

Local convention business up in '09

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A big piece of the economy of downtown Cincinnati and the urban core - conventions -- continued growing in 2009, the Cincinnati USA Convention and Visitors Bureau said.

Total hotel room nights, the main indicator of success in booking conventions, grew by 5.5 percent over 2008, according to the group's annual report. Although growth slowed from a year earlier, when a 6.7 increase was reported from 2007 to 2008, the bureau said the growth outstripped larger competitors such as Atlanta, Orlando, Washington, D.C. and Philadelphia.

The results will be presented Thursday at the bureau's annual meeting at the Duke Energy Convention Center downtown.

The group reported that 198,219 room nights were booked in 2009, up from 187,887. That produced an economic impact of \$59 million, up 5.3 percent from 2008, it said.

The biggest convention in 2009 was for Educational Testing Services in May, which resulted in 13,970 hotel room nights. That is also expected to be the largest convention this year.

In June, Cincinnati was selected to host the World Choir Games in 2012, which is expected to result in 45,000 hotel room nights.

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The advertisement features the USA TODAY logo at the top left. The main title "AutoPilot" is in large, bold, black font, with a blue airplane icon to its right. Below the title, it says "The new travel app for iPhone® and iPod touch®". To the left of this text is a smartphone displaying the app's interface, which includes a "USA TODAY Meeting" section for Sep 21, 2009, with flight details for A6 from BNA to IAD, and weather information for Washington (IAD) showing 73° and Partly Cloudy. There are also links to view a Flickr gallery and an article about Hilton Hotels. At the bottom right, it says "Presented by: Hampton" with the Hampton logo, and a blue button that says "SEE HOW IT WORKS »".

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