

FEBRUARY 2022 NEWSLETTER



**INTERNATIONAL
ASSOCIATION OF
VENUE MANAGERS
REGION 5**

Hello from your Region 5 Newsletter Committee!

Hello Region 5!

We're BACK! We appreciate your patience and can't wait to tell your stories and share your good news!

Since it has been a while, we'd like to reintroduce ourselves. Your Region 5 Newsletter Committee Members are Rachel Caldwell and Heather Lightsey. Rachel is a Senior Event Manager at the Georgia World Congress Center. Heather is an Event Manager at the Destin-Fort Walton Beach Convention Center.

In addition to our monthly newsletter, we are incredibly happy to announce our extended social media presence. You can now follow Region 5 on Twitter and Instagram @IAVM_R5.

We accept news items or suggestions at anytime via iavmr5@gmail.com

Take care,

Rachel & Heather

UPCOMING EVENTS



SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

IAVM Region 5 CVP Application Fee (\$125.00 Value) - Deadline Friday, February 11, 2022 - [APPLY HERE](#)

IAVM Regions 1, 2, 3, & 5 Super Regional Meeting Registration Fee (\$250.00 Value) - Deadline Monday, February 25, 2022 - [APPLY HERE](#)

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Director of Talent Strategy – Raleigh Convention and Performing Arts Complex – Raleigh, NC

[Link to Apply](#)

Engineering Assistant – Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center – Columbia, SC

[Link to Apply](#)

Event Manager – Georgia World Congress Center Authority – Atlanta, GA

[Link to Apply](#)

Event Manager – Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center – Columbia, SC

[Link to Apply](#)

Operations Crew Member – Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center – Columbia, SC

[Link to Apply](#)

Security Manager – Music City Center – Nashville, TN

[Link to Apply](#)

Senior Event Manager – Georgia World Congress Center Authority – Atlanta, GA

[Link to Apply](#)

News & Venue Updates

FLORIDA

DESTIN - Congratulations to Heather Lightsey, Event Manager at the Destin-Fort Walton Beach Convention Center, for completing IAVM's Venue Management School Graduate Institute in December. For more information on Venue Management School, please visit

<https://www.iavm.org/vms/vms-home>



GAINESVILLE - The Stephen C. O'Connell Center is proud to announce that we have hired three new Senior Event Coordinators to join our arena family: Melanie Feltoon, Hadley Owen, and Thomas Soto.



Melanie joins the O'Connell Center team as a Senior Event Coordinator after leaving the IMG Academy in Bradenton. Melanie earned her master's degree from Lynn University in Boca Raton. Melanie has worked in operations for several different places in Ohio, Tennessee and Florida. She will be bringing a lot of experience to our Operations team.



A graduate of the University of Florida, Hadley joins our team after having most recently served as a Supervisor/Advisor in our Event Staff division. Hadley originally joined our arena's team in August of 2017 as a part-time crew member before being promoted to Event Staff Supervisor in December of 2017. During her time as a part-time crew member, Hadley has earned multiple awards including Supervisor of the Month in 2021 and Supervisor of the Year in 2019.



With a Master of Science degree in Management from the University of Florida, Thomas joins the O'Connell Center team after spending 5 years at the arena as a part-time employee. Thomas originally started at the arena in August of 2016 as a crew member just prior to the most recent building renovation. Since being promoted to Supervisor in the Event Staff Division, Thomas has also served in a few additional roles at the arena: Facility Intern, Hire Coordinator, Audience Development Assistant, and Building Coordinator.

GEORGIA



ATHENS - The Classic Center Breaks Ground on a New Arena

Exciting things are happening for The Classic Center in Athens, Georgia. Plans for the new arena were approved in 2020 and now construction has begun! The new opportunities that The Classic Center Arena will bring to downtown Athens will create a remarkable experience for all visitors and community members to

enjoy. The formal groundbreaking ceremony for the new arena is slated for April 28, 2022. This new facility is expected to open in the Fall of 2023.

Not only will The Classic Center bring new prospects for more concerts, conventions, events, tournaments, and a larger arena for the University of Georgia Club Hockey team, The Classic Center has formally signed an agreement with an ECHL team that will soon call The Classic Center Arena their new home. The new arena will be built into the foundation of downtown Athens echoing the college town, its rich music history, outstanding clubs, restaurants, and breweries, along with walkable access to hotels, making Athens a winning destination for all types of events.

