



# INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF VENUE MANAGERS REGION 5



## A letter from the director

Hello, Region 5!

And so it begins - another year is upon us. What do you hope to accomplish in 2018? Be it personal or professional, the new year is a great time to assess where you are versus where you would like to be. That same thought process can be applied to the association. The IAVM Board of Directors will be convening in Dallas later this month to review IAVM's progress over the past year and to plot our course for 2018. If you have any concerns, comments, or opinions you would like to share on IAVM, please reach out to me in the next two weeks and I will pass those along to the board. Look for a full report on the board meeting in next month's newsletter. May 2018 be your best year yet!

Sincerely,

*Todd Hunt*

January 1st, 2018

**Region 5 IAVM News**

**SAVE THE DATE**

- April 22-24, 2018 -

After a great meeting in New Orleans this past spring, Region 5 is joining Regions 2, 3 & 4 for what is billed as a **Super Regional Meeting** in **Lexington Kentucky**.

The planning committee has been working in the background to provide you with a great opportunity to network and learn. We've got a great site, a reasonable hotel deal and a wonderful City Region 5 has never been to. If you have any program topics of interest, please share them with Courtney Dyer, CFE [cdyer@vbgov.com](mailto:cdyer@vbgov.com) and he'll pass along to the planning committee.

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### **WE WANT YOU!**

Do you want to become involved in IAVM Region 5? Do you want to meet colleagues who share your passion for our industry? A great way to achieve your goal is to sign up for a Region 5 committee. You will receive far more than you give and make some incredible friendships to boot! You won't be sorry, so complete the form today and return as directed.

**[Download the 2017 Volunteer Form](#)**

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### **Region 5 IAVM Job Postings**

#### **GREATER RICHMOND CONVENTION CENTER JOB POSTINGS**

##### **[Parking/Box Office Manager \(Full-time\)](#)**

The Parking/Box Office Manager manages all aspects of parking, box office and utility services operations.

##### **[Sales Assistant \(Part-time\)](#)**

The Part-Time Sales Assistant provides assistance and administrative support to the Sales & Marketing Department.

For full job descriptions and application information, visit the [employment page](#) at [richmondcenter.com](http://richmondcenter.com).

Please submit any job postings to [iavmr5@gmail.com](mailto:iavmr5@gmail.com)

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## Alabama

The newest member to the SMG Mobile family is Lydia Jones. Lydia has been working in the hospitality industry for over 9 years. She attended the University of South Alabama where she majored in Sports and Event Marketing. In college, she interned at the Mobile Civic Center. Shortly after college, she began her career in hospitality at the Renaissance Hotels of Mobile, where she worked in sales and events. She has now come full circle and back to SMG as our newest Sales Manager at the Mobile Convention Center. In her free time, Lydia loves spending time with her family, with her first son being born in July 2017, and traveling.



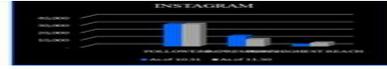
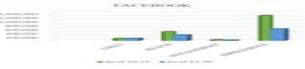
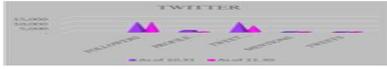
## Puerto Rico

These past months have been of reflection and work towards the recovery of our business. HR keeps on working on facilitating services to employees that are still in need. We had our traditional Thanksgiving Lunch. There is a lot to be thankful for, especially that we kept our employment and we will be back to business in no time. We will be hiring soon for the busy season that starts in January. Positions that we put on hold and now we must retake on the hiring process are: Concierges, Vault Staff, Marketing Coordinator, IT Technician, and Ticket Sellers.



Instagram- our followers kept increasing and went from 30,107 to 30,270. The post with the highest reach was an image promoting Don Omar concerts in February 2018.

Coliseo de Puerto Rico, ranked for the first time in the Social Media Charts of Venues Today, #29 of the world!



As part of our community efforts, we continue coordinating groups of volunteers from different companies for United for Puerto Rico, including Coliseo de Puerto Rico Staff day of volunteering.

November represents the season for giving thanks. November marks the time were people look around and give thanks for all they have. Hurricane Maria left a lot of people hopeless and despaired. We wanted to spare a little of hope and joy and we were more than honored by having the opportunity of preparing the traditional Thanksgiving dinner for more than 2,500 people. After 36 hours of non-stop work, we prepared 1,600lbs of turkey!



