



a success story

# Maritz Global Events Relocates RWA 48 Hours After Flooding Shuts Down City

## The Situation

Romance Writers of America (RWA) is a Houston-based, non-profit trade association dedicated to advancing the professional interests of career-focused romance writers through networking and advocacy.

Each year, RWA hosts an annual conference for authors to network with industry professionals and fellow writers, and give editors and literary agents an opportunity to find new talent. The conference offers 2,100 attendees more than 100 workshops with topics ranging from beginning writing skills to the business side of writing.

RWA was scheduled to host their 30th annual conference in Nashville at the Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center on July 27. Torrential storms in the Tennessee, Kentucky and Mississippi areas dumped a record 13½ inches of rain on the region, causing the Cumberland River to crest above flood stage and spill into the city of Nashville on May 3.

With Opryland's indoor atriums slowly draining from 10 feet of water and the venue closed for the next 90 days, RWA needed to find a new location for its conference fast. This forced many other groups to relocate and there was a fury to book rooms elsewhere—leaving RWA fewer options in facilities able to offer sufficient meeting space and sleeping rooms.

“The deal we got would not have been possible without our relationship with Maritz Global Events.”

*Allison Kelley, CAE  
Executive Director, RWA*

## The Solution

The initial thought was to try to keep the location drivable to minimize changes to guests' travel plans, but a review of the event registration list showed that attendees were coming from all over. Many of these guests were also bringing their families. This helped the Maritz Global Events account representative narrow down her search, and she contacted the Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Resort in Orlando.

*Continued next page...*

## The Results

On the morning of May 5, Maritz Global Events had a proposal from the Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin. Hours later, there was a signed contract in hand.

Because of the great relationships between Maritz Global Events and the national sales managers as well as standard contracts already in place for hotel chains, the deal with the Swan and Dolphin was done effectively and efficiently.

RWA had a fantastic turnout despite having to move their guests, exhibitors and suppliers at the last minute.