

# Salt Palace, Mountain America Expo Center Win Global Sustainability Award

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Salt Lake City, UT** -- The Events Industry Council, in partnership with IMEX (the worldwide exhibition for incentive travel, meetings and events) awarded the *IMEX-EIC Innovation in Sustainability Award* to the Salt Palace Convention Center and Mountain America Exposition Center at the international conference in Frankfurt, Germany, on May 16, 2018. This prestigious award was designed to recognize event professionals who are driving sustainability forward through innovation, collaboration and idea sharing.

The two SMG-managed Salt Lake County facilities were recognized for their significant contributions in improving event business operations with a particular focus on creative approaches to repurposing leftover event materials to support various community organizations. This effort reflects some of the requirements of the recently-obtained APEX/ASTM Level 1 certification for sustainability from the Events Industry Council.

The Salt Palace led the charge to work collaboratively with Mountain America Expo Center, Visit Salt Lake, Utah Food Services and PSAV to obtain concurrent Level 1 certifications. More than 30 members representing these five organizations were part of the Green Team Committee that made this happen. Operating on a five-month timeline, these in-house partners achieved an industry first for concurrent certifications and set a new standard for idea sharing, policy development and cooperative practices.

“This year’s recipient has demonstrated a significant commitment to effective waste diversion and focused on ways materials could support the community instead of adding to landfills,” said Karen Kotowski, CAE, CMP, CEO, Events Industry Council. “The actions the Salt Palace Convention Center and Mountain America Expo Center have taken are leading examples of how to be part of the solution in protecting our planet and also make a huge impact by providing reusable materials to those in need.”

Conventions and trade shows often leave behind a significant amount of reusable or recyclable materials such as signs, banners, cardboard, wood, metals and give-away items. All too frequently these items end up in the landfill. Chance Thompson, Sr. Manager of Sustainability and PR at the Salt Palace and Chairperson for the Green Team Committee mentioned above, has spent the last two years developing partnerships with dozens of organizations that can either recycle or repurpose materials. “For example,” says Thompson, “foam core signs are

donated to local schools to be reused for art projects, science project displays, theater set designs or costumes. Building materials and carpet go to the Re-Store (Habitat for Humanity) to be sold or to be used in housing projects. Lanyards, bags and giveaway items go to Camp Hobé, a two-week summer camp for children being treated for cancer and their siblings. There is a use for just about anything. We've even donated small carpet samples, like you'd see at Home Depot or Lowes, to a local artist. These otherwise useless pieces of carpet will soon be constructed into a picture mosaic of a powerful woman figure in American history. After donation, dedicated recycling and sometimes creative upcycling is key: our cigarette butts go into the content of construction materials, such as traffic cones, and fabric banners have been turned into ball gowns. We also have special collection spots for employees who wish to bring in compostable food waste, batteries, plastic bags and clothing from home. We don't look at recycling as just plastic bottles and cardboard. We aim to achieve diversion as close to zero waste as possible."

This concerted effort by the facilities has resulted in over 200,000 lbs. of material and food being donated to community organizations. This diversion, plus some of our energy saving efforts, is equivalent to eliminating 540 metric tons of carbon pollution.

The Events Industry Council's more than 30 member organizations represent over 100,000 individuals and nearly 20,000 firms and properties involved in the events industry. The Events Industry Council promotes high standards and professionalism in events industry with the Certified Meeting Professional (CMP) program and signature program initiatives. 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 at [www.eicsustainability.org](http://www.eicsustainability.org).

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