

Survey ranks Dallas as 5th-cheapest meeting site

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DALLAS — Dallas ranks as one of the most affordable cities in the country to hold a corporate meeting, according to a recent survey.

The survey, conducted by GetThere, a division of Sabre, ranked Dallas fifth behind Jacksonville, Fla.; Indianapolis; Atlanta; and Tucson, Ariz.

"I'm not at all surprised," said Greg Elam, spokesman for the Dallas Convention & Visitors Bureau. "We use that approach all the time in our presentations against other cities."

The survey used GetThere's online meeting planning tool to gather the data for the report, surveying 50 cities and collecting cost information on the 26 cheapest. GetThere is a Web-based travel reservation system for corporations and airlines.

The company planned a mock, three-day meeting made up of 100 attendees with two attendees coming from each of the 50 most-populous cities. The cost included advance airplane tickets that did not require a Saturday night stay. Accommodations were based on

CONVENTIONS A survey by a division of Sabre finds Dallas to be an affordable place to hold a meeting.

a four-star, full-service hotel. Other factors include meeting room rentals, dining and food and beverage service.

It would cost \$164,000 to hold the meeting in Dallas, according to the survey. The cheapest city, Jacksonville, cost \$139,000. The most expensive of the cities for which GetThere collected cost information on was Honolulu, at \$265,000.

"We did it to illustrate how you could use our system to better understand the cost with corporate meetings and how you can use technology to plan a meeting," said Noel Bilodeau, speaking for GetThere.

The survey comes at a good time for Dallas, which has been in a convention slump. Corporate meetings have dropped off going back to 2000, when companies started cutting back on their travel budgets. Then came last year's terrorist attacks — two months after the

The cheapest cities for corporate meetings

City	Cost
Jacksonville, Fla.	\$139,000
Indianapolis	\$147,000
Atlanta	\$154,000
Tucson, Ariz.	\$159,000
Dallas	\$164,000
Salt Lake City	\$165,000
Chicago	\$166,000
New Orleans	\$167,000
Tampa, Fla.	\$172,000
Philadelphia	\$175,000

SOURCE: GetThere

start of the Dallas Convention Center's \$130 million expansion and renovation.

Elam said the survey will be helpful to the bureau, which is charged with recruiting visitors to the area.

"It will get exposure that we alone couldn't get," he said. "It's an opportunity for a known fact to become more apparent. It is one of the strengths in our sales positioning."

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