



SAN DIEGO CONVENTION CENTER

FY24 Annual Report | July 1, 2023–June 30, 2024



A RECORD-BREAKING YEAR

*This report provides an opportunity to reflect on a year of extraordinary events. Our three biggest economic drivers—Comic-Con, American Society of Hematology (ASH), and American Association for Cancer Research (AACR)—brought in robust attendance, requiring creative approaches to accommodate the influx of visitors. Through these and many other events, we generated an estimated **\$1.5 billion** in regional economic impact.*

The year’s successes also attracted national and international recognition. Most notably, The Wall Street Journal ranked the San Diego Convention Center among the top five convention centers in the United States—the highest-ranking center in California!

In addition to elevating our brand reputation, we strengthened local connections through volunteer programs, donation drives, and by lighting our Sails Pavilion in support of community causes. Together with the San Diego Tourism Authority and our business partners, we proudly represent Team San Diego.

As we celebrate our 35th anniversary, we thank our staff, partners, and clients for an outstanding year. SDCC remains a premier gathering place because of you.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Our Board sets policy for the public benefit corporation the City of San Diego created to exclusively manage, market, and operate our 2.6 million-square-foot waterfront facility.

Jeff Gattas
Board Chair

Shawn VanDiver
Vice Chair

Will Rodriguez-Kennedy
Treasurer

Alyssa Turowski
Secretary

Jaymie Bradford
Board Member

Sam Nejabat
Board Member

Gretchen Newsom
Board Member



Jeff Gattas
Board Chair



Rip Rippetoe, CVE
President & CEO



American Society of Hematology



Esri User Conference



PCMA Convening Leaders

The San Diego Convention Center is the region's premier gathering place, hosting conventions that create economic benefits and jobs for the San Diego region, paid for by outside visitors to the destination.



American Academy of Dermatology



Comic-Con



Art San Diego

San Diego Convention Center's Success

BENEFITS SAN DIEGO

GATHERINGS



80 Events

Conventions, meetings,
and events

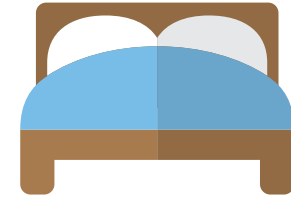
ATTENDANCE



663,000+

Visitors from around
the world

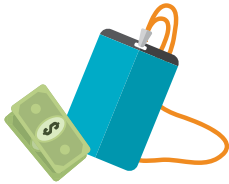
HOTEL ROOM NIGHTS



865,000+

Attendees and exhibitors stay
throughout the region

DIRECT ATTENDEE SPENDING



\$855+ Million

Spending at restaurants, hotels,
attractions, and more

HOTEL & SALES TAX REVENUES



\$35+ Million

Supporting core City services
such as road repair and
public safety

REGIONAL IMPACT



\$1.5 Billion

Total value of the event
to the San Diego economy,
directly and indirectly

BENEFITING THE COMMUNITY AS AN ECONOMIC DRIVER

Your San Diego Convention Center helps drive business throughout downtown San Diego and the region. Visitors come from all over the world to attend conventions and interact with local retailers, attractions, special event venues, hotels, bars, restaurants, transportation providers, and more. With the influx of people, an economic ripple effect can be seen across the county.

A PREMIER GATHERING PLACE FOR LIFE-CHANGING EVENTS

FY24 Event Highlights

Our top economic generators included medical meetings, technology conventions, trade shows, and the full-scale return of Comic-Con!