This facility will have 5,500 permanent seats with the capacity to hold up to 7,500 people along

with the ability to transform for any occasion from concerts and sports tournaments to banquets and general sessions. The Classic Center Arena will create over 600 new jobs for the local community, provide an additional 90,000 hotel room nights, and will provide an estimated \$33 million in annual economic impact.

The new arena will be LEED certified, which will maintain The Classic Center's goal of reducing its carbon footprint at the same time as continuing the facility's growth while creating sustainability. Since opening in 1995, The Classic Center has doubled in size but is using less than half of the original energy levels that were once being used.

ATLANTA - State Farm Arena Hires Tad Boyette as Coordinator, Event Operations

State Farm Arena is excited to announce that Tad Boyette has joined the Event Operations team as a Coordinator, Event Operations. Coming from the University of Florida with 2+ years of experience in conference and event planning, graduate and undergraduate degrees from UF, and arena experience from student employment at the Stephen C. O'Connell Center, we are excited for him to be a part of the team. Tad has also previously been a member of IAVM while also serving as a 2019 VMS intern in Tampa.



When he is not at work, Tad enjoys staying active through playing basketball, golf, and spending time outdoors when possible.

LOUISIANA



NEW ORLEANS - New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center Sales Director Elaine Williams Nominated for PCMA Supplier of the Year

Elaine Williams, CMP, CEM-AP, Director of Sales at the New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, was named as a nominee in the Professional Convention Management Association's 2022 Professional Excellence Awards in the Supplier of the Year category. The award, established in 1983, honors a PCMA supplier who exemplifies excellence to their organization, PCMA, and the business events community.

A supplier is considered a person or business who supports bringing an event to fruition. Williams'

nomination cements her as one of the leaders of the convention and events industry and demonstrates the impact her work has on the events that annually brings thousands of visitors to the New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center.

Williams's career in the Convention Center began with ARAMARK in 1996 when she was named sales manager. While working for ARAMARK, Williams rose through the ranks to achieve the positions of director of sales, director of operations and interim general manager. She joined the New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center sales team in 2007 as a national sales manager. As Director of Sales, Williams leads a team of ten and is responsible for targeting new business as well as selling and servicing the Center's national association and corporate accounts.

In 2005, Williams successfully completed the CMP exam, becoming a Certified Meeting Professional

(CMP) designated by the Convention Industry Council. A graduate of the University of New Orleans, Williams has completed several Hospitality Management Training programs consisting of both internal ARAMARK programs as well as those offered by affiliated hospitality associations.

In May 2021, Williams became the first facility representative in the history of the International Association of Exhibits and Events (IAEE) to earn an Advanced Professional certification in Exhibition Management.

"Elaine has been in the event industry for 25 years, and every single day of that experience shines through when she interacts with our internal and external customers," says Michael J. Sawaya, Convention Center President. "This nomination is a testament to her never-quit work ethic, inexhaustible drive, and passion for providing outstanding service. Elaine does things the right way and is always looking to bring fresh ideas and innovative thinking to her role as Director of Sales. We could not be happier that she is receiving this well-deserved recognition and look forward to her bright future here at the New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center."

The winners of the PCMA Visionary Awards, including the award for Supplier of the Year, will be announced during a live event on March 24th in National Harbor, Maryland.

NEW ORLEANS - Leslie Lotten Named Best Up-and-Coming Professional by Facilities and Destinations Magazine

The New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center is pleased to congratulate Leslie Lotten, Assistant Director of Event Services, as she was named one of the nation's best Up-and-Coming Professionals by Facilities and Destinations, a leading news source for professional planners of conventions, meetings, entertainment and special events.



This honor, voted on by members of the Conventions and Events Industry, recognizes the rising stars on the supplier side of the meetings industry, ranging from event coordinators to sales managers to chefs. These individuals are integral to the various stages of any meeting, from booking to execution.

