WELCOME TO
RALEIGH
“City of Oaks”
EM’s quick start guide to this year’s Annual Conference
Known locally as the “City of Oaks” for its many oak trees that line the streets in the heart of the city, Raleigh—the state capital of North Carolina—is named for Sir Walter Raleigh, who established the lost Roanoake Colony in nearby Dare County. Raleigh (home to North Carolina State University) is part of the Research Triangle Area, together with Durham (home to Duke University) and Chapel Hill (home to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill), and the location of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s world-renowned Research Triangle Park campus. Deftly balancing the historic with the high-tech, Raleigh is also one of the fastest-growing cities in the country.

Raleigh is an early example in the United States of a planned city. Chosen as the site of the state capital in 1788 and incorporated in 1792, the city was originally laid out in a grid pattern with the North Carolina State Capitol in Union Square at the center. Raleigh is home to numerous cultural, educational, and historic sites. The Red Hat Amphitheater located directly behind the Raleigh Convention Center has musical performances throughout the summer months. The Duke Energy Center for the Performing Arts downtown features three theater venues and serves as the home for the North Carolina Symphony and the Carolina Ballet. Walnut Creek Amphitheatre is a large music amphitheater located in Southeast Raleigh. Museums include the North Carolina Museum of Art in West Raleigh, as well as the North Carolina Museum of History and North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences located next to each other near the State Capitol.

In 2011, Businessweek.com named Raleigh “America’s Best City,” and explained why Raleigh came out on top. “Among its many attributes, the city sports 867 restaurants, 110 bars, and 51 museums, as well as a thriving social scene, good schools, and 12,512 park acres, equal to several times the green space per capita in cities like New York and Los Angeles.” Location, location location… moreover, the beaches and mountains of North Carolina are only a two- to three-hour drive from downtown Raleigh.

Today, Raleigh is one of dozens of communities leading the nation’s surge in solar power, ranking...
15th in the country for solar projects installed per capita, according to an April 2015 Environment North Carolina Research & Policy Center study, *Shining Cities: At the Forefront of America’s Solar Energy Revolution*. The report notes that North Carolina has created 3,100 solar jobs, growing by 121% since 2014.

Raleigh is also leading the way in light-emitting diode (LED) lighting technology. Since 2006, the city has installed more than 40 separate LED projects, including outdoor lighting for city parks, interior lighting, solar LED lighting, streetlights, and lighting in parking decks. These projects are estimated to generate nearly $250,000 per year in energy and maintenance savings for the residents of Raleigh. City Plaza, in particular, is a showcase of LED lighting, with the four City of Oaks towers, the Art Screens at the southwest and northeast corners of the plaza, and the interactive fountain showing off decorative colored LED lighting.

Indeed, the “green” movement has gained considerable momentum in Raleigh and its surrounding areas in recent years, and the city now ranks among the top 10 U.S. metropolitan areas in its share of “green” jobs. A leader in environmental technology, Raleigh is a true showcase host city for A&WMA’s annual event. We hope you make time in your schedule to explore the city beyond the LEED-certified Raleigh Convention Center and enjoy all that the “City of Oaks” and its environs have to offer. **em**

**Sources**

3. [http://www.raleighnc.gov/environment/content/AdminServSustain/Articles/LEDLighting.html](http://www.raleighnc.gov/environment/content/AdminServSustain/Articles/LEDLighting.html)