CSI New England achieve the position as Boston Business Journal's second largest event planning company in Massachusetts in 2022 and 2023. She is continuously motivated by the creative aspect of her position and loves putting together inspiring events for all her clients no matter the budget or size - and will work with a fabulous smile on her face! Outside of CSI, Rachel sits on the social media committee of PCMA New England and helps to promote, plan, and execute social events for her chapter. New England is Rachel's backyard and loves exploring new restaurants, venues, experiences, and tours that she can share with future clients who come to this awesome area!



TESS VISMALE

CERTIFIED MEETING PROFESSIONAL
DIGITAL EVENTS CERTIFIED
DAHLIA+AGENCY

A meeting planner, event technologist, award-winning onsite event maestro, dynamic speaker, facilitator, and esteemed educator. Tess is a native Chicagoan, an acclaimed Event Rescuer, and Founder and CEO of iSocialExecution Inc. (iSocialX). Renowned as a Tech Whisperer for DAHLIA+ AGENCY, co-host of the #EventTechPullUp Podcast, Instructor in the Meeting & Event Planning Program at UNC Charlotte, featured Professional Speaker and a Virtual Event Superhero, Her role on the Board of Directors of the National Coalition of Black Meeting Professionals (NCBMP). In addition, she also is on the Editorial Advisory Board of ConventionSouth magazine.



TAUNYA WOLFE FINN

FOUNDER & OWNER
WOLFE ADVENTURES & TOURS

Starting Wolfe Adventures & Tours from the ground up in 2002, brought Taunya's experience in the tourism world, Bachelors in Travel & Tourism, and Masters in Teaching English as a Second Language to the forefront. As her business grew through the years, she brought their office to Newburyport in 2011.

A Boston Chapter member of the travel and tourism organization Skål International, a two-term board member for the North of Boston Convention & Visitor's Bureau and one of their Small Business of the Year Award recipients. In 2025, Taunya was donned a Leadership Award from North of Boston.



MARY KAY WYDRA

PRESIDENT
EXPLORE WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS

As President of Explore Western Mass, Mary Kay oversees a membership-based, non-profit destination marketing organization that is dedicated to promoting Western Mass as an attractive site for meetings and conventions, group tours, sports and leisure travel.

With the exception of a year spent in corporate public affairs, Ms. Wydra has been with Explore Western Mass since 1988, when she joined as a Convention Services Coordinator. She has served as President since 2001. In addition to her duties leading Explore Western Mass, she is actively involved in several local and statewide committees.



DAVID ZIMMERMAN

PUBLISHER
BOSTON SPIRIT MAGAZINE

New England's premier LGBT magazine. Boston Spirit, launched in 2005, is published 6 times per year and covers stories of interest to the region's LGBT community. Features in the magazine range from the worlds of politics and business leaders to Arts, travel and more.

In addition to the magazine, Boston Spirit holds some of the largest LGBT events in the area including its annual LGBT Executive Networking Night. Launched 17 years ago this event has grown to be the largest networking night in New England for LGBT professionals. In May 2024 more than 1,000 area professionals attended the event to go along with more than 40 companies exhibiting.

TOURISM AWARDS



DIANE BURNETTE

LARRY D. MEEHAN LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Diane Burnette is a distinguished hospitality and tourism professional with nearly three decades of dedicated service to North Central Massachusetts. As the longtime Manager of the Johnny Appleseed Visitors Center, Diane built a legacy as the welcoming face and ambassador for the region, greeting countless travelers and showcasing the area's attractions, businesses, and natural beauty. Under Diane's leadership, the center became a cultural landmark featured in various media outlets including WCVB's Chronicle, WBZ, the BBC, and numerous local media publications.

Throughout her illustrious career with the North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce and Visit North Central Massachusetts, the region's destination marketing organization and regional tourism council, Diane transformed the visitors center into a must-stop destination for travelers exploring the region. Her steady leadership, warm personality, and deep knowledge of local attractions helped position North Central Massachusetts as a premier tourism destination.

Her nearly 30-year commitment to serving as the face of North Central Massachusetts tourism has left an indelible mark on the region's hospitality landscape. Throughout her career, Diane has been recognized for her exceptional service with numerous accolades, including special recognition from the Chamber, commendations from U.S. Congressman Jim McGovern and U.S. Congresswoman Lori Trahan, citations from state legislators and formal recognition from local officials—a testament to her far-reaching impact on the communities she has so faithfully served.



DON PACKER

FILM INDUSTRY ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

After graduating from the prestigious film and television program at Boston University in 1977, Don immediately left for Hollywood. There he spent 3 years, 3 months and 11 days learning how to edit film working with award winning editors.

After moving to Boston and for the past 43 years, Don has edited numerous Television commercials, Corporate Videos, Short films and Documentaries. He has also directed both Television commercials and Corporate videos, though his main focus has always been as an Editor moving from film to digital.

He is past President and founding member of the Massachusetts Production Coalition, where during his tenure he created the first of its kind EXPO at WGBH, showcasing companies that create and support film and television in Massachusetts. He has also received the title of Best Editor in New England twice.

In 2005, after having run someone else's company for 11 years he started to open Engine Room Edit with his partner Scott Knowlton. This was followed by BrewhouseVFX and Conductor Productions, all successful companies in Boston. At the end of 2018 he sold his companies to his partners and opened Wild Puppy Productions, a one man shop.



