

# NASIG Newsletter

Vol. 30, no. 4

December 2015

eISSN 1542-3417

## Profile

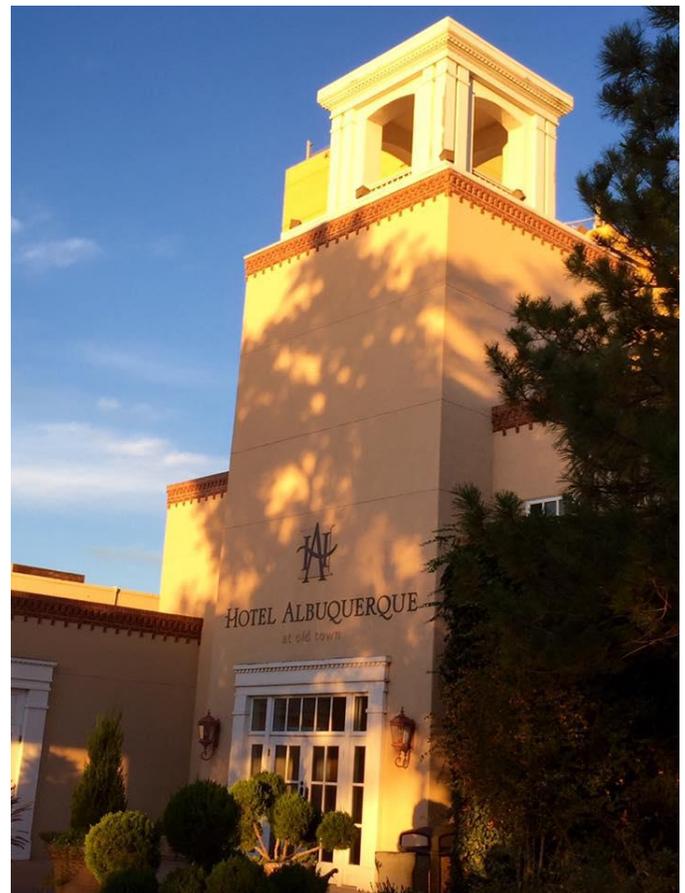
### Site Selection Committee Profile

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Each year hundreds attend the NASIG conference which is held in interesting and unusual sites that are sometimes off the beaten conference path. The NASIG conference is the highlight of the annual conference circuit for many attendees. Participants are often caught marveling at the location and are overheard to exclaim, "How did they pick this site?" Well, there is actually a Site Selection Committee tasked with choosing the perfect place for each future conference from a plethora of possibilities. To an onlooker, it sometimes seems that the activities of the committee are opaque and shrouded in mystery. The purpose of this profile is to de-mystify the work of the committee and highlight its hard work and operations. As profiles editor, I sent a series of questions to the committee. The following questions and answers outline the conversation.

#### ***Who is typically on the Site Selection Committee?***

The committee consists of the NASIG President, the Vice President, and the Conference Coordinator, with the President usually performing the chairperson functions such as writing reports and reporting to the board. The Conference Coordinator is chosen through a formal application process in which a call for volunteers is sent out and a small group selects the successful candidate from the pool of applications received.



*Site of the 2016 NASIG Conference, Hotel Albuquerque  
(Photo courtesy of Steve Oberg)*

#### ***How are decisions made about which cities are reviewed?***

Choosing a city to review involves a number of factors. The committee considers locations or regions that members have indicated would be of interest to them. It focuses on the geographic location in conjunction with an analysis of the concentration of NASIG

members in an area. NASIG tries to move the conference around to different regions so that maximum numbers of NASIG members have a conference fairly close by every few years. It also helps NASIG to set up a Conference Planning Committee when there are several members in the area. The 2016 conference scheduled for Albuquerque has been an exception with few members close at hand.

Other considerations include average cost of hotel rooms, size and location of airport(s) in relation to the conference site, access to restaurants and other activities in the area, and various amenities offered by the hotel and city. The committee tries to find conference sites that are no more than thirty miles from a major airport. A more complete list of criteria for site selection is available at:

[http://www.nasig.org/uploaded\\_files/92/files/SiteSelection/Site%20Selection%20Criteria.pdf](http://www.nasig.org/uploaded_files/92/files/SiteSelection/Site%20Selection%20Criteria.pdf).



*Site of the 2016 NASIG Conference, Hotel Albuquerque (Photo courtesy of Steve Oberg)*

### ***What is the process for site selection?***

The Conference Coordinator sends a form letter to cities chosen for review asking for proposals. Letters may go out to fifteen or twenty possible cities requesting proposals. The Site Selection Committee reviews the proposals from the cities that respond, which could be approximately 80 percent of those asked, and selects

two or three places for onsite visits. The Conference Coordinator works with the city visitor bureau (CVB) to make travel arrangements. Sometimes a city will pay for air travel, but usually NASIG covers that cost. The CVB will set up meetings with a few different hotels in that city for the committee to visit and will arrange for overnight stays in some of the hotels. The establishments usually provide the rooms gratis, and it is rare that Site Selection Committee members stay in the same hotel multiple nights. The CVB also takes the committee to see some possible conference event venues such as local museums, zoos, or gardens. After site visits have been completed, the committee compares the locations visited and makes a report to the NASIG Board. The decision as to the next conference location is made by the board based on the information the Site Selection Committee has provided.

### ***What are some examples of why cities considered may not be selected?***

Some of the reasons the committee has decided against having the conference in a city include:

- The airport is very small and far from the downtown area
- Restaurants are several blocks walk from the hotel
- There is no easy way to reach the conference location without using trains or buses in addition to airplanes
- Unresponsiveness during the site selection process (which indicates NASIG might have this same problem during conference planning)
- High hotel rates

### ***Are there other interesting facts about the process that the committee would like to share?***

While the economy was struggling and the hotel rates were favorable, NASIG was planning conference sites two years out. This year, we decided to take a break, and we will be doing site selection later in 2016 for the 2018 conference, rather than visiting sites in late 2015 or early 2016. This will allow the selection committee to see the site closer to the time of year that the conference would take place as opposed to in the

middle of winter which often happens. Also, the Vice President will have a chance to be part of the selection process for the conference site at which they will be President.

***What are some of the rewards and challenges of being on the committee?***

It is interesting to see the locations of the conference sites and to be part of the discussion for what is required in a NASIG conference venue. We meet some really good people on these visits and see some very interesting locations. One of the challenges can be the time of the year that the committee does the site visits. If we do the visits in the winter, we try to picture what everything will look like for a May/June conference time.

***How much travel is involved to choose a site?***

The committee will usually travel to two or three sites in a year, with two nights hotel stay.

***What happens after the site is chosen?***

The work of the Site Selection Committee is complete with regards to the conference site for a particular conference year and hands the reigns over to the Conference Planning Committee (CPC) and the Program Planning Committee (PPC) who in collaboration with the board plan the next outstanding NASIG conference. The Conference Coordinator is an ex officio on the CPC.

According to all reports from the Site Selection Committee, the Conference Planning Committee, the Program Planning Committee, and the NASIG Board, the 31<sup>st</sup> Annual NASIG Conference to be held in Albuquerque, New Mexico from June 9 to 12, 2016 promises to be amazing! The conference theme will be “Embracing New Horizons” and Albuquerque will definitely be another warm and welcoming place for NASIG to visit.



*Site of the 2016 NASIG Conference, Hotel Albuquerque  
(Photo courtesy of Steve Oberg)*