Lotten, who is going into her 36th year as a member of the New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center team, is no stranger to awards celebrating her contributions to the Conventions and Events Industry. In 2018, she received the "Tourism Matters" award from New Orleans and Company, which is granted to select tourism industry professionals that have distinguished themselves through hard work, dedication, and years of service.



NEW ORLEANS - New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center President Michael Sawaya Recognized as a Top Leader by *New Orleans 500*

The New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center (NOENMCC) is pleased to announce that Convention Center President Michael J. Sawaya was included in Biz New Orleans' New Orleans 500 publication which profiles business leaders who are driving the greater New Orleans economy and shaping the region's future.

Mr. Sawaya came to New Orleans in 2018 from San Antonio, TX. Since his arrival, he has been a

shepherd of the New Orleans Convention Center, embarking on an ambitious \$557-million five-year capital improvement plan – the largest in the NOENMCC’s 37-year history. He has also been the guiding force in getting the organization and the facility back to business following Hurricane Ida and throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Michael J. Sawaya is a leader’s leader with 43 years of experience in the hospitality industry,” says

Jerry Reyes, President of the Ernest N. Morial New Orleans Exhibition Hall Authority and Area Managing Director for Highgate Hotels. “The good work he does at the Convention Center ripples through the economy. From spearheading the transformation of part of the facility into a temporary field hospital early in the pandemic to working with the National Guard and the Louisiana Department of Health to house troops and patients after Hurricane Ida — Michael is an inspiring leader who continues to demonstrate his steadfast commitment to our organization and to the people of our region. We are thrilled that Biz New Orleans has recognized him in its *New Orleans 500* publication.”

This year, under Mr. Sawaya’s leadership, the NOENMCC was selected as one of the city’s “Best Places to Work” by *New Orleans CityBusiness* and received a “New Orleans Top Workplaces” Award

from *The Times-Picayune | The New Orleans Advocate*. The NOENMCC was also named as a National Top Workplace for 2021, the only convention center in America to hold that title.

NORTH CAROLINA

CHARLOTTE - Ovens Auditorium Ranked Ninth Worldwide in Theatre Ticket Sales

Ovens Auditorium has been ranked the number 9 theatre venue in the world in ticket sales according to Pollstar's Year End Ticket Sales Report, published earlier this week. According to the report, theatre shows at Ovens Auditorium between Nov. 2020 and Nov. 2021 sold 91,842 tickets and grossed \$8,122,722.



Despite the resounding impact of the pandemic on the live events industry, Ovens Auditorium saw increases in both ticket sales and revenue when compared to 2019, which can be largely attributed to a record-breaking run of Broadway's *Wicked*. Presented in partnership with Blumenthal Performing Arts Center, the four-week, 32-performance production was seen by more than 70,000 patrons this past fall. Its final week of performances marked the highest-grossing week ever for a show presented by Blumenthal Performing Arts at Ovens Auditorium. Other high-selling 2021 shows included *Rauw Alejandro*, *Gabriel Iglesias* and *Blippi the Musical*.

"As Charlotte's largest-capacity theater and an integral piece of the city's arts and culture history, Ovens Auditorium has been a beloved part of our community for decades, and we're thrilled by this well-deserved recognition on a global stage," said Tom Murray, Chief Executive Officer of the Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority (CRVA), which manages the City of Charlotte-owned venue. "We're incredibly grateful to our patrons for providing unwavering support in such uncertain times, and to our partners of Blumenthal for helping us welcome iconic Broadway shows like *Wicked* to our storied stage. This is a great testament to the power of live entertainment and the arts."

"We had high hopes for *Wicked* as the first show to reopen in our theaters at full capacity, but the experience exceeded our expectations," said Blumenthal CEO Tom Gabbard. "Our audiences went above and beyond in adhering to the mandatory mask policy and the wildly successful

engagement showed us what we suspected all along: that audiences are ready and eager to get back in the theater to experience the electricity of live performance once again.”

Ovens Auditorium opened in 1955 alongside the Bojangles Coliseum as part of the city's first major civic auditorium and dedicated sports and concert venue. In 2019, the two venues merged to become officially known as the Bojangles Entertainment Complex, or the BOplex. In 2020, with the addition of a 35,000 square-foot connector, the two venues were officially unified. Ovens Auditorium also received additional enhancements, adding new seats and carpeting throughout the venue to elevate the guest experience.



