

# Welcome to 2012 Annual Convention of the Alabama League of Municipalities

May 19 – 22, 2012 • Birmingham-Jefferson Convention Complex • Birmingham, AL

## Exhibitor FAQ

**Who exhibits?** Exhibitors are companies that provide products and services used by Alabama's local governments. Some industries represented are: Housing, Architects, Engineers, Consultants, Telecommunications, Document Management, Heavy Equipment, Office Products, Recreation, IT, Environmental Technologies, Banking, Emergency products, Insurance, Healthcare, and Security.

**Who attends?** The Annual Convention is attended by local elected officials, municipal clerks, professional administrators, municipal attorneys and other public sector officials. This gathering presents a unique opportunity to meet numerous key officials involved in the decision making process. ALM's convention is not a public or consumer show. It is an education and business event for government officials.

**What are the exhibit hours?** The exhibit hall opens Sunday, May 20, from 5:30 p.m.-7:00 p.m. for the Exhibitor's Showcase and League Reception. On Monday, May 21, the Hall reopens from 10:30 a.m. until 2:45 p.m.

**What events are planned for the exhibit hall?** A total of seven events are planned. Sunday night exhibitors and attendees will be in the Expo Hall for the **Exhibitors Showcase** and the **League's Reception** and Municipal Marketplace **Featured Prize Drawings** from 5:30-7:00 p.m. On Monday, the Hall opens at 10:30 a.m. for **coffee breaks** and the **Luncheon** from 12:15 to 2:15 and Exhibitor Sponsored **Prize Give-a-ways**. The intent is to create more time for face-to-face interaction between exhibitors and officials. Call Cindy Price 334-262-2566 and ask about a **NEW** opportunity to sponsor a table in the Expo Hall for Sunday evening and Monday lunch.

## Contract/Forms

**How do I sign up for an exhibit booth?** Complete the 2012 Exhibit Contract & Registration Form and mail with a check to the League address on the contract or you may fax the form with credit card information to 334-263-0200 to the attention of Cindy Price. Exhibit Registrations are not complete and will not be processed until payment in full is received. For more information, contact Cindy Price at [cindyp@alalm.org](mailto:cindyp@alalm.org).

**Can I complete an Exhibit Booth Registration onsite?** NOT recommended and NOT without prior notification. You *must* notify the League and have confirmation of available space. Rarely is there available booth space in the EXPO Hall for onsite registration. You may contact the League office through Wednesday, May 16 to check availability.

**What is the deadline?** We continue to process contracts until all booths are sold. If you are submitting your contract after **Monday, May 14**, it must be accompanied by the full amount due.

**What is the print deadline for the program?** The print deadline for the official convention program is **April 13, 2012**. All registration contracts received by this date will be included in the program. However, all exhibitors will be included in the registration packets each attendee receives at the Convention Registration Desk at check in.

**Do you accept credit cards?** Yes. We accept all major credit cards.

**Can I reserve a booth?** Yes. The **Reservation Policy** on the Exhibit Registration states, "ALM will reserve booths in first come, first serve priority. However, booths will be held on a pending basis until payment is received. If payment is not received after 10 (ten) days of reserving the booth, booths will be re-opened for availability." The policy is in effect until Monday, May 14, at which time registration contracts must be accompanied by full payment.

**Do I need to pay the full amount or the deposit amount?** The League does not accept deposits to hold exhibit space. You may reserve a booth following the Reservation Policy on the registration contract. “ALM will reserve booths in first come, first serve priority. However, booths will be held on a pending basis until payment is received. If payment is not received after 10 (ten) days of reserving the booth, booths will be re-opened for availability.”  
**After Monday, May 14, registration contracts must be accompanied with the full amount due for the booth space.**

**Do I get a discount for buying multiple booths?** We do not offer a discounted rate for multiple booths. All spaces are at the contract prices per each; regardless of how many are purchased.

**Are all the booths the same price?** No. There are two options for basic 10'x10' booths; you may choose a center booth at \$825 or a corner booth for \$900. Limited bulk space (20'x40') is available at \$2,500.

**What forms do I need to submit?** In order to process your contract we must receive a completed Exhibit Registration Form and payment by check or credit card.

