

## Salt Lake Event-related Businesses Receive Sustainability Certifications

**For Immediate Release  
September 12, 2017**

**Salt Lake City, UT** -- In a revolutionary approach to gain international sustainability certification, five Salt Lake entities applied for and concurrently received APEX/ASTM Level 1 Certification in a collaborative effort spearheaded by the Salt Palace Convention Center. The partners, including Visit Salt Lake, Utah Food Services, South Towne Exposition Center and PSAV, have been certified by iCompli as meeting rigorous standards for sustainability developed by the Events Industry Council's Accepted Practices Exchange (APEX) in conjunction with ASTM International.

Karen Kotowski, Chief Executive Officer of the Events Industry Council, said, "Responsible environmental and social practices in the events industry is a global concern. We are inspired by the collaborative approach taken by the Salt Palace Convention Center, South Towne Exposition Center, Visit Salt Lake, Utah Food Services and PSAV in making this commitment to sustainable events."

This certification is particularly relevant now in light of recent decisions that have been influenced by city, state and federal policies. For example, Salt Lake City is working towards a 50% diversion rate for recycling by 2018 and an 80% reduction in fossil fuel emissions by 2040.

Dan Hayes, General Manager of the SMG-managed and Salt Lake County-owned Salt Palace and South Towne facilities says this is a great accomplishment for Salt Lake and sets the stage for more collaborative work throughout the area. "For five, tourism-related entities to receive green certification concurrently sends a very strong and positive message about our area's commitment to sustainability. We see this as an opportunity to position us as leaders in the green meetings industry arena. It's unprecedented for the destination, two venues, their exclusive caterer and their in-house audio visual company to come together to obtain certification at the same time," said Mr. Hayes.

The collaborative approach to the effort was the brainchild of the Salt Palace's Guest Relations Manager Chance Thompson, who serves as the Chair of the Green Team. This 32-member team, representing all five entities, began its work in November 2016. The team met every two weeks to review policies, compile data, track diversion rates, discuss best practices, develop communication pieces, educate co-workers and implement programs aimed at making our collective operations more eco-friendly. The program has already resulted in a Quarter 2 diversion rate of 51%.

"One of our four core values at SMG/Salt Lake is 'responsibility to the environment' and that is reflected in our ongoing practice to reduce, reuse and recycle," said Mr. Thompson. "One of the best ways to let current and potential clients know that we embrace the idea of a more sustainable workplace is to become certified as meeting the APEX/ASTM standards."

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The application review process was rigorous. It is conducted by iCompli, a division of BPA Worldwide, a non-profit international auditing organization. This firm developed the certification protocols for the APEX/ASTM standards and performed the independent, third party certification for each Salt Lake entity. The venues, for example, had to develop policies and practices in eight different areas, including: staff management, communications, waste management, energy conservation, air quality, water quality/conservation, environmental procurement and community partners. The requirements on the applications for Visit Salt Lake, Utah Food Services and PSAV were all different, but each organization shares the same values, as reflected in our joint environmental policy statement and like-minded procurement policies.

The Events Industry Council's 33 member organizations represent over 103,500 individuals and 19,500 firms and properties involved in the meetings, conventions and exhibitions industry. The Events Industry Council vision is to be the global champion for event professionals and event industry excellence. It promotes high standards and professionalism in the events industry with the Certified Meeting Professional (CMP) program and signature program initiatives. The CMP credential is recognized globally as the badge of excellence in the events industry. The qualifications for certification are based on professional experience, education and a rigorous exam. The four signature programs — Sustainability, Industry Insights, Knowledge and Leadership — represent the key initiatives, assets, services and products for the Events Industry Council. Learn more online at [www.eventscouncil.org](http://www.eventscouncil.org).

APEX is the acronym for the Events Industry Council's *Accepted Practices Exchange*. ASTM is the *American Section of the International Association for Testing Materials*. APEX/ASTM Venue Standards identifies the procedural requirements for venue selection based on the above-mentioned criteria.

Level 1 begins as a two-year certification which can be renewed bi-annually, or entities can choose to apply for more difficult levels of certification, up to Level 4.

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