

Calgary MC&IT Story Ideas

Meetings & Conventions Calgary (MCC) would be pleased to provide expert commentary on emerging trends and topics in the Canadian and North American meeting, convention and incentive travel sector, or on the unique advantages of Calgary, Alberta, Canada as a world-class meeting and convention destination. Following are a number of story suggestions that may be useful in our editorial planning and preparation.

Calgary, the liveable business hub.

When you think of high-flying business cities around the world, the first images that often jump to mind are of power brokers in power suits doing power lunches, working long hours and making hard-nosed decisions. The typical concrete jungle.

But Calgary, Alberta is anything but typical. Despite being one of the top energy industry hubs in North America, and an emerging global business centre that has a reputation for hard work, this western Canadian city of just over a million people continues to land at or near the top of many rankings that place it among the best cities in the world to live:

- #1 - Canada's Best Places to Live and Work (Canadian Business/MoneySense 2009 and 2010)
- #1 (in the world) – Quality of Living Eco-City Ranking (Mercer 2010)
- #3 – Canada's Smartest Cities (Maclean's/Canadian Council on Learning, 2010)
- #4 – Canada's Most Cultured Cities (Maclean's/Canadian Council on Learning, 2010)
- #6 – Canada's Most Active Cities (Maclean's/Canadian Council on Learning, 2010)

The same attributes that make Calgary a great place to live and work also make it one of the best meeting and convention destinations in Canada. Access to a diverse and influential business community, a strong economic base and an exciting array of social and recreational activities ensure that visitors to Calgary get a well-rounded experience that makes them feel at home.

Calgary, the quintessential western experience.

It's the end of a busy, information-packed day at your annual convention. Time to head back to your hotel, grab a quick shower and slip into your jeans – there's a delicious barbecue dinner and a rodeo being staged just for you and your fellow delegates. No other city evokes the true spirit of Western Canada quite like Calgary. Calgary is unbridled energy, practical business savvy and warm western welcomes – all rolled into one dynamic package with a cool, cosmopolitan edge.

In addition to Alberta's best air travel connections and an urban centre that is both safe and clean, Calgary offers an ever-expanding array of meeting and convention spaces, plus more than 11,000 guestrooms ranging from budget to boutique. When it comes to pre and post opportunities, the majestic Canadian Rocky Mountains, the fossil-rich formations of Alberta's badlands, rugged ranchlands and numerous Aboriginal heritage sites are all within an hour's drive.

And yes, one of the many optional activities from which meeting and convention planners can choose when planning an event in Calgary is a genuine, personalized rodeo. It's just one of those things that helps Calgary to deliver the quintessential western Canadian experience for meeting and convention delegates.



An energy city that's eco-aware.

Planning a green meeting or convention at the epicenter of Canada's oil and gas industry may seem like an oxymoron. But Calgary, Alberta – Canada's leading energy city – is much more eco-aware than you might expect. In fact, Canada's third largest city was ranked #1 in the world in Mercer's 2010 Quality of Living Eco-City Ranking.

"Many people are quite surprised to learn about Calgary's environmental side," says Peter Gregus, Managing Director of Meetings & Conventions Calgary. "No city is perfect, but there are many examples of sustainable green initiatives that prove that Calgary is an eco-conscious city dedicated to environmental preservation and awareness."

By way of example, Gregus points to meeting venues and accommodations providers across Calgary that have received ratings from the Green-Key Eco-Rated program, a graduated rating system designed to recognize hotels, motels and resorts committed to improving environmental performance. In addition, the Calgary TELUS Convention Centre and the Calgary International Airport have both been recognized by BOMA (the Building Owners and Managers Association) for environmental leadership.

At the municipal level, The City of Calgary was the first municipality in North America to achieve corporate-wide ISO 14001 certification, recognizing environmental management systems across all its operations; and in 2006 received the World Leadership Award in the environment category, in recognition of its sustainable development and work that continues to enhance, protect and respect the environment. Calgary is also the proud home of the only transit system in North America registered with the ISO 14001, for environmental standards aiming to minimize the impact of services on the environment.

These green milestones, coupled with the environmental stewardship efforts of other industry stakeholders, position Calgary as a destination with sustainable tourism initiatives, dedicated to preserving its status as a world-class destination for years to come.

A Calgary convention will have your delegates walking 15 feet off the ground.

One of the many pluses of meeting in downtown Calgary during the winter – or any time of year, for that matter – is something the locals call a "Plus 15 System". What in the world is a "Plus 15" you ask? Only the world's largest elevated, climate-controlled pedestrian pathway – and one of the easiest ways to get around the entire downtown core of Canada's third largest city.

"The Plus 15 makes it easy to move to and from downtown office towers, to hotels, to the Convention Centre and shopping complexes without ever going outside," says Peter Gregus, Managing Director of Meetings & Conventions Calgary. "That's a major plus at any time of year, but especially during the winter months."

Calgary's Plus 15 system is a series of enclosed bridges, spanning a total distance of 16 kilometers (10 miles), that connect the majority of the buildings in Calgary's downtown core. Shortly after the first bridges were constructed in 1970, the system became known as the "Plus 15" because each of the bridges is roughly 15 feet above ground level. Since that time, another 57 bridges have been built and all new construction in Calgary's downtown core is required to be linked to the network.

"Calgary's climate is rather moderate compared to other western Canadian and Alberta centres," Gregus notes. "Our famous Chinook winds can raise the temperature more than 20 degrees in a single day, turning brisk winter weather into spring-like conditions. But even on cool days, the Plus 15 allows visitors to move around the downtown without a coat."

The accessibility afforded by Calgary's Plus 15 walkways makes the city an excellent 4-season meeting destination. Delegates travelling from the US can take advantage of low winter fares for northbound flights, making Calgary a lucrative option.