RALEIGH - Raleigh Convention & Performing Arts Complex receives City of Raleigh's Environmental Climate Action Award for Energy and Waste

Each year, the Environmental Advisory Board recognizes a number of awardees for their contributions to

climate action in Raleigh, NC. The Climate Action awards recognize the work of residents, organizations and businesses in Raleigh that advances the goals of Raleigh's Community Climate Action Plan. The plan's objectives are to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 80% by 2050, build community resilience to climate change impacts and support climate equity. The winners of these awards are making meaningful contributions to awareness, action and equity in our community.

With over a million guests annually attending conventions, concerts, and theatre performances at the Raleigh Convention and Performing Arts Complex (RCPAC), these venues showcase the City of Raleigh's continued dedication to sustainability on an international, national, and local level. From ongoing reductions in water and energy usage to environmentally sound construction and capital improvement efforts, the RCPAC has demonstrated its commitment to intentional, sustainably-minded choices that protect, conserve, and improve our local and global environment and community. Since 2017, the facility has diverted over 150,000 pounds of food from the landfill, created over 38,000 pounds of compost and avoided nearly 2000 tons of CO2 emissions from its waste management practices. The 500kW solar array on the Convention Center roof produce enough energy to power 100 NC homes. The facility's use of LED lights both reduces energy use by over 318,000 watts per day and diverts electrical waste from the landfill because of longer-lasting bulbs. Additionally, native plantings and landscaping at the complex provide habitats for pollinators and opportunity for public education about pollinator protection. The RCPAC is dedicated to providing excellent services to Raleigh's visitors and guests and to demonstrating the viability of sustainable business practices.



RALEIGH - Sodexo Live! Renews Long-Term Agreement with Raleigh Convention & Performing Arts Complex



RALEIGH CONVENTION & PERFORMING ARTS COMPLEX

Sodexo Live!, the leading hospitality partner to the world's most iconic venues, announced a multi-year

renewal of its partnership with the Raleigh Convention & Performing Arts Complex. Sodexo Live! provides catering services to the Raleigh Convention Center and other venues that make up the Complex — Red Hat Amphitheater, Coastal Credit Union Music Park and Duke Energy Center for the Performing Arts — which together welcome nearly a million visitors each year.

Under the local leadership of General Manager Jamie Jenkins, the Sodexo Live! culinary team is a vital part of the Raleigh Convention Center's award-winning sustainability efforts, which include:

- using 100% biodegradable food-service items;
- pledging to source a high amount of food from local vendors and farmers;
- donating excess food to community food banks;
- converting used cooking oil into biofuel; and
- diverting 40% of its food waste from the landfill and into compost instead.

Sodexo Live! Executive Chef Phil Evans has spent years perfecting his craft in some of the country's finest kitchens, including five-star and five-diamond resorts. From his beginnings working in the kitchen of three-star Michelin chef Marc Meneau in France, Chef Phil has also served as executive sous chef at the St. Regis in Houston, executive chef at the St. Regis in Aspen, and as executive chef at the North Carolina's own acclaimed Umstead Hotel & Spa and Herons Restaurant.

The award-winning chefs on the team have prepared meals for four former U.S. presidents and world-renowned chefs Julia Child, Jacques Pepin, and Alice Waters, amongst others.

Through the extension of the current agreement, Sodexo Live! commits to providing significant capital contributions for enhanced guest services including new POS/CC systems, action stations, presentation items and equipment upgrades.

Kerry Painter, Raleigh Convention & Performing Arts Director/GM, said, "We are happy to expand our work with Sodexo Live! as we invest in the guest experience for everyone who comes to visit our properties in Raleigh. Their long-term commitment to hire local employees and utilize local suppliers is important, as we mutually seek to be revenue drivers for the broader local economy through the calendar of events we host here on a regular basis."

Sal Ferrulo, Executive Vice President, Sodexo Live!, added, "We look forward to continuing to provide our Raleigh partners with the unparalleled service experience they expect from us. We work with an ownership and a management team here in Raleigh that truly encourages us to focus on and innovate the guest experience, as we invest together in culinary programs that will attract functions of all sizes to the City of Oaks."

