

**GMGA 2012 Conference  
Committee Meetings  
February 15, 2011**

The GMGA 2012 Steering Committee met with Northside Hospital Cherokee Conference Center manager Lorrie Keener on February 15, 2011, at 3:30. She distributed materials [*see secretary's book*] to members Gerald Phillips, Russell Brannon, Ed Stumler, Diane Walton, Suzie Thomas, Dot Martin, Pam Raines, Carol Mumaw, Monte Bores, and Joan McFather. Prior to the meeting, the group was able to sample some offerings by Center Cut Catering.

Lorrie's presentation took the committee through printed materials created for Cherokee County Master Gardeners, including pictures of key points in the facility, a floor plan with room dimensions and Fire Marshall occupancy loads, a quote for venue fees, catering and bar quotes, hotels and special offers, and places of interest for visitors to Cherokee County. She also distributed folders containing policies, procedures, rules and regulations, rental rates and information, available amenities, a list of approved caterers, and assorted applications and agreements.

In no particular order, the following points were brought up during the meeting:

- The facility can seat up to 545 diners at tables, using all the adjacent rooms.
- An adjustable height 8'x20' stage would be comped. Can be adjusted 18" to 24".
- There is an AV zone for each of 4 rooms.
- The patio and a portion of the upstairs will be available, but the upstairs would be used for registration and is less desirable as a place for vendors.
- There are approximately 400 parking spaces available for attendees.
- If we serve alcohol, a deputy sheriff must be hired at \$35/hr x 4 hrs.
- There are 81 round and 6 six foot tables on site, as well as chairs to seat 8 per table. There are 12 high top cocktail tables. More tables and chairs can be hired in: Lorrie suggests O'Brian Productions, they company they use, as does the Chamber of Commerce.
- The Coffee Café upstairs is reopening with more options available. A possible conflict of interest with caterer and/or sponsor. Lorrie can help define the issue later.
- Decorations are up to us, but we can use what they have available and supplement.
- The pre-function area holds 200 standing.
- On the days we use the facility, Lorrie would want one MG present as the go-to contact. They would use walkie-talkies.
- Lorrie strongly urged employing one of their AV techs, although preset is available at \$50/hr x 2 hrs.
- There are 5 caterers to choose from; at present only one has a liquor license. We should bid all five to get the best deal.

- Lorrie will help us with hotels: if we offer a good deal, perhaps we can arrange a shuttle from one.
- We might also arrange for good deals with area merchants, such as shopping discounts.
- There is a \$500 refundable damage deposit.
- The hours listed in our final contract will include set up/take down by the facility.
- Be sure to allow plenty of time for loading in vendors: the back doors can be made wide and are close to the set up area, but parking and maneuvering space behind the building is limited.
- Due to the height of the facility's walls, Lorrie suggests we recommend vendors think "up" when they plan booths, not "out." Nothing may be pinned to the walls.
- We should consider booking the facility until 5 p.m. Saturday.
- A complete changeover from theater-style seating to round table dining (or the reverse) will take 1-1.5 hours. Changing breakout rooms Sutali and Warluskee takes 15-30 minutes. Consider color-coding several groups of attendees to be moved in rotation.
- For uniformity, provide vendor tables in stated sizes at differing rental rates, plus 2 chairs. Lorrie thinks we can put 20 vendors in the Etowah room.
- Flooring will be necessary under vendors. Consider asking a refundable damage deposit from vendors.
- We need a two-day event insurance policy. Check to see if GMGA already has.
- The facility has preset variable computerized lighting.
- Computerized background music can be achieved with an Ipod attached to the facility's sound system. Lorrie suggests having live entertainment on Friday night and can make recommendations.
- There is a green room for speakers' comfort, but a bathroom is accessible only by elevator unlocked by Lorrie's key.
- Nearer the time, we should plan a run-through.

Following the meeting, the Steering Committee took a tour of the facility. The meeting was adjourned at 5:50 p.m.