



## HARTFORD CONNECTICUT

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In the meetings destination galaxy, Hartford is New England's Rising Star. Charming and cosmopolitan, the city offers unique attractions and fun neighborhoods, especially the exciting riverfront district known as Adriaen's Landing, where the 540,000-square-foot Connecticut Convention Center is located. The facility features 65,000 square feet of meeting space, 19 meeting/breakout rooms, a 40,000-square-foot ballroom, and a 140,000-square-foot Main Exhibit Hall. There are more than 1,600 hotel rooms within walking distance of the facility and 6,500 hotel rooms within 15 miles.



**Andrea Berry**  
Director of Outreach  
and Events  
Aircraft Owners and  
Pilots Association  
(AOPA)

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association landed in Hartford, Connecticut with its 2011 AOPA Aviation Summit, held at the Connecticut Convention Center, attracting about 10,000 attendees with its more than 60 hours of seminar/classroom hours and more than 400 Exhibitor Booths. They even used the nearby Hartford-Brainard Airport for "Airportfest," where dozens of aircraft were displayed. Although this association has high demands of space and technology and generates more than 5,000 hotel room nights, this one-of-a-kind convention is most at home in a Mid-Market destination.

### Cost-Conscious

*Our organization is very cost conscious. We are compared with Air Shows, which are Aviation Industry events usually held in an open space or big field and have very low cost, but also offer education, exhibitions and networking. We have to keep our costs as low as possible, so we usually select 2nd or 3rd tier cities. A lot of our attendees fly in, so our other consideration is a regional airport, which our members prefer to fly into more than a large airport. Hartford-Brainard Airport was an excellent airport for our pilots. It was a very easy commute to the convention center. There was an aircraft display in conjunction with our show at the airport.*

### CVB Help

*The CVB helped us market the show by reaching out to local businesses and communities and generating interest in general aviation. People who own businesses often become a pilot for their business, and we presented several successful case studies. The CVB helped us with fliers and getting the local communities interested in coming to our convention.*

### Facility Demands

*Typically we need a lot of meeting space, we have concurrent classes and about 400 booths. At this convention we were able to have a newsroom, and speaker-ready rooms. The convention center had sufficient capacity for high-speed internet and even though we had to use their labor for some of the technological jobs, we were allowed to bring in our own people, which we preferred and was more cost-effective. At this show we introduced APOA Live, where we had a live broadcast from the show floor, and we also had an APOA Learning Pavilion, where we held a series of mini-seminars, just off the show floor. These were new additions to the show and the Convention Center was very helpful with these challenges.*

### Walkable Towns

*One reason we go to 2nd tier cities is that we have everything close. Hartford is very walkable. Bigger cities tend to be very spread out, and that can be costly for our members and they will complain.*