TENNESSEE

NASHVILLE - Music City Center President & CEO



to Serve as PCMA Chair

Music City Center President and Chief Executive Officer Charles Starks is the newly appointed Chairman of the Board for the Professional Convention and Management Association.

In 2022, PCMA, the global leader in business events, will combine its Board of Directors and Foundation Board of Trustees.

“I’m honored to serve as PCMA Chairman of the Board,” said Starks. “I’m excited to lead the organization in this next chapter alongside the most global and diverse board in its rich history.”

Starks has successfully led Music City Center since its inception. He is only the third convention center executive to chair the PCMA board in its 65-year history. He previously served in other capacities on the Board of Directors and the Foundation Board of Trustees.

Starks began his one-year term in January. He will continue his role at Music City Center during his PCMA service.

NASHVILLE - Music City Center Dresses Up Green Roof

The rooftop of Music City Center got dressed up for the holidays. A so-called “top dressing” was delivered to the facility’s four-acre green roof in late December.

Using a pneumatic system and 580 feet of hose, contractors pushed roughly 250 cubic yards of compost from a lower dock level to the rooftop to cover the urban greenspace.



The top dressing is necessary to compensate for natural erosion and reintroduce vital organisms that support plant life on the roof. The compost will also help germinate wildflowers that will be seeded in early spring.

Music City Center is known for its sustainability efforts, which are largely supported by the green roof. The roof absorbs heat, insulates the facility, reduces air pollution, and provides a natural habitat for plants, insects, and wildlife.



NASHVILLE - Small Tractor Clears Path for Big Business at Music City Center

Music City Center is located in the heart of downtown Nashville, where snow usually consists of a few flakes. This January, however, flakes gave way to flurries and 10 inches of

snow during a series of winter blasts.

A few years ago, the team at Music City Center decided to rethink their approach to winter weather, ditching the squeegees and shovels and opting for a small tractor.

The Ventrac 4500 gave workers the stability to crawl over any terrain and the capability to work in any conditions. The tractor can brush debris, remove snow, or spread salt, while the operator has access to automatic controls, lights, and heat.

During recent winter weather events, the Ventrac 4500 was used to clear paths at entry and exits points around the facility, including the loading docks, which helped maintain team member, partner, and guest access.

The versatile piece of equipment purchased to improve efficiency and ensure events would not be impeded by inclement weather has proven its effectiveness and its worth many times over, especially this year.

VIRGINIA

VIRGINIA BEACH - The Virginia Auditorium Managers & Suppliers Assn. was formed several decades ago as a social and professional venue for IAVM members. Recently the "core" group started meeting monthly to stay in touch and swap stories. Pictured are (left to right) Courtney

Dyer, CVE, Virginia Beach CC (retired), Bill Holland, CVE, VBCC, (retired), John Rhamstine, CVE, Norfolk Cultural Facilities, George Cook, Delta Graphics (retired) (Founder of VAMSA), and Joey Tsao, Hampton Coliseum (retired). Not pictured are Carman Barefoot, Richmond, (retired), Jim Mathias, Richmond, (retired), Bobby Chapman, (Roanoke), (retired), Frank Roach, (Hampton), Mike Abington, (Hampton), (retired) and Bill Waldo (honorary).



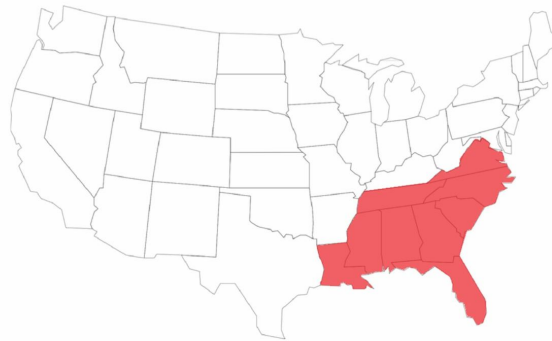
ALLIED NEWS

Hi Allied Partners! We want to hear from you. Send any news or updates to iavmr5@gmail.com

FUN FACT

Did You Know?

Region 5 includes the entire states of Virginia, Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia Florida, and Louisiana as well as Central and South America!



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