

Washington 2006 - Affordable and Comfortable

Have you made arrangements to attend Washington 2006, the international philatelic exhibition taking place May 27-June 3 at the Washington, DC Convention Center? If not, you still have time to plan the vacation of the decade, but do not delay.

Some collectors have the impression that past international shows have been expensive and uncomfortable affairs. Washington 2006 is doing everything possible to make sure that all attendees have a pleasurable experience during their visit no matter what their budget.

Washington, DC is a major hub for domestic and international air carriers and offers three regional airports: Reagan National, Dulles International, and Baltimore-Washington International. Discount airlines from across the country regularly offer specials, especially during the start of the vacation season. Traveling by bus? Greyhound and other bus companies offer round trips between New York City and DC for as little as \$40. Prices can be even lower from locations such as Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Richmond, and Norfolk.

Traveling by car? Consider parking the car in the outer suburbs at one of the many Metro stops and take the train into town. Parking is under \$4 per day, and one-way fares are only a few dollars. The trip into the city typically takes under 45 minutes. There are some 2,000 parking spots at 70 parking lots within a three block radius of the Convention Center available on a first-come basis, typically charging around \$20 for the day.

Hotels right in Washington can be expensive. Most of the discounted blocks of rooms reserved by W2006 at seven nearby hotels have been booked. A new option available to show-goers is the brand new Embassy Suites hotel located two blocks from the event at 900 10th Street. Special rates are \$189 per night double occupancy, \$169 single occupancy, and are only available by booking this rate online through the W2006 web site.

Smaller hotels in the city offer rates as low as \$99 per night. For those on a tighter budget, check out suburban hotels, especially those within walking distance of Metro stops. Look especially in the Arlington, VA and Crystal City Ronald Reagan Airport area. Rates can start around \$69 per night. The Internet will help in finding these and other deals. Check out Hotwire and Priceline.com for deeply discounted rooms. AAA/CAA and AARP members should look into special offers available exclusively for them. Seniors should always ask if a discount is available no matter which property they are considering.

Washington 2006 continues the long-standing tradition of U.S. internationals by offering free admission to all visitors. Other international shows elsewhere have charged the equivalent of \$5-10 dollars per day just to enter the hall.

The most common complaint heard about other international shows has been the lack of chairs and the booth configurations of the dealers. Be assured that Washington 2006 has addressed these concerns from the very early planning stages of the exhibition.

All dealers have the option of either stools or chairs for customer use. They will be provided with two chairs or stools (at their choice) for every 5 feet of booth space frontage. However, it is the dealer's choice whether or not to have any chairs at all available for customers. Dealers can also configure their booths with options of see-through countertops and/or frontage.

Additionally, W2006 will have areas throughout the show floor with tables and chairs for people to rest. Chairs and benches will be provided in major cross aisles. Other retreats are located in each of the three major halls.

The food courts provide additional seating.

The Washington 2006 exhibition takes up over 500,000 square feet of space.

The dealer aisles are extra wide and will be carpeted, but plan to wear comfortable shoes. It is possible to rent wheelchairs or motorized scooters on a daily basis (\$25 and \$50, respectively) or for the entire run of the show. This should be done in advance to assure availability through a link from the W2006 web site or directly from "Scootaround" at <http://www.scootaround.com/rentals/wpe/>, or by phoning 1-800-441-7575. Payment can be arranged using major credit cards.

Attendees need not leave the Convention Center for lunch or snacking. The facility includes an 18,000 square foot casual dining food court with reasonably priced options at seven different dining experiences. These

include: Foggy Bottom Grill (American fare), Wolfgang Puck Express (salads, soups, pizza), Seafood by Phillips, Subculture (gourmet deli), Bello Pronto (Italian), Mr. Thoi (Vietnamese), and a Mexican restaurant. Hours of operation are at the discretion of each establishment. Special food carts will also provide alternatives to the type of food usually available.

By joining the Washington 2006 Club, an exclusive lounge and eatery restaurant right on the show floor, members can enjoy additional food options not available elsewhere and a peaceful area for conversation and rest. Entrance is included with Washington 2006 memberships at the Sustaining Supporter (Organizer's Club) level and above. Otherwise a Washington 2006 Club membership may be purchased separately.

For full information about Washington 2006, including an up-to-date schedule of meetings, seminars, and first day ceremonies, go online to <http://www.washington-2006.org>, or write to Washington 2006, PO Box 2006, Ashburn, VA 20146-2006. Questions may also be emailed to info@washington-2006.org

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