**What comes with my booth?** Each booth has the following:

- 6' skirted table
- Electrical connection (indicate on form if desired)
- 2 side chairs
- 1 wastebasket w/liner
- Signage with company name and booth number
- Back and side drapes
- EXPO Packet
- ✓ Three Representative Badges (10'x10' space)
- ✓ Six Representative Badges (20'x40')
- ✓ Prize Information Form
- ✓ Registrant List
- ✓ Two Convention Programs

**Can I just fax or e-mail my contract?** You may, but we cannot act on your contract until your payment arrives. We recommend sending credit card information on all faxed or emailed contracts. Please contact Cindy Price (334-262-2566) if your payment will be sent under separate cover.

### **Booth Assignments**

**When are booths assigned?** The booth assignment process begins in February. The previous year's exhibitors are given priority. Afterwards, all booths are assigned on a first-come, first-serve basis.

**If booths aren't assigned until February should I just wait to send in my contract so I know what is "open"?** No, don't wait! Since booths are assigned on a first-come, first-serve basis you will limit your options by waiting to send in your contract. The earlier we have your contract the more options you have. If you are concerned about what booth you will be assigned we can contact you to discuss your choices when your contract comes up for processing. Booth space will be held on a pending basis until payment is received. If payment is not received after 10 (ten) days of reserving the booth, booths will be re-opened for availability. Booths are not assigned without full payment. You can see the [interactive online floor plan here](#).

**How do I request a specific booth?** Specific booth numbers can be chosen by listing a first, second, and third choice on the registration form. If none of the choices are available we will assign the next best booth. Many exhibitors note areas of the hall rather than specific booth preferences. You can see the [interactive online floor plan here](#).

**What exhibits display in the "Bulk Space" section?** The six Bulk Space areas on the floor plan are reserved for exhibitors to display large equipment and are ideal for products that contain a gas tank or are battery powered (i.e. lawn mowers, dump trucks, lifts, power washers, vehicles, etc.). If the floor plan shows all six bulk spaces reserved

please contact Cindy Price at 334-262-2566 to place your name on a standby list.

**What if the booth I want is already assigned to another exhibitor?** Unless it is specified for us to contact you prior to making an assignment we will assign the best booth available. If you would like to be contacted prior to us assigning your company a booth please make a note on the registration form.

**How do I request an assignment near another company?** If you and another company would like to be assigned side-by-side please make all efforts to have both contracts submitted around the same time. In addition, each contract should include a note referencing the desire to be located near each other.

**What if I received my confirmation and am not happy with my assignment?** Please review your confirmation carefully and contact us immediately so we can work with you to address your concern. Contact Cindy Price at 334-262-2566.

### **Cancellations/Refunds**

**What should I do if I need to cancel my booth?** Contact Cindy Price at 334-262-2566 immediately. A booth will not be deemed cancelled until you receive written confirmation (e-mail/fax/letter) from the League. Cancellations must be received by April 20, 2012.

**Can I receive a refund?** Contact Cindy Price at 334-262-2566 to discuss your need to cancel. The **Cancellation Policy** on the Registration Contract states, "ALM will authorize refunds only if notified in writing and received by **April 20, 2012**. A \$100 administrative fee will be charged for all cancellations. No refunds will be given after this date".

### **Interactive Floor Plan**

The interactive floor plan will be posted on our website prior to the Convention. It will include the company name, booth number, program index and description.

**I sent in my contract but I am not listed on the floor plan. Why not?** The interactive floor plan is not updated daily. If you are not listed after you receive your booth confirmation you will be included with the next update.

**Can I choose my booth from the interactive floor plan?** The floor plan posted on line is for reference only and does not assure availability of specific booths. Often times, booths shown as "open" online have already been assigned. Booth availability will be determined when your paperwork is received.

**Can I have my logo included with the Interactive Floor Plan?** Yes, send your logo in a jpeg or gif file to [cindyp@alalm.org](mailto:cindyp@alalm.org) with your request.

### **Hotel Reservations**

**Are there special conference rates for hotels?** No. However, the League has posted two options for Conference exhibitors and attendees. The rates provided are not guaranteed to be the lowest available.

**How do I make a reservation?** Exhibitors are required to make their own reservations. The League has provided information on two hotels for Conference exhibitors.

