

Catch Des Moines Customer Advisory Board  
Zoom Meeting- May 19, 2021

Welcome: David Kliman, The Kliman Group

State of the City: Greg Edwards, Catch Des Moines

- Des Moines hosting [Dew Tour](#) this week/weekend
  - DSM is now home to the largest skate park in the country—The [Lauridsen Skatepark](#), with 88,000 square feet. It is located between Wells Fargo Arena and the river, downtown.
- Des Moines has a full summer of events scheduled:
  - June
    - [Principal Charity Classic](#)
    - [World Pork Expo](#)
    - [Certified Piedmontese IRONMAN 70.3 Des Moines](#)
    - [National Junior High Finals Rodeo](#)
  - July
    - [US Youth Soccer President's Cup](#)
    - [Fuel Ethanol Workshop](#)
    - Three weekends of Nike Basketball/Tournament of Champions
    - US Grains Council
  - August
    - [Iowa State Fair](#)
- Hotel occupancy is hovering >50% for the first time in awhile
  - Weekend travel is actually higher than weekday travel
  - Business travel is still lacking

Around the Room: What is reality for you and your organization?

- **Lauren, National Pork Producers Council:** World Pork Expo is three weeks away and has between 4,000 and 5,000 people registered currently. This event takes place at the Iowa State Fairgrounds and has indoor and outdoor elements. The event typically sees a large international presence, specifically from China, so attendance is lower given the circumstances. Food and beverage service will look a little different, focusing on grab and go prepackaged meals, served buffet lines and beverage servers vs. self-pour. Many of their vendors are following suit, even without imposed restrictions. They are following CDC guidelines for masks and recommending vs. requiring, Lawyers said if they require it, then they are responsible for policing it.
- **Monica, American Assn of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO):** Meetings are virtual through August. They will have an in person committee meeting in September, and Annual Meeting in person in October in San Diego. Annual Meeting registration is expected to be 75% of "normal." Regional in person events will start soon. The Southwest regional meeting in Orlando already has 1,000 people registered. This event was originally going to be hybrid, but that is no longer the case since in person registration was so strong. They will cap registration at 1,100 people. Room will still be set for COVID compliance and are exploring COVID testing options.

- **Morgan, Conference Direct:** Lots of active RFPs. National Conference of State Legislatures is sourcing 2025 and hosting an in person meeting in Puerto Rico. They blocked 450 room nights and pick up has exceeded 700. Locations with active travel restrictions lead to a lot of uncertainty about pickup, and thus they still see a need to request waived attrition. She is asking custom questions on all of her RFPs about COVID compliant room settings, attrition, etc. so she knows up front who can accommodate, should the future need remain.
- **Scott, National Speech & Debate Assn:** NSDA was scheduled for Des Moines this year but has gone virtual. They rebooked Des Moines for 2024 and 2025. This will be their second year virtual. Online competition increased the accessibility among students so they actually have higher attendance (currently 12,000). When they go back in person in 2022 (Louisville) they are anticipating increased attendance. They are looking at more space to accommodate. Their virtual platform was custom built, and NSDA hopes to keep at least part of it active long term, for increased accessibility for students.
- **Tonya, United Methodist Women:** Assembly in Orlando in 2022 will be their first in person meeting since COVID. This demographic is largely 65+ so they fall into a higher risk category. Several questions for, and conversations with, attorneys to understand liability and ability to require masks/vaccines. Trying to get a COVID clause in every contract. Seeing higher rates than budgeted on transportation and other event related costs.
- **Sarah, ITAGroup:** Will be attending an event soon that requires either proof of vaccination or a negative PCR test within 3 days of the event. Event will have rapid testing on site and still require masks. Has a 1,500 person event in the Bahamas in June. Bahamas is currently at a level 4 (high risk) so they offered refunds but most are still planning on going (300 requested refunds). Also just hosted a group of 350 in Mexico. Everyone tested negative for return.
  - o ITAGroup is using a third party called [Vital Circle](#) to manage uploading vaccination records, COVID tests, etc.
- **Valerie, United Church of Christ:** July event this year is virtual, which is challenging because of the desire to replicate the in-person event, virtually. They are using a platform from the Presbyterians, and expect a larger audience. There will be lots of zoom rooms, some interactive – some just listening. All in person meetings have been cancelled through this year, the next in person is scheduled for March 2022, but there is uncertainty about that. Their youth event for 2022 will not be in person.
- **Dan, Iowa Soccer Assn:** Player retention was a big focus this past year; registration is their main revenue stream. They continue to follow the guidance of scientists and pediatricians, and their organizational protocols are a little bit stricter than the state. They are hosting the US Youth Soccer President's Cup in Des Moines in July. They have cancelled the opening ceremonies and adjusted some activities and guidelines to comply with guidelines from every state/club represented.

**Teresa, Corteva:** This summer Corteva will be having hybrid meetings – but not what you typically think of. It will be small pods of people meeting in person, virtually tuning into speakers and presentations that are also together in a small group. There are ~50 employee pods of 10-15 people, and ~5k people split into pods for the sales rep meeting. Zoom webinar is the platform. They have a return to office goal of September, and they have plans to attend their first tradeshow in August (Farm Progress Show). Hopeful for a return to normal travel and events in 2022.

**Mary, UnityPoint:** Since she is in a field of health professionals, their meeting guidelines are very conservative. They had a virtual meeting planned for September that just switched to in person for about 150 people. 1,500 person meeting in May has gone virtual, but they hope to be back in person next year.

Open Discussion:

- Contracts will look different. There is concern with rate—will it hold for future years, and does their need to be a clause for marketplace rate. Current rates are lower than contracted rates. Rebooking clause may change to allow for a longer rebooking window (vs one year). Force majeure is important, and planners want to request a COVID clause.
- Everyone's definition of hybrid is different.

[APEX Recovery Resources](#)—industry resources and guidebooks for all layers of COVID recovery.