

IRSJA Fall 2024 Conference Attendees:

*Welcome to Minneapolis- St. Paul Information!**

OUR HOTEL:

MSP Airport Hilton Hotel
3800 American Blvd East
Bloomington, MN 55424
952-854-2100

<https://www.hilton.com/en/hotels/mspahhf-hilton-minneapolis-st-paul-airport/>

Free shuttle services to/from airports and Mall of America (ask at desk for more information)

AIRPORTS:

There are two MSP airports: **Lindbergh/Terminal 1** (the largest with major airlines like Delta, United, American) and **Humphrey/Terminal 2** (if you are taking a taxi to the airport after the conference make sure you know which terminal you're going to). They are about a mile apart, and there is a light rail train that connects them. Our hotel is just south of the Terminal 2 (and across 34th Ave the Fort Snelling Cemetery if you are into military cemeteries). **There is a free shuttle to our hotel.**

TRANSPORTATION (in addition to UBER and Taxi):

METRO LIGHTRAIL – Blue Line

<https://www.metrotransit.org/route/blue>

A metro train that has a station about a block from the hotel roughly at intersection of *American Blvd* and *28th Ave* (southwest of hotel parking lot; turn right and walk along "American Blvd", turn right at tracks on 34th Ave). The blue line goes from the Mall of America to airport to downtown Minneapolis (which, if you have the time, is worth seeing since at our hotel we are on the outskirts of the metro, the "494 Corridor" which is more airport/industrial/hotel area in the suburb of Bloomington). This Blue Line will also take you to the University of Minnesota and further points in the northern metro.

FOOD (and shopping):

There is a restaurant in the hotel. Also, there are more restaurants than you can count at the Mall of America (see below), a *5 minute free shuttle ride from the hotel* (west about a mile on American Blvd).

There is a small snack shop in the Hilton as well.

BEST RESTAURANTS IN DOWNTOWN MINNEAPOLIS (a blue line train ride away)

https://www.tripadvisor.com/Restaurants-g43323-zfn20931975-zfp58-Minneapolis_Minnesota.html

RATED BY READERS AS BEST IN TWIN CITIES

<https://mspmag.com/eat-and-drink/best-restaurants-readers-poll-results-2024/>

MALL OF AMERICA: www.m.mallofamerica.com

- Second largest in the nation; over 500 stores; as big in area as 7 football fields; an indoor amusement park; also a walk-through Sea Aquarium where sharks swim over you; many movie theaters.
- Some Recommended restaurants at MOA
<https://twincities.eater.com/maps/best-restaurants-bars-mall-of-america-minneapolis-st-paul>
"Where to Eat in Mall of America":
<http://travelwithbender.com/travel-blog/midwest-usa/where-to-eat-in-mall-of-america>
- ANOTHER GOOD OPTION: Closer to our hotel than the Mall of America is at the Hyatt Regency Hotel "*Urban Craeft Kitchen and Market*". Good ratings (restaurant and also market for soups, sandwiches etc.)
<https://bloomington.regency.hyatt.com/en/hotel/dining.html>
(just go right on American Blvd and then at 34th Ave turn left)

ST. PAUL:

- If you feel like venturing into St. Paul, you can walk along Summit Ave and see some old mansions, including the “Governor’s Mansion”. Summit Ave also is the site of F Scott Fitzgerald’s apartment. Also, our state capitol is just across the highway from downtown St. Paul.
- In St. Paul, personal restaurant favorites (of Peggy’s anyway):
(not cheap, mostly Italian though W.A. Frosts isn't):
<https://luciancora.com/>
<https://www.la-grolla.com/>
<https://www.wafrost.com/>

RECREATION, NATURE, WALKS:

MINNESOTA VALLEY WILDLIFE REFUGE (free)

<https://www.fws.gov/refuge/minnesota-valley>

Just across the street from the Hilton parking lot (southeast) is the entrance to this wildlife refuge which has a beautiful Visitor’s Center, and many walking/hiking paths. It’s a good place for introverts to get away, relax, get some fresh air.

*(put together by Peggy Hanson, peglohanson@gmail.com
507.403.9413; blame her for any errors)

BONUS: Helpful Suggestions

from our late, great Lyn Cowan (from 2017 Invitational)

While we do have world-class theater, museums, all sorts of intellectual delights, and the national WNBA Champions Minnesota Lynx, and the homes of several corporations which bring you breakfast (e.g., General Mills, Pillsbury), medical devices (e.g., Medtronic), computer technologies (e.g., Seagate), the cutest mascot in college sports (Goldie the Golden Gopher), and the tallest building in the country between Chicago and Los Angeles, the IDS tower in downtown Minneapolis, and dozens of other odd and interesting things (e.g., Paul Bunyan's home), we also have the unique **Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge**. These beautiful 18,000 acres of woods and small lakes are home to dozens of species of wildlife. It is right down the road and there is no admission fee. The wildlife will probably be indifferent to you, but don't take that personally. Right at the entrance is the Visitors Center where you can pick up a map and look at the exhibits if you wish. Or you could just go boldly where you have never gone before and come back refreshed and relaxed.

We don't want to exaggerate, but there are about half a million restaurants in the **Mall of America about a mile down the road in the opposite direction from the wildlife refuge**. The hotel has a free shuttle (it's only about a mile). One of the restaurants recommended is the **Twin City Grill** inside the Mall on the first floor at 30 North Garden. If you're interested in something a little different, located in the Mall's Food Court is the Piada Italian Street Food, a fast but very good food concession served McDonald's style. <https://mypiada.com/menu/mall-of-america>. If you haven't been to the Mall, it is practically a small city, but there are information desks and kiosks which can point you to where you want to go. Across the street from the Mall is the Hazelwood Food and Drink (8150 E. 26th Ave. S.). Also nearby is Woollys, specializing in steaks, at 7901 34th Ave. S. A little further out (about 5 miles) is Jensen's restaurant, where the specialty is fresh Minnesota walleye. If you have never had fresh Minnesota walleye, here's your chance to live regret-free when you leave the state.

All these restaurants are less than 5 to 10 minutes by either shuttle or Uber.