SITE VISIT TO VERIZON CENTER

In attendance, Peggy/Otto Schmid, Brad Chapulis, and Brian Sather (Verizon Center) -- Danielle Duffey (Visit Mankato) came later.

The dates we looked at for Mankato are September 27-29, 2017.

We had a several hour tour of the Verizon, the 2 attached hotels, and a room at the City Hall across the street. Contrary to what we had heard, the Verizon as part of its expansion is adding an arena and several breakout rooms, not just remodeling some of its older rooms. The addition is to be finished in 2016, so we were visiting in mid-construction, but they have models available, and a video should be coming that will help give a clearer vision of what we can expect.

After our visit, we were sent a proposal for the conference, for an estimated fee of $7,750.00 for the site. In addition, Visit Mankato would award us a grant of 500.00 dollars to help with transportation needs for mobile tours. Both the Hilton Garden Inn ($119.00 per nite) and the City Center Hotel ($86.00 per nite) would set aside room blocks for us. Both are attached to the Verizon via the Skyway. The fee at the Verizon would include the breakout rooms, the banquet hall, the Reception Room (the old bank vault), exhibitor space, and most equipment needs.

Our comments---

The older banquet hall should be more than sufficient for our meals and keynote speakers. The new breakout rooms will be large and should work fine. We also may have 2 of the older breakout rooms for smaller sessions. In addition, if we need it, there is a beautiful and spacious room right across the street in the City Hall that we can rent. The plaza in front of the City Hall has been re-landscaped and would be a lovely outdoors venue if we had the need. We would be using their in-house caterer, so the catering costs appear to be similar to what we will have in St. Cloud. Visit Mankato would be happy to work with us to set up any mobile tours.

The fees for the Center are somewhat higher than we will have in St. Cloud, but they include most equipment in Mankato, which St. Cloud does not do.

We would recommend the Verizon Center as a site for a conference in 2017, or if the Board is thinking of elsewhere for 2017, then we would recommend Verizon for 2018.