Since some universities are starting to reopen and welcoming students again, we received the visit of 'Instituto de Banca de Guayama. Students did a tour through our facility, main kitchen and other relevant operational areas. All the future F&B professionals were amazed and mesmerized by our facility, the size of our kitchen and all the back-of-the-house areas that as clients they are not able to appreciate, but is the heart of this state-of-the-art building.

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## Florida



GAINSVILLE - In June 2017 the Stephen C. O'Connell Center finalized its full-time operations staff with the hiring of David Straley as Event Coordinator. Before being hired in a full-time role, David served as Interim Event Coordinator from September 2016 to June 2017 while he completed his Baccalaureate studies. David graduated from the University of Florida with a Bachelor's of Science degree in Sport Management and a Minor in Entrepreneurship. He is originally from Palm Beach Gardens, FL and worked in the O'Connell Center general workforce as a Supervisor before being promoted to Interim Event Coordinator.

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## Georgia

**ATLANTA** - The No. 1 convention, sports and entertainment destination in the world is setting the gold standard for environmental sustainability.

The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) has awarded LEED Gold certification to the 3.9-million-square-foot Georgia World Congress Center (GWCC), the largest convention center in the world to achieve this status. LEED, an acronym for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, is an internationally-recognized green building certification awarded to facilities that employ sustainability strategies, including indoor air quality, energy and atmosphere, sustainable sites, water efficiency, material and resources.

The GWCC initially earned LEED Silver certification in 2014, becoming the largest LEED certified convention center in the world. "Improving our performance from LEED Silver to Gold reflects our commitment to having better buildings, being better neighbors, and hosting better events," said Tim Trefzer, LEED Accredited Professional and the GWCCA's Corporate Social Responsibility Manager. "It's a testament to our leadership's vision to anchor the greenest convention, sports, and entertainment destination in the world."

The GWCCA's 220-acre downtown Atlanta campus strategically integrates solar power, electric vehicle charging stations, sustainable procurement practices, green cleaning, and a comprehensive waste diversion focus that includes food donation, composting and recycling. An industry leader in sustainability, the Authority's campus is the ideal setting to host the USGBC's annual Greenbuild International Conference and Expo in 2019.

The Savannah International Trade & Convention Center (SITCC), managed by the GWCCA, recently obtained LEED Gold certification; also Mercedes-Benz Stadium, located on the GWCCA campus, recently announced its LEED Platinum certification.

The Authority's sustainability highlights include:

The GWCCA campus has diverted more than 14 million pounds of material from landfills since 2010 through recycling, composting, donations, and reuse.

Energy-efficiency upgrades to the campus have resulted in a minimum of 39 percent savings on utilities.

Plumbing fixture upgrades have resulted in saving 32 percent more water than required by building code.

The 1.6 megawatts of solar panels on the GWCCA campus generate enough electricity to power 160 homes in Georgia annually.

GWCCA staff has experienced a 48 percent reduction in traditional commuting through options such as public transportation, carpooling, walking/biking, and driving low-emitting, fuel-efficient vehicles.



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**ATLANTA** - Georgia Dome Demolition Sets Stage for New GWCCA Campus Development  
The Georgia Dome - the iconic, game-changing venue that forever altered Atlanta and the

state of Georgia's cultural, architectural and economic landscape - was imploded at 7:30 a.m. Eastern Standard Time on Nov. 20.

Taking a mere 12 seconds to flatten the building's cable-supported roof and main structure, the implosion utilized more than 10,000 man-hours of preparation, 4,800 total pounds of strategically placed explosives, and approximately six miles of detonating cord and one mile of electrical wire connections.

The Dome's calling card was its versatility. It was the only venue to ever host the Olympics, the Super Bowl, and the NCCA Men's Final Four. The Georgia Dome hosted its final public event, Monster Jam, on March 5.

Built for \$214 million by the State of Georgia and operated by the Georgia World Congress Center Authority (GWCCA), the Georgia Dome opened in 1992 and served as home to the NFL's Atlanta Falcons for 25 years prior to the team's move next door to state-of-the-art Mercedes-Benz Stadium, also on the GWCCA campus. More than 1,400 events took place at the Georgia Dome, drawing 37 million guests and generating more than \$7 billion in economic impact.

