The first public art museum in the Western United States, the Crocker Art Museum in Sacramento finished an expansion project in 2016 and is now able to host events for up to 1,300.

GOLDEN CALIFORNIA
AGLOW WITH SUCCESS

By Linda Reyes

Abundant valley sunshine and fresh ocean breezes instill a sense of well-being for groups that meet in Central California. Swirling wine in a glass while looking out at the land where the grapes were grown can serve as an apt metaphor for planting the seeds of productivity.
In this part of the state, inspiration can be drawn from its alluring diversity and scenery, whether it’s the Pacific Ocean, fertile valleys or redwood-covered mountains. No wonder, then, so many stories of success start here.

**SACRAMENTO & SURROUNDS: LANDS OF PROMISE**

“California Begins Here” is the name of the capital city of Sacramento, and that holds true on many fronts, including for the meetings industry, as many associations have gathered here to focus on new issues.

Ready to host groups with a mix of sophisticated convention facilities, unique special-event venues, a vibrant downtown, approximately 10,000 regional hotel rooms and an international airport, the city’s appeal offers opportunities for planners and attendees alike.

Near the Capitol is the Sacramento Convention Center, which provides 150,000 square feet of exhibit space, a 20,000-square-foot ballroom and 31 meeting rooms. It hosts numerous association functions each year including, more recently, the Service Employees International Union’s United Healthcare Workers West and the Religious Conference Management Association.

Just north of downtown, across the American River, is the 350-acre Cal Expo. Down the street, the Red Lion Hotel Woodlake Convention Center provides 88,000 square feet of conference facilities for up to 1,000 attendees. And just up Interstate is the 17,271-seat Sleep Train Arena.

In West Sacramento, the 15,000-seat Raley Field offers a variety of events and recently added a new 5,000-square-foot tailgate.

Southeast of Sacramento, Jackson offers visitors with distinctly local attractions such as gold mine tours and walking tours of the historic downtown. Groups can convene at the Jackson Rancheria Casino Resort, which offers flexible meeting space for up to 740.

Northeast of Sacramento, in Roseville, larger meeting venues include the Maidah Community Center, Eagles Hall and the downtown Vernon Street Town Square, which now has free Wi-Fi and a shaded stage. In nearby Rocklin, event spaces include Rocklin Event Center, the historic Finnish Temple Hall and the Rocklin Community Center. Another 10 miles north, in Lincoln, the Catta Verdera Country Club can host up to 220 or private golf tournaments up to 144.

**DAVIS & SANTA CRUZ: TIME FOR RECREATION**

Groups can focus on recreation and relaxation in these two active university towns. In Davis, 15 miles west of Sacramento, bicycles are popular forms of exercise and transportation (pedestrians also abound and the city is extremely walkable as well), while agrounds fill up quickly with everything from casual activities to tours of nearby vineyards.

On the University of California/Davis campus, venues include the platinum LEED-certified UC Davis Conference Center, which offers 5,400 square feet of meeting space and a catering kitchen, and the Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts, with a 1,800-seat hall and a 250-seat theater. Other local venues include the Wildhorse Golf Club, with conference space for up to 350, and City Hall, with seating for up to 110.

Two hours south of Davis, picturesque Santa Cruz is set between the verdant Santa Cruz Mountains and peaceful Monterey Bay. The Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk has been drawing visitors for more than a century with rides and entertainment. Adjacent is Cowell Grove, a historic landmark overlooking Monterey Bay that has 20,000 square feet of space. Another attraction is the Seymour Marine Discovery Center, which offers a number of events up to 235 in rooms with ocean views. More recently, a proliferation of small-batch breweries has fueled the creation of a unique activity...
Located on Monterey County’s east coast, Highway 1, Big Sur’s Eastern Inn can host groups of up to 150 people.

Brew Cask, which offers groups of up to 15 to 30 people is available for a vintage 1980 Thomas International School Bus.

Key events include the University of California/Santa Cruz campus and the downtown Santa Cruz Civic Auditorium. At Fisherman’s Wharf, where seafood-centric restaurants and small-scale excursions abound, a Monterey Conference Center is scheduled to undergo a $45 million renovation that will include a new physical and technological improvements.

A few miles north of Santa Cruz, in the mountain town of Felton, groups can meet at Roaring Camp, which offers indoor and outdoor event space. At Roaring Camp, attendees can enjoy train excursions, hikes through the redwoods and gold panning. Another place for team building is Mount Vernon Redwood Canopy Tours, which offers zipline adventures.

Down the coast, in Watsonville, at the Santa Cruz Farmers’ Market, which offers more than 33,500 square feet of retail space.

Golfers can enjoy the annual summertime Golf Classic Festival, held at the 37-hole Pebble Beach Golf Links, located just across the street. The Golf Links are world-renowned and offer some of the most challenging holes in the world, with links stretching for miles along the Pacific Ocean.

The Monterey Peninsula offers some of the most beautiful and challenging golf courses in the world. Pebble Beach is known for its art-glass restaurants and shops, not to mention modern meeting facilities that will keep attendees from feeling cooped up.

Together, the two put on a truly unique event that is sure to be remembered for years to come.