DR. ROBERT KRIM

AWARD OF APPRECIATION

Framingham State University Professor Bob Krim is considered a leading expert on Massachusetts' innovation history and a prominent writer on what drives innovation in this region.

He led a 175-person team for 13 years, which found that more than 450 innovations originated in Massachusetts and changed the nation or the world. No other state or city comes anywhere near Massachusetts, from the first organ transplant to the telephone, the chocolate chip cookie, the Revolution that led to the United States, and the first state to end slavery.

Three years ago, Bob and Boston Globe Innovation columnist Scott Kirsner developed www.TheInnovationTrail.org, which visits 20 walkable sites in Boston and Cambridge. It won Boston Mag's Best of Boston Historical Walking Trail.

Krim wrote a book with Alan Earls, *Boston Made: From Revolution to Robotics: Innovations that Changed the World*, which tells 50 stories of Mass Innovation. His work is a permanent exhibit at Logan Airport's Four Centuries of Innovation: From Massachusetts to the World and is featured at Terminals C and E.

He is a Newton native, married to Dr. Kathy Anderson. He taught history at Roxbury Community College. He knew Martin Luther King, Jr. He worked for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the City of Boston Police and Mayor Flynn on lowering the homicide rate, which they accomplished by 80% in 1991 and have kept down since.

He has a BA Cum Laude from Harvard, a Masters in History from Univ California: Berkeley, and a joint PhD/MBA from Boston College.



SUZANNE TAYLOR

REVOLUTIONARY ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Since 2010, Suzanne has worked on the Freedom Trail® Foundation to help meet its mission to market, promote and help to preserve the Freedom Trail and 16 official Freedom Trail historic sites, through varied cultural programs, visitor services and activities, and marketing and public relations efforts. She passionately maintains long-lasting relationships and continues to create new partnerships to enhance the Freedom Trail experience, create educational opportunities, and build tourism in the Commonwealth. Suzanne is dedicated to making Boston a world-class city and served the City of Boston as a Boston Parks and Recreation Department employee for many years before joining the Foundation team. Born in Boston, Suzanne is a long-time Boston resident, and loves helping people, soccer, music, and Wally the Green Monster.

EXHIBITORS:

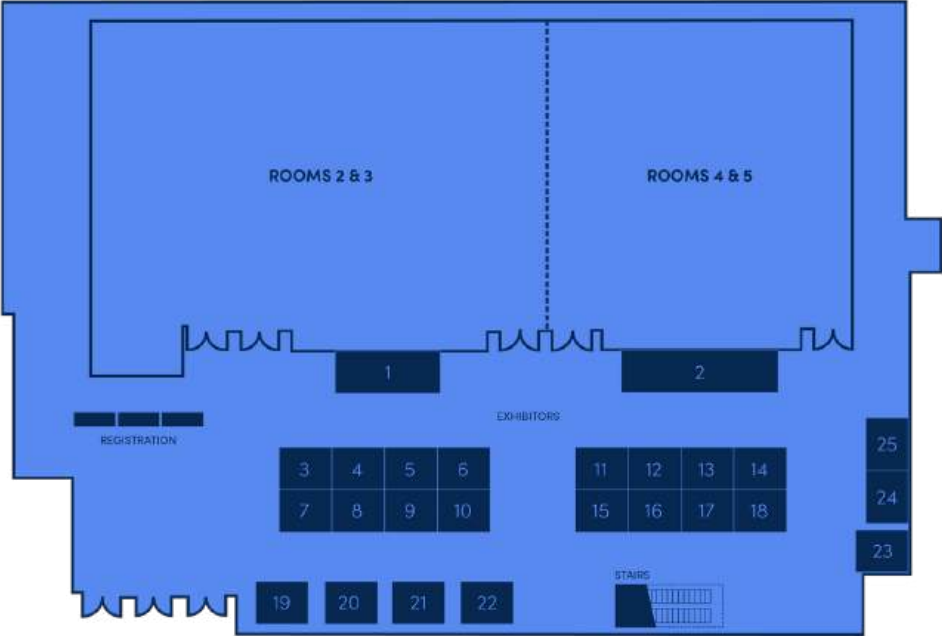
BOOTH	EXHIBITOR	BOOTH	EXHIBITOR
1	Chester Railway	14	Commonwealth Kitchen
2	Massport	15	Visit New England
3	Sperling Interactive	16	Proverb Agency
4	Lupa Zoo	17	CTM Media
5	LocaliQ	18	Paperkite
6	High Street Place	19	Department of Conservation and Recreation
7	The Innovation Trail of Boston	20	Mass Cultural Council
8	Greater Merrimack Valley CVB	21	Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
9	City of Lowell	22	MassLive Media Group
10	Mosaic Center	23	Expedia Group
11	Groton - Enjoy the Experience	24	Blue Seven Studio
12	Polish Center of Discovery & Learning	25	Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism/ Regional Tourism Councils
13	Springfield Symphony Orchestra	26	Hearst Agency Times Union Media Group

FLOOR 1



EVENT MAP: MASSMUTUAL CENTER

FLOOR 1



FLOOR 2



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