Cleanup is expected to take approximately three months, laying groundwork for a 1,010-room luxury convention center hotel serving the adjacent Georgia World Congress Center. Ground breaking is scheduled for early 2019. The site also will include a new 600-space parking deck and The Home Depot Backyard, a 13-acre greenspace designed for game day tailgating at Mercedes-Benz Stadium and community programming on non-event days.



south of the Peach State's capital city.

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#### **ATLANTA** - Walker Stalker Con Keeps Growing at the Georgia World Congress Center

The fifth anniversary of Walker Stalker Con, a convention for fans of "The Walking Dead" and other post-apocalyptic horror entertainment held Oct. 27-29 at the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta, was also the event's biggest gathering so far.

"It was our largest event ever," said Francesca Garrett, vice president of marketing for Fan Fest, which produces Walker Stalker Con in 16 cities in the U.S. and abroad. After Atlanta, the next largest events are in Chicago and London, which boast 35,000 and 30,000 attendees, respectively, Garrett said.

It's only fitting that Walker Stalker's Atlanta edition is the brand's most successful. AMC's "The Walking Dead" is set in the Atlanta area, and the top-rated show is primarily filmed in and around the town of Senoia in Coweta County,

Walker Stalker boasted an impressive lineup of meet-and-greet sessions with numerous stars of "The Walking Dead," including headliners Andrew Lincoln (Rick Grimes) and Norman Reedus (Daryl Dixon), panel discussions, plenty of cosplay and a zombie-fied marketplace of vendor merchandising that filled the GWCC's expansive Building B exhibition halls.

Imagine if you were able to meet, spend time with, take selfies and get autographs from your favorite actors or celebrities. That's the basic premise of Walker Stalker Con - by fans, for fans. "Our focus is on authentic interactions with actors, free family-friendly activities and a relaxed environment where the actors can be themselves," reads an excerpt from [walkerstalkercon.com](http://walkerstalkercon.com).

Attendance was projected at 65,000 over the course of the three-day event, and although an official head-count was not available at the time of this article's publishing, preliminary estimates range from 65,000-70,000.



**KENNESAW** - Joe Skopitz has joined Kennesaw State's Department of Event and Venue Management as the Director of Operations and Assistant General Manager at Fifth Third Bank Stadium. Skopitz comes to KSU with over 20 years of experience, most notably with Centennial Olympic Park in Atlanta, GA. With a passion for special events and facility management, and extensive experience in operations, corporate events and live entertainment, he is ready to help make a difference at KSU.



"I am grateful for the opportunity to work with the existing staff and the wonderful talent already on the roster," Joe said. "To work within in the community that I live will provide an opportunity to create experiences and events that will enhance the lives of students in Cobb County and people throughout the region. Kennesaw State is definitely on the rise, and I look forward to growing with the University."

Mr. Skopitz is a graduate of the University of Georgia, obtaining both his bachelor's and master's degrees in Athens, GA. He is also a graduate of IAVM's Venue Management School at Oglebay. Joe and his wife Audrey reside in Marietta with their five-year- old twin boys.

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## Louisiana

NEW ORLEANS - Leah Sulony has been named Event Manager at the New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center (MCCNO) - the sixth largest convention center in the nation. In her new capacity, she will be responsible for managing all aspects of the event planning process. As a liaison between the Center and clients, she will guide clients through event preparation and show set-up, monitor in-house events and oversee all related activities to ensure successful events.



Sulony began her career in New Mexico where she worked to monitor and inspect vehicles for the U.S. Air Force. The New Orleans native then transitioned from her military career to become an International Air Freight Pricing Specialist for UPS Supply Chain Solutions before serving as Director of International Operations for Chicago's New World Van Lines.

After a brief stint as a small-business owner, she began her service in the hospitality industry. She gathered experience as Event Services Manager for Hilton Worldwide and as Operations Manager for Hosts New Orleans before landing at the New Orleans Convention Center.

Leah has experience handling logistics for all manner of events, from intimate receptions to parades with more than 10,000 guests in attendance. "We are proud to bring Leah on board and look forward to seeing what she can do for the Convention Center and the city of New Orleans," said Donna Karl Sakelakos, Director of Events at the New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center.



NEW ORLEANS - Lauren Castine been named Event Manager at the New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center (MCCNO) - the sixth largest convention center in the nation. In her new capacity, she will be responsible for managing all aspects of the event planning process. As a liaison between the Center and clients, she will guide clients through event preparation and show set-up, monitor in-house events and oversee all related activities to ensure successful events.

