Get Ready Y’all – STMA is coming to Austin!
By Patrick Allen, STMA Manager, Sales and Marketing

In January 2011, the 22nd Annual STMA Conference and Exhibition will be in Austin, TX for the first time. The majority of the events will be at the Austin Convention Center and the headquarters hotel is the Hilton Austin, which is adjacent to the Austin Convention Center. While Austin, the state capital of Texas, is the 15th largest city in the U.S. with more than 750,000 residents, and more than 1.5 million in the metro, the city is very compact, and there is much to do within walking distance of the Conference locations.

Three of Austin’s famous entertainment districts are within a short walk of the Hilton Austin—Sixth Street, Warehouse/Downtown, and Red River. Five more—University of Texas, South Austin, South Congress, East Austin, and Market District (DASH HERE) are a short taxi ride away. These eight districts house the majority of Austin’s more than 200 live music venues. These venues, plus the fact that the Dixie Chicks, Stevie Ray Vaughan, Willie Nelson, and many more musicians all got their start in Austin, have led to Austin formally being called the Live Music Capital of the World.

In addition to music, Austin is the top filmmaking location in the state of Texas, and one of the top locations in the country according to MovieMaker Magazine. Both of these industries are featured at the internationally renowned South by Southwest Music, Movie, and Interactive Conference and Festival (SXSW), at which more than 250,000 visitors enjoy 10 days of concerts, trade shows, and festivals each March.

Austin is also a notoriously healthy and environmentally conscious city. It has been named one of the safest cities in America due to a very low violent crime rate by multiple sources, and the “Greenest City in America” by MSN, the “#1 College Town in America” by the Travel Channel, and the “City with the Best People” by Travel + Leisure magazine. The city is home to the world headquarters of Whole Foods, Inc. and smoking is prohibited in most restaurants, bars, and music venues.

While its “greenness” significantly contributes to Austin’s reputation as one of the best places to live in America according to Forbes, the city definitely pollutes. Don’t worry about the environment though, it’s just the mesquital! It also contributes to the waistline of its visitors as Austin is home to world famous barbecue joints Stubbs, Iron Works (adjacent to the Hilton Austin), Salt Lick, and County Line. Don’t like barbecue? There are many other styles of food available throughout the city, including sushi, international, upscale, and Tex-Mex, another local flavor that shares top billing with barbecue.

Getting to Austin is easy, as Austin-Bergstrom International Airport services more than 250 commercial passenger flights per day and 38 locations non-stop. And with the average high temperature in January in the 60’s, many STMA-ers will be hitting the links at one of the areas more than 25 area public and resort golf courses, including Barton Creek Resort and Spa, one of the premier golf resorts in the U.S.

As you can see, there is a lot going on in Austin. We didn’t even mention the University of Texas, home to some 50,000 students, the vast amount of local attractions, Lake Travis, Lake Austin, Lady Bird Lake, Texas Hill Country, shopping, or the 1.5 million Mexican free-tailed bats that make their home under the Congress Avenue Bridge. Chiroptophobes (those who fear bats) the continent’s largest urban bat population only calls the bridge home from April-November.

For more information on the STMA Conference and Exhibition, please visit www.STMA.org/conference.

For more information on Austin, please visit its Convention and Visitors Bureau website at www.austintexas.org.

7 Years and Counting!

STMA recognizes the following members for their commitment to STMA during the previous seven years. Thank you for your support!

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