



Event Team’s Review of 2023 Convergence: *Recap, Pros & Cons, and Next Steps for 2024*

This document recaps 2023 Convergence and sets out suggestions and next steps for 2024 which is scheduled for October 3, 2024.

Relevant Input from RVA757 Connects’ End of Year Survey Regarding Convergence

59% of respondents were in favor of canceling the dinner at the end of the event and ending earlier.

Recap of Attendees/Sponsors/Budget

Final Count - Attendees:

- RSVPs: 182
- Actual Participants: 165
- RSVP Timing: over 50% registered in the last 10 days

Sponsorships:

- Total number: 8

Final Budget: The event broke even

Pre-Event Planning:

- Pre-planning for speakers/content:
 - Spent too much time trying to get the Governor.
 - Need to finalize speakers/agenda earlier.
- Event marketing: (Timing of RSVPs)

- Could drive earlier RSVPs by confirming and promoting the speakers/agenda earlier.
- Invite all members of both Chambers early.
- Registration:
 - ChamberRVA will continue to handle registration.
 - Brainstorm how to manage outlying registrations – manual registrations, people that have issues registering.
 - Add language to the marketing/registration website to clear up confusion relating to being a member.
- Other:
 - Start earlier and end earlier: 9 a.m. – 4 p.m., no dinner in 2024.

Event Day – The Actual Event

- Room set up
 - Include pipe and drape in the AV contract next year to hide unwanted background elements.
- Backdrop –
 - Use Chambers' and RVA757's logo backstops, or the Convergence logo
 - Create a banner for sponsors' logos, including the event logo.
- Registration Process:
 - No change
- Meeting Flow:
 - Focus on key points and limit sessions to help with fluidity.
- Content:
 - Content was good but could be more concise.
 - Continue to align content with RVA757 Connects'/the Chambers' priorities.
- AV support:
 - Sound could have been better. Greg will speak with the AV company.
- Pre-dinner Reception:
 - Keep reception but start earlier – 3:30 or 4 pm. No dinner.
- Dinner:



- No dinner
- Other:
 - Eliminating dinner may affect how many people stay overnight.
 - Ask Cliff Fleet if a discounted rate could be provided without a minimum number of rooms being booked.
 - Pricing – same even without dinner.

Post Event:

- Speaker content posted
 - Greg Gilligan posted on the RVA757 Connects website under “Convergence” the PowerPoint presentations all nearly all presenters by the morning of the event.
 - Content related to the Global Internet Hub was posted shortly after the announcement was made, with photos of attendees opening up the map.
 - RVA757 website traffic spike in the days after the event.
- Media coverage
 - Va Business Mag article on Global Internet Hub
 - RTD I-64 Gap article
 - VA Gazette article on econ info presented
 - Try to get TV stations from both regions. – may not get buy-in, is it newsworthy?
- Follow-up Survey
 - Approx. 11 people took the paper survey.
 - Next year, use a QR code to link to the survey; place printouts of the code on tables and have it on-screen – mention it several times throughout the day.

Overall Conference Theme:

- 2023 Theme: Major Initiatives Advancing I-64 Innovation Corridor was good and appropriate. Build on this for 2024.
- Possible additional content for 2024 year?
 - Have other megaregions (such as Cascadia) be part of the content – RVA757 will reach out.
 - Comparing the regions’ GDP per capita and population growth as metrics of performance – Matrix

Planning For 2024

- This event has become an institution
- Stretch attendance 2024 goal 300.
- 2024 event is scheduled for October 3, 2024.
- Start planning in March
- Agenda and speakers set by June

Immediate Next Steps

- Ann to reserve room
- John to reach out to other megaregions

Thanks to all who made 2023 a big success! Bryan and Brian