- 1. Comic-Con International: San Diego**
July 2023 • \$161.1M Regional Impact
135,000 Attendees
- 2. American Society of Hematology**
December 2023 • \$125.4M Regional Impact
28,000 Attendees
- 3. American Association for Cancer Research**
April 2024 • \$85.2M Regional Impact
23,200 Attendees
- 4. American Academy of Dermatology**
March 2024 • \$65.9M Regional Impact
19,800 Attendees
- 5. International Association of Chiefs of Police**
October 2023 • \$60.3M Regional Impact
15,594 Attendees
- 6. BIO 2024 International Convention**
June 2024 • \$60.2M Regional Impact
19,500 Attendees
- 7. American Thoracic Society**
May 2024 • \$54.8M Regional Impact
14,033 Attendees
- 8. Esri**
July 2023 • \$54.1M Regional Impact
17,835 Attendees
- 9. American College of Rheumatology**
November 2023 • \$54M Regional Impact
12,000 Attendees
- 10. American Library Association**
June 2024 • \$43M Regional Impact
13,532 Attendees



LEAVING A LASTING LEGACY

In advance of the American Thoracic Society's International Conference, ATS and community partners planted 27 new trees in Embarcadero Marina Park North along the San Diego Bay waterfront.

ATS, AstraZeneca, and Breathe Southern California donated 20 Tipuana tipu trees and 7 pink Coral Gum trees to the Port of San Diego. These trees are well-suited for the local environment, will help improve air quality, and can provide shade from the sun as they grow.

“The ATS members are strong advocates for regulating pollution and acting on climate change. Air pollution is one of the greatest environmental risks to the health of millions around the world. With cleaner air, countries can reduce the burden of disease from acute respiratory diseases, including asthma.”

— M. Patricia Rivera, MD, ATS President

We thank ATS for supporting local communities and helping the world to breathe!



PCMA CONVENING LEADERS 2024



January 7–10, 2024

San Diego took center stage in the meetings and events industry as we hosted the Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) for Convening Leaders 2024. Thousands of meeting planners, media, and suppliers converged for the industry’s “Super Bowl” to explore the latest trends, strategies, and innovations.

With record attendance, this year’s gathering encouraged the community to THINK BIGGER. Esteemed speakers included President Bill Clinton, Former U.S. Senator and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, and neuroscientist and acclaimed actress Mayim Bialik.

Beyond the broader attendee activities and media events, personalized meetings and tours with sales leaders from SDTA and SDCC strengthened relationships with leading meeting planners, attracting premium groups to book here.

The event’s success was made possible through the financial support and collective efforts from our regional tourism community, including San Diego Tourism Authority, San Diego Tourism Marketing District, Visit California, Port of San Diego, hotel partners, and local businesses.

“Part of the draw for CL24 likely was the destination, sunny San Diego, which has become so popular a meeting and event locale that it is having to find new and creative ways to accommodate its largest groups.”

— *Prevue Meetings*

“San Diego boasts a safe, compact convention district in the form of the Gaslamp Quarter, a cuisine scene picking up major steam, harbor views seemingly at the end of every street and a raft of new developments that will augment its draw power all the more.”

— *Meetings Today*



THE PCMA EXPERIENCE

PCMA guests witnessed:

- The beauty and convenience of meeting at SDCC, situated with the San Diego Bay on one side and Gaslamp Quarter on the other, with numerous hotels in walking distance.
- A variety of meeting spaces, including the vibrant, open-air atmosphere of the Sails Pavilion, which hosted an immersive attendee marketplace dubbed “The District.”
- Recent enhancements such as new carpet in meeting rooms, expanded digital signage, water fill stations, and EV charging stations.
- Cutting-edge food and beverage offerings, ranging from creative happy hour menus to exclusive chocolate bars crafted specifically for Convening Leaders.
- Helpful and experienced staff dedicated to ensuring guests always felt safe, welcomed, and comfortable.
- Team San Diego’s commitment to sustainability, as SDCC leadership engaged in behind-the-scenes tours to highlight initiatives to reduce energy and water consumption, transition away from single-use plastics, compost, donate unserved food, and locally source ingredients—setting industry standards.

“#CL24 has set the standard for excellence and goes down in the record books of event industry gatherings as best in class.”

— PCMA Attendee



A CONTINUED PARTNERSHIP

Our President & CEO Rip Rippetoe (pictured, center) serves on the PCMA Board, an esteemed group of global business event leaders.



