

Catch Des Moines Customer Advisory Board  
Zoom Meeting - August 26, 2021

Welcome and Update: Catch Des Moines

- Per the newest [census](#) numbers, Greater Des Moines is the fastest growing metro in the Midwest. We are now at around 700,000 residents in the metro.
  - o Our downtown area is active and growing. Demographic is lots of young people, this is driving development of new restaurants, bars, and things to do.
- Industry related updates:
  - o Since earlier this summer hotels in Greater Des Moines have been operating around a 70% occupancy level (this is just below what we would see in a “normal” year, higher 70s)
    - Still lacking in the business travel, strong push towards leisure travel
  - o Lots of [great events](#) took place this summer to help get us there, to name a few:
    - National Junior High Finals Rodeo
    - Ironman Des Moines 70.3
    - BBI Fuel Ethanol Workshop
    - Nike Tournament of Champions
  - o Our [state fair](#) surpassed 1M attendees
    - 115-130k attendees on a given weekend day
    - 7<sup>th</sup> largest Iowa State Fair recorded
  - o We will be hosting [USA/Canada Lions Annual Forum](#) in September
    - 1,500+ attendees from all over the country + Canada
  - o We are not yet experiencing a major influx of cancellations
    - We are seeing corporations shift on returning to the office – with the surge in Delta many are pushing back their return dates again
    - Planners are starting to ask those questions about cancellation policies, etc.

Diversity Equity Inclusion

- Catch Des Moines will be creating a local DEI committee, that includes people that understand the community and importance from a meeting planning and event perspective.
  - o We want to view what is important from the lens of an event planner and attendee or visitor
  - o We will look to our panel to advise us on how to elevate the event experience for diverse groups, what groups we should be booking to enhance and support these groups within our community, what language we should be using, etc.
    - Events have pulled out of Minneapolis due to the civil unrest following the George Floyd incident and trials and have relocated to Des Moines because we are a city that is trusted in that sense. However no communities are immune to these problems and we should be a champion for positive change and work to be proactive and show ourselves as an inclusive, safe city.

## Catch Des Moines Hype Video

- General Feedback:
  - o The narrator was fantastic, video makes you feel energized, it is to the point and highlights things happening in DSM and development, diversity is recognized, shows DSM as a welcoming city
  - o More representation of the Latinx and Indian communities would be nice
    - Could potentially put some of that footage in place of extra shots of the drum corp. as they will be remembered easily since their beat plays throughout
- Goal for Catch DSM is to be able to use this in sales and attendance building
- Is this a useful tool for the planners in the room?
  - o Videos are used on shuttles from airports to hotels
  - o Videos like this may not play a key role in decision making
  - o Different groups request different marketing assets so some may appreciate videos more than others
  - o Less relevant for sports as many travel based on the status of the tournament vs desirable city
  - o

## Around the Room Updates:

- **David, International Assn for Food Protection:** Held annual meeting in July in Phoenix (~1,400 people). Asked unvaccinated attendees to wear masks. This meeting had around 38% of their regular attendance and it was hybrid. Hybrid had some confusion and technical difficulties but ultimately was a good meeting and did raise some revenue. Being in food safety they received some criticism about meeting, but also being in food safety all of their attendees should have been well educated on the vaccine and safe practices.
- **Lauren, National Pork Producers Council:** Held World Pork Expo in June (~10,000) people. Less international presence than normal. They will be cancelling an October meeting in Denver because it is between producers and retailers and many retailers are reinstating corporate travel bans. In the same breath they are planning a 50-person meeting for September in Des Moines. Meeting status seems more dependent on the demographic than size. Pork producers are willing and eager to meet without restrictions. Certain packing plants have started mandating vaccines so that reaches from higher level execs all the way to the average joe working on the line.
- **Tonya, United Methodist Women:** Assembly is booked for Orlando in 2022. They originally wanted to require proof of vaccination, but new legislature is stopping that from happening. Attorneys are working through this. In a survey of all conference presidents ~80% were in favor of requiring proof of vax and the other ~20% were on the opposite side.
  - o Wondering about policing masks:
    - Lauren: her attorneys said do not take on the responsibility of policing masks because knowledge/responsibility = liability
    - David: Phoenix had a mask mandate ahead of their meeting but the convention center would not be responsible for enforcing and put it back on the group.
- **Stacy, Principal:** Held first in person meeting in a while in Chicago, which has a citywide mask mandate. Meeting had ~45 people, one person refused to go because of

the mask mandate. They have a number of virtual meetings on the calendar through the remainder of the year. Their attorneys and risk analysis team have decided to have meetings follow the CDC and local guidelines where the meeting is at vs putting in place across the board standards. Spring events for next year are still on the books.

- **Bel, International Society for Computational Biology:** Welcome to our board! Her entire staff has always been remote so that's nothing new for them. They are an international group so all of their meetings have to consider that international travel and guidelines piece.
- **Dan, Iowa Soccer Assn:** US Adult Soccer met in Dallas, and you had to have proof of vaccination to enter the Annual Meeting. They also restricted attendees to one per organization when typically, each organization would send multiple people. US Soccer moved their meeting from Chicago to Miami and upon moving they had to start offering a virtual element because so many attendees are uncomfortable travelling to FL.
- **Teresa, Corteva:** Attending the Farm Progress Show in Decatur, IL – first customer facing event in a while. Employees must wear mask when unable to keep 6 feet of distance but there is no requirement (only encouragement) for employees. Her attendee base is farmers so a much less cautious demographic. Her Q1 calendar next year is packed with in person events that they are hopeful will stick.

Open Discussion:

Is the decision to work remote tied to event cancellation decisions?

- Depends on the company
  - o Looking at the COVID numbers and risk factors specific to where offices are located