



DESTINATIONS
INTERNATIONAL

DESTINATION
PROFESSIONALS DAY

— FEBRUARY 19, 2026 —

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On February 19, 1896, members of the Detroit Chamber of Commerce joined the Detroit Manufacturers Club at the Cadillac Hotel in the center of the city to form the Detroit Convention and Businessman's League. They had come together, drawn by a growing awareness that the city was developing a reputation as a convention city – largely due to the rapidly-growing manufacturing sector – and that this brought important commercial and economic benefits. They saw the potential for promoting events in the city to proactively draw more visitors (and business activity) – in other words, what they defined as the new organization's mission: "hustling for conventions."

The Detroit Convention and Businessman's League was the first organization of its kind in the world. Over the last century, the destination organization has grown into a major driver of economic development for many cities and destinations around the world. Today, there are more than 10,000 destination organizations, which include destination marketing organizations and destination management organizations (DMOs), convention and visitors bureaus (CVBs), tourism boards, sports commissions and offices that attract film and media productions to a destination.

Destination organizations comprise a sector within the broader travel and tourism industry. They are uniquely positioned to serve as catalysts for creating an environment in which a community thrives as an ideal place to visit, live, work, play and invest. Through their work and relationships throughout the community, they work to enrich the quality of life for residents, help attract and retain talent, foster culture and community, support public services and grow the overall economy.

The destination promotion industry has grown into a major driver of economic development for many cities and destinations around the world. Destination organizations are a vital part of the travel and tourism industry, which employs almost 348 million people and was expected to contribute about 10% of global GDP – more than \$11 trillion – to the global economy in 2024, according to the World Travel & Tourism Council.

Destinations International, the world's largest and most respected resource for destination organizations with more than 8,000 members and partners from over 750 destinations in 32 countries and territories worldwide, is launching an initiative to gain recognition for the important contributions of the sector and those who work in it by promoting the annual celebration of February 19 as "Destination Professionals Day." The first observance will be February 19, 2025.

The objective of an annual observance is to raise awareness and appreciation for the important role of destination organization professionals, celebrate them and highlight the varied and exciting career tracks the sector offers as a means of attracting future generations of destination professionals.