

## Using the IMAPS Host Hotels Helps the Society

With planning already underway for the 2007 Symposium in San Jose, now is a good time to talk to you about a serious topic of risk that faces IMAPS for each symposium – ROOM BLOCKS AND ATTRITION.

The IMAPS Annual Symposium requires a LOT of meeting space for our events: such as technical sessions, multiple committee meetings, PDCs, social events, and the exposition. In order for IMAPS to obtain the meeting space it needs we are required to commit to a substantial block of sleeping rooms. Allotted meeting space is tied to the number of sleeping rooms booked in the hotel. Hoteliers allocate meeting space to groups in accordance to the percentage of sleeping rooms they are utilizing in the hotel on a day-by-day basis. Hotels will not just sell the meeting space without a room block commitment, as meeting space is used as an enticement to sell sleeping rooms to other groups. Convention Centers take into consideration the number of rooms we have blocked citywide when negotiating with us to use their facilities.

To protect the value of the rooms that have been reserved for IMAPS, hotels include a clause in their contract for monetary damages if the event's attendees occupy fewer rooms than agreed. This slippage by the group is known as attrition. Damages sought by the hotels due to attrition can run into hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Discount Internet bookings increase the competition we face when trying to fill our room blocks. Because of the adverse consequences of the risk associated with attrition, some technical societies and associations are considering drastic measures such as:

- tying room reservations to the registration fee, i.e., not being able to register until you book a room in an official group hotel;
- no longer engaging in providing room blocks for attendees

The goal of this article is to help inform you, our members, of this challenge that the Society faces. IMAPS' primary concern is to provide you with the availability of a quality room during the Symposium. You can help the Society by booking within the reserved room block so that the Society can obtain the necessary meeting space it needs, meet its obligation to the hotels, avoid hefty attrition fees, and keep the registration and hotel room fees down. We appreciate your loyalty.