TEAM SAN DIEGO



Your San Diego Convention Center is part of your community. We proudly support and partner with local organizations throughout San Diego.

San Diego Pride

Together with Team Tourism, we marched in this year's Pride Parade to celebrate and support the LGBTQ+ community. We had nearly 200 volunteers in our Team Tourism parade group!

Fighting Hunger

Volunteers from our team met at the Jacobs & Cushman San Diego Food Bank to help bag produce in their distribution center. We had volunteers from the Convention Center, San Diego Tourism Authority, San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance, and the San Diego County Lodging Association. In total, the group bagged 11,000 pounds of produce!

Beautifying the Bay

As part of our commitment to sustainability, SDCC team members took part in Operation Clean Sweep, volunteering to pick up trash and other litter in communities along the San Diego Bay.

Thanksgiving Pies

Our food and beverage team donated 100 pumpkin pies to assist San Diegans in need through Mama's Kitchen. A nonprofit providing nutritional support to San Diego residents at risk of malnutrition due to critical illnesses, Mama's Kitchen is an organization we are thankful for and proud to support.

January 2024 Flood Recovery Efforts

Following the devastating floods in January 2024, SDCC donated dozens of critical items for San Diegans impacted by the storm, including cleaning supplies, drinking water, and more.

San Diego County High School Hospitality Conference

SDCC welcomed more than 50 high school students from schools across the San Diego region for a behind-the-scenes tour of the facility. Students, many of whom visited the Convention Center for the first time, learned about the management of meetings and conventions as well as the opportunities for professional development within the hospitality industry.

