

Monterey Conference Center Talking Points

The newly renovated \$60 million Monterey Conference Center (MCC) reopens January 2018 with a grand reopening ribbon-cutting and celebration on January 31, 2018. We are already booking conferences into the new Conference Center, and businesses are investing in our downtown area.

Location: Centrally located in historic downtown City of Monterey.

Mission: The MCC is a catalyst for the revitalization of the city and the economic engine that will accelerate growth that contributes to quality of life for the community.

Meeting Space: The MCC offers more than 40,000 square feet of flexible meeting space with a capacity of 3,200 people. The facility is adjacent to the newly renovated Portola Hotel & Spa and the Monterey Marriott. Altogether, these properties will offer 85,000 square feet of flexible meeting space and 19,150 square feet of exhibition space. There are also more than 800 hotel rooms within walking distance of the MCC.

Redesign & Rebranding: The City of Monterey hired Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM), a leading architecture, interior design, engineering and urban planning firm to redesign and rebrand the MCC. Since Monterey is a community that is rich in history and heritage, architects behind the redesign wanted to preserve the historical character of the building and area while transforming the structure into a more modern conference center that would resonate with the current generation of clients and attendees.

SOM has made several updates to the design of the building including the flexibility of the space. For example, the former Steinbeck Forum was a single room with fixed seating and a permanent stage. The new design of the room will be suitable for many uses including an exhibit hall, ballroom with movable airwalls, meeting rooms, pre-function space, an art gallery as well as administrative offices.

Architects also wanted to bring more natural light into the building so they developed skylights and clerestory windows and integrated a wraparound balcony into the design, inspired by the elevated wraparound porches of the Monterey style. The building will also have an outdoor terrace with awe-inspiring views of the Santa Lucia Mountains, Monterey Bay and the downtown area.

The Monterey County Convention and Visitors Bureau (MCCVB) led the rebranding program working with SOM and the City of Monterey which led to the new tagline – “Where Innovation & Inspiration Meet.”

Green Building: The MCC is a modern, LEED-certified meeting facility. In an effort to achieve LEED-NC Platinum designation, the MCC will be adding solar panels to the building in the near future.

Funding: The renovation is funded through the Conference Center Facilities District, which is separate from other city funds – and is comprised of a special assessment paid by the local Monterey lodging industry.

History: The MCC first opened its doors on April 30, 1977, and became instrumental for the growth of the hospitality and tourism industries in Monterey County. Over the years, the MCC hosted a number of notable events including the first-ever TED Conference in 1984. The renovation of the MCC began in November 2015.

Art & Sculptures: Monterey-based Metal Specialties was commissioned to design and fabricate the sculpture and fountain on the plaza which includes a contemporary, stainless steel school of fish and streams of water. The large scale sculpture was generously donated by the Monterey Marriott and Portola Hotel & Spa.

The new fountain joins the refurbished bronze statue of Don Gaspar de Portola, the first governor of California. The statue, sculpted by Fausto Blazquez, was donated by King Juan Carlos I of Spain to the City of Monterey in 1978.

The "Two Dolphins" sculpture by Big Sur artist Emile Norman was removed during the renovation and has returned to the MCC. The impressive 9-foot tall piece is composed of thousands of pieces of inlaid wood and was originally unveiled in 1981.

In addition, the 36-foot ceramic tile "Monterey Mural" was also removed during the renovation and will be reinstalled on the corner of Pacific Street and Del Monte Avenue. The festive mural, which consists of more than 600 handmade tiles, was created by artist Guillermo "Bill" Wagner Granizo and depicts the rich history of Monterey.

Nearby Hotels: The MCC is adjacent to the Portola Hotel & Spa and the Monterey Marriott. It is also convenient to a number of other hotels ranging from the boutique Hotel Pacific to the Hyatt Regency Monterey Hotel & Spa as well as dozens of other area lodging options which make the facility a centerpiece for group business in the region.

Nearby Attractions: The MCC is walking distance or just minutes to a diverse list of iconic attractions including Cannery Row, Monterey Bay Aquarium, Old Fisherman's Wharf and an incredible array of restaurants and shops.

Getting Here: Monterey Regional Airport (MRY) is all about convenience. Boarding time and security checks are quick and efficient and long-term parking is just a few steps away. Enjoy the ease of flying to and from MRY on more than 40 flights in and out daily, with nonstop flights to Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Phoenix, San Diego and San Francisco.

There are also multiple driving routes to Monterey County depending on which direction you are coming from. Iconic Highway 1, which runs from north of San Francisco to Big Sur offers breathtaking views of the Pacific coastline and has often been called the top road trip in America. Scenic Highway 101 runs through the central valley corridor of California and allows motorists an opportunity to see the rich land that has made the Salinas Valley the "Salad Bowl of the World."

Coming from the South, the fastest route is Highway 101 North (to Salinas), then travel west on Highway 68 for approximately 25 miles to Highway 1. Allow six hours from Los Angeles, which is about 350 miles.

Coming from the North, the quickest way to reach Monterey County is 101 South to 156 West over to Highway 1 South. This route is about 100 miles and takes roughly two hours from San Francisco. From San Jose, the route is about 75 miles and takes approximately an hour and twenty minutes.

Website: MontereyConferenceCenter.com; MeetInMonterey.com.