

Conference Planner Report October 2016 Board Meeting

Doug and I have been busy these last few months touring several hotels as possible conference sites. We visited Kalispell, Missoula, Bozeman, Billings and will tour Helena on Tuesday, October 18, 2016.

We felt that Kalispell could possibly be a conference site, except the space would be very tight. It is also a long drive north from Missoula and we really need to consider both sides of distant Montana in our planning.

We visited the GranTree Inn in Bozeman and found the facility capable of hosting our entire conference using the reduced workshop number per slot. We were able to negotiate a good facility price for our 2018 conference. Dates are set for April 11-14, 2018.

We visited Missoula in September 2016 and the Holiday Inn Downtown and found it to be an excellent site. There is plenty of room for vendors, breakout rooms, banquet facilities and sleeping rooms. The staff was most gracious in working with us and they have sent MLA a proposal to host an upcoming conference. The hotel is in the midst of major remodel and it will be completed in 2017. We will consider this location for either the 2019 or 2020 conference site.

We will tour the Radisson Inn (Red Lion Colonial Inn) in Helena. The facility has been completely refurbished. If the facility meets our conference space standards and facility price cost we would like to consider it as the site for our 2019 or 2020 conference.

After several meetings with the 2017 Conference Steering Committee there will be some changes in format at our 2017 conference. The conference will be split between the Northern Hotel and Double Tree by Hilton (formerly Crowne Plaza) in downtown Billings.

There will be revamping of the number of workshops per slot from 6 to 4. Workshops will be shortened to 60 minutes, down from 90 minutes.

The committee is also discussing reducing the number of meals and/or including meals as part of an increased registration fee as other conferences offer.

More information will be available for the October Board Meeting.

Debbi & Doug Kramer