**Sheraton Birmingham Hotel:** 2101 Richard Arrington, Jr. Boulevard, North, Phone: 1-800-325-3535  
Connected by walkway to the BJCC where the Expo will be held. Parking information: \$12.00 nightly (unlimited privileges); \$8.00 daily  
[http://deals.sheraton.com/Sheraton-Birmingham-Hotel-115/so.htm?PS=PS\\_aa\\_South\\_Google\\_sheraton\\_birmingham\\_hotel\\_Exact\\_100510\\_NAD\\_FM](http://deals.sheraton.com/Sheraton-Birmingham-Hotel-115/so.htm?PS=PS_aa_South_Google_sheraton_birmingham_hotel_Exact_100510_NAD_FM)

**The Tutwiler-Hampton Inn and Suites:** 2021 Park Place, (205) 322-2100. Hotel is convenient to the Birmingham-Jefferson Convention Complex and includes complimentary internet and hot breakfast with valet parking \$12.00 + tax daily. <http://www.thetutwilerhotel.com/>

### **Badges/Staff Registration**

**How do I register my staff?** Exhibitor staff may be registered using only the following method: Official Paper registration form (forms are mailed to your main contact in January), phone, fax and email options are not available for staff registration. **Registration form is also available [HERE](#).**

**How many badges do I get with my booth?** Each exhibit is allotted three (3) to six (6) complimentary staff badges depending on booth space reserved.

**How do I receive my badges?** Badges will be included in the Expo Packet placed at your booth the day of set-up.

**Is there a cost for additional badges over our allotment?** Additional badges are \$100.00 each. These badges may be ordered via the paper form (before the deadline) or onsite at the Exhibitor Registration counter. Have payment information (credit card or check) ready. The League does not invoice for additional representative badges.

**Can I use my Exhibitor badge to enter a session?** Exhibitor badges may be used for the sessions but there is to be absolutely no soliciting. These sessions are educational and are not to be used as an avenue to distribute literature or do any marketing. Exhibitors are invited to attend sessions, but may not make direct contact regarding their products and services outside the Expo Hall (this includes announcements, unsolicited conversations regarding their business and distribution of promotional materials). Exhibitors must wear name badges provided by ALM while in the Expo Hall or educational sessions. Badges provide admission to all non-ticketed events.

**How do I make badge changes?** Refer to your confirmation for instructions on making changes. After Friday, May 11, all changes will be made on site at the Exhibitor's Registration counter.

**How do I add/change a staff registration after the deadline?** After the deadline, Friday, May 11, *all* changes, additions, deletions, corrections, etc. *must* be done onsite. Exhibitor Registration opens at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday, May 20 (set-up day). Any member of your staff may take the incorrect badges to the counter and have them corrected or reissued in another name. There is no fee for this.

**Can we swap badges between our staff?** Yes. If a staff member will not be attending for the duration of the Expo they may give their badge to another staff member. Simply take the badge to the Exhibitor Registration counter and they will reprint the badge with the replacement name. You must have the badge with you to avoid being charged.

**What if I'm registered and lose my badge?** If you are already registered and misplace your badge please go to the Exhibitor Registration counter onsite and they will reprint your badge. There is no fee for this.

## Ordering furnishings/utilities/services

**How do I order tables, chairs, etc.?** You will receive a packet by email or regular mail from the George E. Fern Co. for any additional requests for equipment such as carpet, additional chairs, podiums, or services. Ordering by the **advance order deadline May 3<sup>rd</sup>** is recommended as services are more generally more expensive when ordered onsite.

### **What comes with my booth?**

- 6' skirted table
- Electrical connection (indicate on form if desired)
- 2 side chairs
- 1 wastebasket w/liner
- Signage with company name and booth number
- Back and side drapes

**Can I bring my own furnishings?** Yes. You may bring what you need for booth set up. If you need assistance with unloading or setup you may contact our show decorator, the George E. Fern Co. prior to the EXPO or on site at their service desk. Set up *must* be complete by 4:30 p.m. on Sunday, May 20, for the Exhibitor's Showcase and the League Reception to open at 5:30 p.m.

**What is the deadline for advance service orders?** The advance order deadline (May 3<sup>rd</sup>) are **noted on your confirmation form**. Services may be ordered after this date for a higher charge. They can also be ordered on set-up day and during the Expo.

**Who do I contact with questions?** Contact Cindy Price at 334-262-2566 prior to May 18<sup>th</sup> with any questions related to the show. Contact information for the George E. Fern Co. and the main convention registration desk will be provided in your Exhibitor Confirmation Packet.

