

Why Pay More in Louisville?

For the first time ever, the IPPS Eastern Region is charging higher registration fees for conference attendees who do not stay at the conference hotel, the Seelbach Hilton in Louisville. "Why?" you might ask. Has some greedy streak taken over IPPS Eastern Region? As someone interested in the IPPS Annual Conference, you deserve to know the inside scoop.

In order to secure properties that could offer sufficient sleeping rooms for 300-400 attendees AND a variety of meeting rooms, conference hotels have been routinely booked 3-4 years in advance. When conference attendance started dropping off as the economy declined, IPPS Eastern Region was still committed to big numbers of guest rooms for several years. And the conference hotels don't let us off the hook like they do when you book just one room. In each of the past 3 years the IPPS Eastern Region has paid thousands of dollars for unused sleeping rooms, depleting revenue essential for running the organization.

We booked the Seelbach Hotel in Louisville three years ago; it was hands down the very best deal we could get downtown. In our experience, conference attendees have always shown a strong preference for a downtown location, where there is more choice of nightlife. However, as you're well aware, much has changed in our economy and trade associations since 2008. The Seelbach and most hotels impose stiff penalties for not meeting minimum room bookings and food and beverage sales. These penalties are most often non-negotiable. IPPS attendees who stay at the hotel are doing their part to cover our costs. Those who elect to stay elsewhere share in the benefits of the conference, but contribute to the losses we've been experiencing.

Earlier this year, the IPPS Eastern Region Board decided to give an incentive to stay at the Seelbach by raising the registration price to those who stay elsewhere. The \$55 differential for the 2011 registration is actually not enough to cover potential hotel penalties, but we hope enough of you will choose to have some fun at the Seelbach and help IPPS with our last big hotel commitment.

What are we doing to avoid this situation moving forward? The 2012 conference, to be held in the Brandywine Valley of Pennsylvania, will showcase a significantly different conference format for IPPS. We have contracted with Holiday Inn Express in Glen Mills, PA at a room rate of just \$109. While we may have a social event at this property, all talks will be held off site at either Longwood Gardens or at Winterthur Museum and Gardens. Our welcome reception will be held at a unique local garden center. Transportation to the meetings each day will be provided. There is virtually no financial risk to IPPS in the hotel contract and you will be afforded economical lodging with sessions at world class facilities.

Come to Louisville for a fantastic program, engaging tours and the chance to talk one-on-one with key plant industry professionals and other friendly plant geeks! Those opportunities will arise much more often if you stay at the Seelbach Hilton. And there is the convenience of being able to run to your room to grab your coat and camera before the tour buses leave! New members have a better chance to socialize and feel a part of the group by staying at the Seelbach. This historic hotel has attracted authors (F. Scott Fitzgerald), gangsters (Al Capone), presidents (nine in fact), entertainers and filmmakers as guests. Legend has it that it is haunted as well! Make your reservation today by calling 1-800-333-3399 and identify yourself as part of the IPPS group to get the conference rate of \$149 single or double occupancy. **Reservations must be made by September 25, 2011.** Hope to see you in the bar or in the elevator!