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News

Expanded Convention Center Nets First Gathering

By KYW's Mike Dunn

Plans to expand the Pennsylvania Convention Center have already paid off with the first booking of an international convention that would not fit into the current facility.



Narcotics Anonymous — a group of recovering drug addicts — has decided to book its 2013 International convention here in what will be an expanded convention center.

Michael Polin, director of conventions for Narcotics Anonymous, says coming to Philly is only possible because the Center is

expanding.

And Polin is not worried that the construction has yet to begin.

"We feel confident based on the information that we have that we're going to have an expanded center," he said, "which is what we would need in order to hold the event here."

Philadelphia City Councilman Michael Nutter is chairman of the center, and said "booking this particular convention demonstrates the need for expansion."

"There are many others in the wings who want to be in Philadelphia. We just need a bigger building to accommodate them."

Thirty-thousand attendees are expected, and local officials expect they will spend an estimated \$17-million while here.

The expansion is due to be complete by 2009 -- a full four years before the Narcotics Anonymous gathering.

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PHILADELPHIA CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU BOOKS NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS 2013 WORLD CONVENTION AT PENNSYLVANIA CONVENTION CENTER

The Recently-hosted Professional Convention Management Association Annual Meeting And New Updates On Expansion Credited

PHILADELPHIA, PA...February 15, 2006... Officials from Narcotics Anonymous World Services (NAWS), the Philadelphia Convention & Visitors Bureau (PCVB) and Pennsylvania Convention Center Authority today announced that NAWS has selected Philadelphia as the host city for its biennial world convention due to the recent success of the Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) Annual Meeting and positive updates on the expansion of the Pennsylvania Convention Center. The 35th World Convention of Narcotics Anonymous will take place in Philadelphia from August 29-September 1, 2013. The event is expected to attract more than 30,000 attendees utilizing up to 14,485 room nights with an economic impact of nearly \$17 million for the Philadelphia region.

Michael Polin, director of conventions, meetings and events for Narcotics Anonymous World Services; Hon. Michael Nutter, board chairman of the Pennsylvania Convention Center Authority; Dittie Guise, chief operating officer of the Pennsylvania Convention Center; and Jack Ferguson, executive vice president of the PCVB, officially signed the contract today at a press conference at the Pennsylvania Convention Center.

"We are thrilled about the opportunity to bring our Narcotics Anonymous World Convention with its 30,000 attendees representing over 40 countries to Philadelphia. The expansion of the Pennsylvania Convention Center has allowed us for the first time to seriously consider the city," said Polin. "This convention is a non revenue-generating event for NA. The purpose of the convention is to make recovery in NA available to all in need, and we will partner with our members, public and private agencies, and the general public by providing access to recovery meetings throughout the event."

"This group is really a win-win for Philadelphia and the Pennsylvania Convention Center," said Chairman Nutter. "We were unable to host this group in Philadelphia because we did not have the square footage to fit their needs. Now, with expansion underway, Philadelphia will have the space that meeting planners have asked for and that will mean great economic impact for the citizens of Philadelphia and the region."

"We are very excited to welcome Narcotics Anonymous World Services to Philadelphia in 2013. This convention is also very special to Philadelphia because it is the first convention we have booked since the highly successful PCMA annual meeting held in Philadelphia last month," said Ferguson. "We expect to book many more groups in the next six months as a result of the positive experiences we know the 1,500 meeting planners, such as Narcotics Anonymous World Services, had while in Philadelphia."

The program for the NAWS consists of recovery meetings where members of the fellowship, not professional speakers, share their "experience, strength, and hope" on various topics in concurrent workshops and general sessions. Attendees use the convention as a networking, or "fellowshipping" opportunity with a culmination at the general session, World Unity Day. This session is teleconferenced to thousands of members at more than 150 locations in 30-40 countries around the world, including many drug treatment centers located in correctional institutions.

"It is so exciting to have Narcotics Anonymous World Services be the first group to book at the Pennsylvania Convention Center since steps toward expansion of the center have been officially announced. This convention will not only have a great financial impact on Philadelphia, but it brings with it a positive social impact," said Guise. "Pennsylvania's citizens will benefit from this truly world conference."

NAWS is an international community-based organization of recovering drug addicts. Started in 1953, the NA movement is the world's oldest and largest self-help organization for people in recovery from drug addiction, with more than 35,000 weekly meetings in 126 countries, speaking approximately 65 different languages accounting for over 400,000 members worldwide. For more information on Narcotics Anonymous, visit www.na.org.

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About the Philadelphia Convention & Visitors Bureau

Who we are: The Philadelphia Convention & Visitors Bureau (PCVB), www.PhiladelphiaUSA.travel, a private non-profit membership corporation, is the official Tourism Promotion Agency for the City of Philadelphia, and the primary sales and marketing agency for the Pennsylvania Convention Center. The PCVB competes with its counterparts worldwide for convention and tourism business. The organization has departments dedicated to the multicultural, sports, and life sciences markets.

Our mission: To generate economic impact and job growth by increasing the region's hotel occupancy and revenues, while concurrently affecting other diverse segments of the hospitality industry. To do whatever it takes to attract ethnically diverse regional, national and international convention and tourism customers through creative sales, marketing and communications efforts. To deliver exceptional service and experiences for all, ensuring repeat business across market segments. To increase the quality of life for all our citizens, stakeholders, and visitors by supporting the region's vibrant arts and entertainment, historic, cultural, retail, restaurant, and sports venues.



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