**Are exhibitors permitted to place candy or other treats in the booth for attendees?** Yes, you may bring small treats for yourself or attendees. We do ask that if you have any food items in your booth area please make sure your space remains tidy during all EXPO hours. Bottled water will be available for exhibitors during set up on Sunday. On Monday, coffee breaks and lunch will be served in the EXPO Hall.

**Is there security overnight on Sunday and during show hours?** Security will be provided in the EXPO Hall Sunday, May 20<sup>th</sup> through the breakdown time on Monday, May 21<sup>st</sup>. The Alabama League of Municipalities, the Birmingham-Jefferson Convention Complex, and the George E. Fern Co. will take reasonable caution to protect exhibitors against damages or loss during the show. However, the Alabama League of Municipalities, the Birmingham-Jefferson Convention Complex, and the George E. Fern Co. assume no liability for damage, destruction, loss or theft or exhibitor property.

## Set-up

**I have a simple and small display. Can I set-up on Monday morning?** No. Set-up *must* be completed on Sunday, May 20 by 4:30 p.m. Any booths unoccupied by 4:30 pm on Sunday will be assigned to companies on standby. In this case, no refunds will be made.

**Can I carry my own materials into the exhibit hall?** Yes. However, if you need assistance unloading, this service can be ordered from George E. Fern Co. prior to the EXPO or onsite at their service desk. Please follow the unloading procedure outlined in the exhibitor confirmation information. Also, please be aware that the League does not have carts or other equipment for transporting boxes, etc.

**Can I set up my own booth?** Yes; with the following conditions regarding 10'x10' and 20'x40' booths: 1) The installation can be accomplished by your full time company employees; 2) Set up and handling of their own

product; including but not limited to the installation, interconnection, calibration and operation of equipment.

***As a Heavy Equipment exhibitor what are the procedures for set-up?*** Heavy Equipment exhibitors are the first to move in. The schedule begins at 8:30 a.m. and should be completed by 10:00 a.m. You will be contacted prior to the EXPO by Cindy Price to schedule a time for move in.

***Where do I park to unload my materials?*** Please follow the parking, unloading and loading procedures outlined in the exhibitor confirmation information. The set up day is very busy and these procedures are designed to maintain safety and allow for a well-organized and smooth set up day. If clarification is needed, contact [cindyp@alalm.org](mailto:cindyp@alalm.org).

***Will there be someone available to help me?*** An exhibitor registration counter will be staffed beginning at 8 a.m. If you have questions please see the League staff. If you need help with your materials please contact the George E. Fern Co. before the EXPO or onsite at their service desk. There is a charge for all assistance by the various service providers.

***What if I go to my booth and the furnishings I ordered are not there?*** If this service was pre-ordered from the George E. Fern Co. check with their onsite service desk. All shipments for the show should be shipped to the George E. Fern Co. If ordering this service after April 15, 2012, please make sure you have verbal confirmation from the George E. Fern Co. **and follow instructions in the packet. Do not ship your show contents to the convention center or host hotel. There are no arrangements for exhibitor storage and shipment safety cannot be guaranteed.**

***How do I find a missing crate?*** If this service was pre-ordered with the George E. Fern Co., check at their onsite service desk if you find something missing from your shipment. If show contents were shipped to convention center or host hotel by mistake please see Cindy Price at the Exhibitor's Registration Desk. *Do not ship your show contents to the convention center or host hotel. There are no arrangements for exhibitor storage and shipment safety cannot be guaranteed.*

***If I forget to order something can I order it during set-up?*** Yes. All service providers will be available onsite for last minute orders.

***Is there a meeting for vendors to attend before the Expo Hall open on Sunday night?*** Yes. Exhibits must be set up by 4:30 p.m. League staff will have a time of welcome to vendors and go over important reminders for the show. Exhibitors are encouraged to attend to make their experience the most beneficial.

## **Breakdown**

***Can I leave earlier than the specified break-down time?*** **NO!** As per the signed Contract, **all exhibitors** must remain **fully assembled** until 2:45p.m., May 21<sup>st</sup>. Early packing or breakdown is not permitted. This is also a safety issue since there are still attendees in the Hall. The League takes this safety issue very seriously and removes violators from future conference invitations. Any vendor who breaks down early will be fined \$1,000 and may not be allowed to exhibit in future League Expos.