A native of Louisiana, Castine's career path took her around the country as she continued to hone her skills. From her stay in New York where she interned for a variety of high-profile brands like BET Network and the fashion brand Valentino, to her work in Washington D.C. as the Director of Meetings and Events for the American Institute of Architecture Students (AIAS), Castine comes to the MCCNO with a sharp knowledge of the event planning world.

In her previous role as Director of Meetings and Events for AIAS, Castine handled forecasting, development, and execution of D.C. area and international conferences. With more than 6 years of experience under her belt, Castine returns to Louisiana to make an impact as Event Manager at the New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center.

Castine graduated from LSU in 2011 with a Bachelor of Science. She also aims to complete her

Masters in Tourism Administration and Events Management in 2019 from the George Washington University School of Business.

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NEW ORLEANS - New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center Employees Deliver Holiday Cheer to Families at The Ronald McDonald House of New Orleans

Toys and Supplies Donated by Convention Center Staff, plus food donation by Centerplate



***Convention Center employees AJ McCorkle, Clair Lorell, Kelli Zohar-Davis, Maurice Jackson, Megan Clay, Cassie Jones and Nicole Newton helped load up vehicles with food, toys and supplies bound for the Ronald McDonald House.***

Santa's elves brought plenty of smiles to small faces as they delivered a hefty sack of toys to The Ronald McDonald House of New Orleans. New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center employees donated money via payroll deductions to raise funds to buy toys and supplies for the young patients who are spending their Christmas in a hospital setting as they battle various illnesses, as well as toys for their siblings, and gift cards and toiletry packs for the parents. The group also purchased items for the Ronald McDonald House, such as snacks, sheet sets, pillows, and flashlights.



***Convention Center employee Erik Gonzalez loads in an armful of gifts for the residents of the Ronald McDonald House.***

Convention Center employees Kelli Zohar-Davis, Erin Oubre, Clair Lorell, Megan Clay, and Mildred Simon used their personal PTO hours to shop for toys at various local stores on Friday, December 15. The following week, on Tuesday, December 18, employees Nicole Newton, Maurice Jackson, Erik Gonzalez, Kelli Zohar-Davis, Cassie Jones, Megan Clay, Matthew Fryou, and AJ McCorkle distributed the toys and gifts to the families who reside at the Ronald McDonald House during treatment. Centerplate, the Convention Center's exclusive food and beverage provider, generously donated 60 boxed lunches containing sandwiches, chips and fruit, plus cookies for a decorating activity.

"We are so grateful to the Convention Center employees who donated, shopped for, and delivered gifts and meals to the families staying in the House. It's heartwarming to know that people care and took the time to make Christmas special for everyone," said Brooke Stewart, Programs and Volunteer Coordinator Ronald McDonald House Charities of South Louisiana.

The Convention Center's staff chose The Ronald McDonald House of New Orleans because of the organization's commitment to improving the quality of life for families of seriously ill children.



The mission of the Ronald McDonald House Charities of South Louisiana is to provide a "home-away-from-home" to families of seriously ill children and to provide programs that give comfort, compassion and care to children and their families. Parents with critically ill children are invited to bring their immediate family to stay in the Ronald McDonald House, free of charge, while their sick child receives treatment. The house provides a safe, homey place to stay, laundry facilities, and meals/snacks for the residents so that families don't have to incur additional expenses and be separated during an already stressful time.

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### **Mississippi**

Please submit your news to [iavmr5@gmail.com](mailto:iavmr5@gmail.com)

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### **North Carolina**

Please submit your news to [iavmr5@gmail.com](mailto:iavmr5@gmail.com)

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### **South Carolina**

Please submit your news to [iavmr5@gmail.com](mailto:iavmr5@gmail.com)

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**Tennessee**

Please submit your news to [iavmr5@gmail.com](mailto:iavmr5@gmail.com)

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**Virginia / Washington / Maryland**

Please submit your news to [iavmr5@gmail.com](mailto:iavmr5@gmail.com)

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**Allied Member News**

Please submit your news to [iavmr5@gmail.com](mailto:iavmr5@gmail.com)

IAVM Region 5 | 635 Fritz, Dr. Suite 100, Coppell, TX 75019

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