

Methodist Hospital and other facilities of the Texas Medical Center.

Galleria/Uptown

According to tourism officials, there are more than 6,000 hotel rooms in the Uptown/Galleria district, a few miles west of downtown along I-610. The Galleria shopping destination, numerous restaurants and nightspots, and the 1,400-acre Memorial Park and golf course are located here.

The 373-room Omni Houston added a 10,000-square-foot ballroom and 6,000 square feet of pre-function space, bringing total event space to 32,000 square feet, said Joe Wronski, director of marketing. "The new pre-function space includes floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking our two outdoor pools and famed Swan Pond, home to the Omni Houston's signature black swans." The new ballroom can seat up to 1,110 for meetings and up to 820 for banquets.

Directly across from the Galleria, the 515-room JW Marriott Houston has 40,000 square feet of event space, including Liberty Hall, the Grand Ballroom, and 12 additional meeting rooms. In September 2008, the hotel completed a \$12.5 million renovation to meeting space, public areas and restaurants, said Peggy Goosen, director of sales.

The 289-room Houstonian Hotel, Club and Spa completed \$7 million in guest room renovations and upgrades in 2008, according to Mark Lupton, director of sales and marketing, who said the hotel is set to open a new tennis facility this year. The hotel has 32,000 square feet of event space with banquet seating for up to 600.

Hotel Derek, a contemporary 314-room boutique hotel with 10,000 square feet of event space,

completed a \$2.1 million update in early 2009. A 152-room aloft is planned to open in summer 2009 just west of Galleria Mall.

West Of Houston

CITYCENTRE, a mixed-use development in Memorial City includes Hotel Sorella, a 244-room Valencia Group property. Norris Conference Center connects to Hotel Sorella by a sky bridge and provides more than 17,000 square feet of event space. "Our two ballrooms have large windows (some floor to ceiling) with views of the green spaces and water/fire fountain feature in front of Norris and Hotel Sorella," said Gail Walker, sales manager. According to Walker, the conference center opens May 1 and Hotel Sorella plans a July 1 opening.

About 15 miles southwest of Houston, Sugar Land Town Square is an exciting new destination for the greater Houston area, said Kim Brooks, director of sales and marketing for the Sugar Land Marriott Town Square. "Sugar Land is growing so fast, and we're right in the heart of it." Town Square includes retail, restaurants, office and residential space and the new Sugar Land Marriott Town Square, located on the town plaza, with 300 guest rooms and 26,500 square feet of meeting and event space. "It's a vibrant, new property in a great location," Brooks said.

North Of Houston

The big news in Conroe, which is located about 40 minutes north of Houston, is the recent opening of La Toreta Del Lago Resort and Spa, formerly known as Del Lago Resort. "After a two-year, multimillion-dollar transformation, this is

now a world-class resort and a great new asset for our area for any type of group meeting or event," said Lindsey Hafner, director of the Conroe Convention and Visitors Bureau. The resort has 445 guest rooms and 70,000 square feet of indoor event space with four ballrooms, three executive boardrooms and 10 additional breakout rooms. Outdoor options include scenic views of the lake, golf course or Aqua Park for groups of up to 1,500.

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