

CSM of the Year

By Andrea Doyle
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And the Award Goes to...

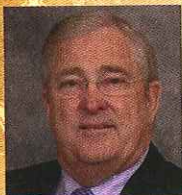
The Convention Services Manager (CSM). You can't stage a meeting, conference, or trade show without one. That's why the CSM of the Year Award, sponsored by *Successful Meetings*, in conjunction with the Association for Convention Operations Management (ACOM), honors a top CSM at a CVB, convention center, and hotel each year.

Here are the winners for 2008

CVBs

Robert "Bob" Berry

Customer Services Manager, Irving Convention and Visitors Bureau, Irving, TX



Before joining the Irving Convention and Visitors Bureau as a customer services manager, Bob Berry was a meeting planner with the

International Communication Association.

"I was on their side of the fence for over 13 years. In all that time, only two convention services managers went over and beyond to help me. They did things I didn't even think of, something I now strive for."

According to clients, Berry does just that. "From first contact, Bob Berry energetically guided me through the planning process for our convention," says Margaret Carnahan, vice president/convention chair for the Women Military Aviators, based in Marshfield, MO. "Bob is proud of his community, and goes above and beyond to promote Irving as a first-rate location. Bob Berry personifies, 'Texas Hospitality.'"

Convention Centers

Sher-Rhonda Cabean

Account Executive, Baltimore Convention Center, Baltimore, MD



Sher-Rhonda Cabean's motto when working with clients at the Baltimore Convention Center (BCC) is, "Successful meetings

executed with excellence."

During the past nine years at the convention center, she has perfected an attention to detail, a skill she hopes will benefit her when she eventually becomes an attorney. She juggles the demands of a full-time career with classes at the University of Baltimore, where she is pursuing her bachelor's degree in Jurisprudence. Law school will follow.

"I have always loved to see things come together after all of the detailed planning. It's amazing when the finished product is shown. It gives you great incentive to see how you can improve with the next client, and how you can make it better event after event," says Cabean.

Hotels

Paul Ruby

CMP, Convention Services Sales Manager, Westin Park Central, Dallas, TX



"I enjoy what I do and owe each of my customers the same respect and passion, no matter what they are spending or what deals they have

received" is the message Paul Ruby has taped to his telephone. He treats every group that comes through the doors of the Westin Park Central with the same level of attention. "Customer service is my passion," he says.

Janet Blomquist, director of support services for Texas Electric Cooperatives, in Austin, TX, attests to this. A motivational speaker her group was using wanted to drive into the ballroom on his Harley-Davidson. "Paul called the fire marshal and took care of all the arrangements to make this happen," says Blomquist. "I have been in this business for over 35 years, and Paul is truly one of the best convention services individuals I have ever worked with."