***What do I do if I have an emergency and have to leave?*** Leave your booth as is and contact Cindy Price at the Exhibitor's Registration Desk and then contact the George E. Fern Co. at their service desk to disassemble and pack your booth for shipment back to your home office. Under no circumstances should an exhibitor pack their booth before leaving for an emergency.

***Is there anyone available to help me disassemble my booth?*** Yes. Please contact the [George E. Fern Co.](#) for these services. You may arrange this prior to the convention or during the convention week.

***How do I arrange for shipment back to my office/warehouse?*** The George E. Fern Co. can assist you with the

forms and scheduling for the shipments. Please contact them [HERE](#) prior to the convention or make arrangements onsite at their service desk.

### **Giveaways/Prizes**

**Can I do drawings for give away prizes?** Yes, you can conduct drawings however because the convention attendees are government officials you must be aware of legal limitations and the procedures and schedule limitations imposed by the Annual League Convention. *See also - How will prizes be distributed?*

**How will prizes be distributed?** Exhibitors are encouraged to offer prize drawings to increase overall excitement and good traffic flow. Time will be allotted at the end of the Monday Luncheon on May 21<sup>st</sup> for drawings if you wish to participate. Give-a-way signs will be available from ALM upon Sunday check-in for vendors to display their prize(s) and winner names(s). Attendees will circulate the Hall at the end of lunch on Monday to check exhibitor give-a-way signs and pick up claim their prizes. Exhibitors are responsible for delivery of any prizes not claimed by 2:30 p.m. on Monday, 21<sup>st</sup>. Unclaimed prizes cannot be left with League employees for delivery. See the prize give-a-way procedure and schedule in the Exhibitor Packet upon arrival Sunday or [click here for the Schedule](#).

### **Parking/Public Transportation/Directions/Maps**

**Where can find a facility map and directions?** [http://www.bjcc.org/attending\\_an\\_event.php?page=maps](http://www.bjcc.org/attending_an_event.php?page=maps)

**Where can I park after I unload my items for set up on Sunday and on Monday during the Expo?** This information will be included in the vendor confirmation packet.

**What are the loading and unloading procedures?** Follow the loading and unloading procedures outlined in the exhibitor confirmation information. Set-up day is very busy and procedures are designed to maintain safety and allow for a well-organized and smooth set-up day. If clarification is needed, please call Cindy Price at 334-262-2566.

### **Sponsorships**

**How do I find out about sponsorships?** The League offers a variety of **convention** and **golf** sponsorships each year. NEW this year is **Expo Table** Sponsorships. Once your exhibitor registration is complete you will receive information on sponsorships. For more information about sponsorships contact [cindyp@alalm.org](mailto:cindyp@alalm.org) or call at 334-262-2566.

**Does the League have other avenues to let municipal officials know about our company?** Yes. In addition to being an exhibitor, you may want to advertise in our magazine, *The Alabama Municipal Journal*, or purchase a vendor package. As an exhibitor, you may want to consider advertising in pre-show issues to let attendees know you are coming. Remember, pre-show issues will have time-sensitive deadlines. Click [HERE](#) to visit our website for more information. Please contact Cindy Price at [cindyp@alalm.org](mailto:cindyp@alalm.org) or at 334-262-2566 for detailed information.

## **16 Reasons Your Company Should Exhibit in 2012**

1. Attendance has been strong and steady (around 1,200) for the past few years
2. Exhibit rates will stay the same as 2011 (rates have not increased for the past 5 years)
3. Exhibitors get free access to the convention attendee mailing lists
4. Demonstrate that your company is surviving and stable in this economy
5. Gain market share when others are cutting back
6. Even with new technologies, in-person events are still rated the best for generating leads and maintaining client relationships
7. Gain exposure to the decision makers in Alabama local government
8. Government must still make purchases in a recession; other business clients might have to curtail their spending
9. Grow your business now and experience a faster rebound than other companies that remained stagnant during this period

10. If you have a new product/service now is a great time to educate attendees
11. The clients of companies that have closed will be looking for new partners – be at the Expo so they know you are still growing
12. Your competition and municipal clients will be there!
13. Assure your current clients that you are still able to serve them and simultaneously expand your business
14. Give potential clients the information they need now so they can contact you when your services are needed
15. The convention is relevant every year. Elected officials face new and old issues and require fresh ideas, products and services to solve them.
16. Be in Birmingham to **Answer** questions; **Share** solutions; and **Expand** your client base!