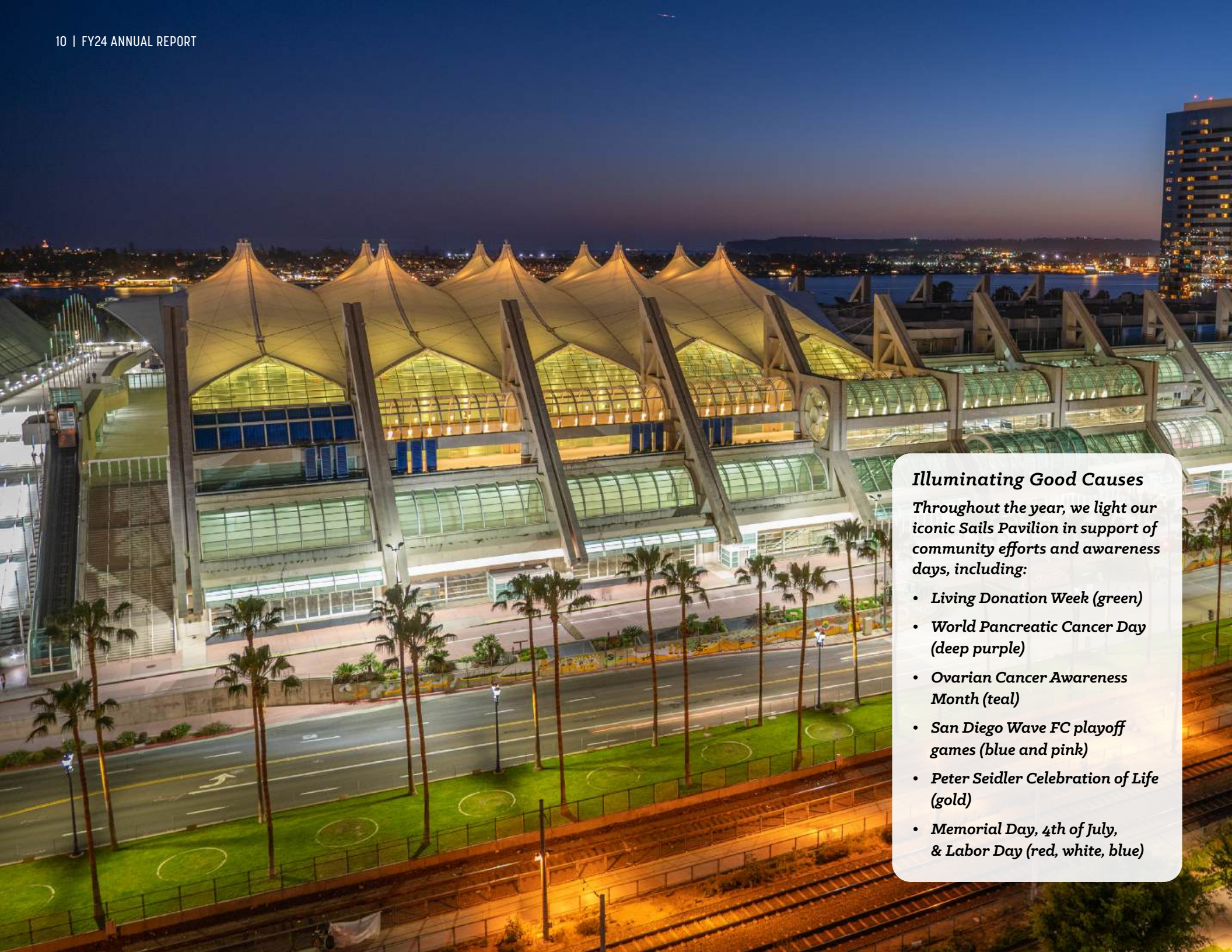
Holiday Blanket Drive

Our SDCC team partnered with local homelessness services provider PATH (People Assisting the Homeless) to collect donations of new blankets. Over 110 blankets were donated to support formerly homeless veterans in their transition to a new home at PATH's veteran housing site, Zephyr, in the Grantville neighborhood.

Sustainable Meetings and Conventions

SDCC coordinated with dozens of local nonprofits to deliver literal tons of excess office supplies, furniture, and other items donated by our clients at the conclusion of their conventions.





illuminating Good Causes
Throughout the year, we light our iconic Sails Pavilion in support of community efforts and awareness days, including:

- *Living Donation Week (green)*
- *World Pancreatic Cancer Day (deep purple)*
- *Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month (teal)*
- *San Diego Wave FC playoff games (blue and pink)*
- *Peter Seidler Celebration of Life (gold)*
- *Memorial Day, 4th of July, & Labor Day (red, white, blue)*

AWARD-WINNING TEAM & PARTNERS

Local and international organizations recognized our team's leadership and service.

Long-time SDCC team member **Robert "Shack" Shackelford** received one of four **2024 Heroes of Hospitality Awards** from the **Above and Beyond Foundation**, funded by GES and the PCMA Foundation. Shack's dedication and performance over the last 26 years continues to set the standard for outstanding service.

The **San Diego Business Journal** honored our Executive Chef, **Sufi Karaien**, as a winner of the **40 Next Top Business Leaders Under 40 in 2024**. Chef Sufi leads our industry through his management of complex operations and integration of sustainable practices.

The **San Diego Business Journal** also recognized our President and CEO **Rip Rippetoe** as one of **San Diego's 500 top business leaders** in their SD500 issue.

The **YWCA of San Diego County** recognized **Renee Jung**, Exhibitor Services Manager, as a **Tribute to Women and Industry (TWIN) Award honoree** for her role in delivering quality service to clients, exhibitors, and attendees.

The **International Association of Venue Managers (IAVM)** Foundation selected **Victoria Mitchell**, Director of Engineering and Capital Projects, as a member of the **30 Under 30 cohort in 2024**, for her exceptional achievements and future potential.

Women in Tourism and Hospitality presented **Maren Dougherty**, Executive Director of Marketing & Communications, with a **2024 WITH Trailblazer Award** for her leadership and industry contributions.

Exhibitor Magazine recognized SDCC with the **Centers of Excellence distinction**, an award issued to only 25 facilities across the country.



2024 Heroes of Hospitality



SDBJ 40 Under 40



IAVM 30 Under 30



TWIN Award



SAN DIEGO
convention center