

# APRIL 2022 NEWSLETTER



## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Greetings Region 5 Members,

Spring is finally upon us! We've trudged through years of a pandemic that took loved ones, careers, and opportunities. Our venues have been secured from civil unrest and also engaged in much needed fights for justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion. Venue managers have waited and worked diligently & patiently to make it to the other side of COVID. We've been waiting to finally emerge back in to the full-swing of things – and maybe kick it in to overdrive to make up for lost time. Our spirits may have felt heavy, strained, or fatigued over the last two years. The good news is hope always returns. After every winter, a season of renewal and reinvigoration is welcomed. Life comes roaring back from dormancy, ready to color the world in bright blooms as reminders that life is beautiful and worth celebrating.

With a much needed since of renewed purpose, this year's annual Region 5 Meeting will be held in conjunction with Regions 1, 2, and 3. The theme is appropriately Reconnect | Recharge | Refocus. Many venue managers are hungry for professional development they've been unable to attain in the last couple years. There is so much we continue to learn from one another. Connection is good for our mental and emotional health. When we come together with other venue managers who can laugh with us and empathize with us, we are able to momentarily let the weight of the world lift. We find the spark and the joy again. These meetings help individuals return to their venues with more knowledge, better leadership skills, deeper networks, and a realigned sense of purpose.

From April 24-26, this year's Super Regional Meeting is in the idyllic, seaside city of Portland, Maine. I have been before, and Portland is an amazing city. If you are outdoorsy, there are beaches, wildlife, lighthouses, and local islands to explore. If you're indoorsy, the museums, historic sites, spas, restaurants, and breweries are excellent. Add an extra day or two to your trip in order to recharge and to enjoy all that the city has to offer. <https://www.visitportland.com/>

See you soon in Portland!

Kathryn Carlson, CVP

## UPCOMING EVENTS

*Portland, Maine*  
*April 24-26, 2022*



## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Region 5 is seeking volunteers to be on the Membership Committee! If you are interested, please email Nominating Chair, Carol Moore, at [carol@newnancentre.com](mailto:carol@newnancentre.com)

## INTERESTED IN HOSTING A CHAPTER MEETING?

Chapter meetings are a great way to network with industry peers in your local area as well as provide beneficial education opportunities. Chapter meetings can be as small as a luncheon or networking after-hours social to a full day of sessions.

Never planned a chapter meeting? No worries, your Region 5 Chapter Meeting Committee is here to help you through the process and provide resources to help you plan a successful meeting.

If you want to get started please reach out to your Region 5 Chapter Committee Chair, Bryan Miller, at [bmiller@vbgov.com](mailto:bmiller@vbgov.com).

## NEWS & VENUE UPDATES

### ALABAMA

#### **BIRMINGHAM - Protective Stadium**

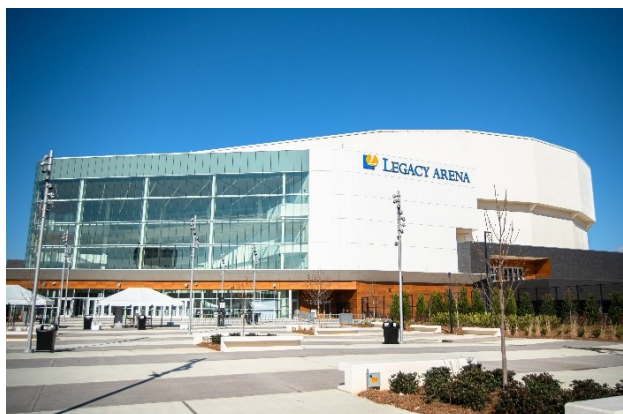
The Birmingham-Jefferson Convention Complex is excited to welcome a new addition to the Uptown campus! Protective Stadium broke ground in December 2018 and officially opened its doors on October 9, 2021 with its first-ever event as the "Home of the UAB Blazers" – a University of Alabama at Birmingham Blazer football game. Since then, Protective Stadium has hosted the remainder of UAB's home football games, the 2021 AHSAA Super 7 high school football championship games, the 2021 Birmingham Bowl matchup between the Houston Cougars and Auburn Tigers, and a pre-season friendly between the Birmingham Legion FC and Atlanta United FC.



Protective Stadium is set to be the new home of Legion FC, as well as host The World Games Opening and Closing Ceremonies and the majority of the USFL season, including the Magic City's



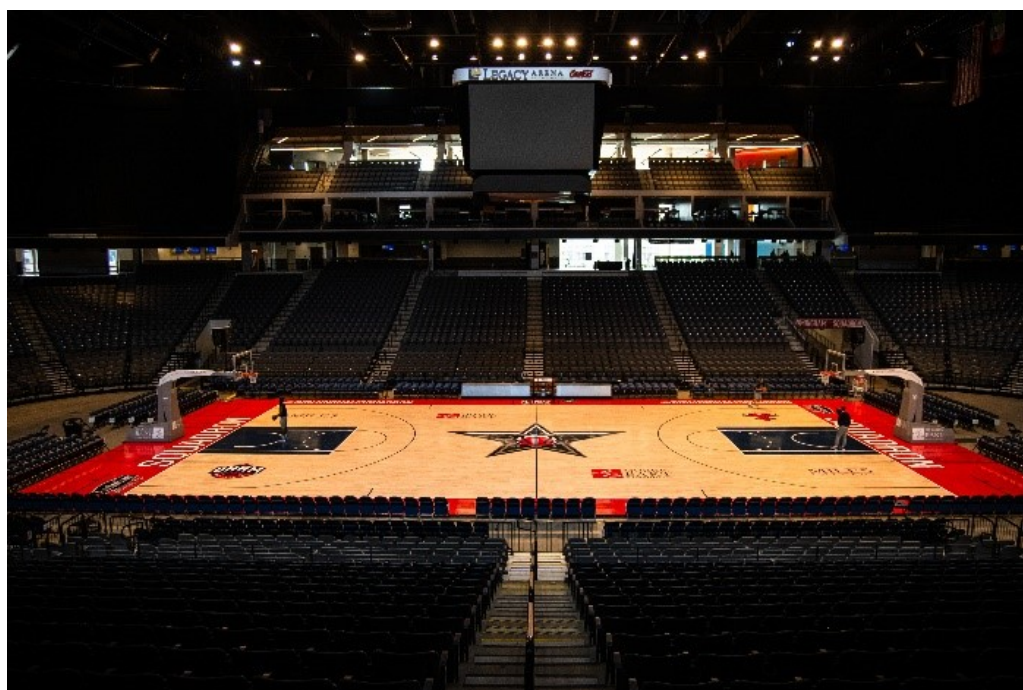
own Birmingham Stallions. The inaugural 2022 Legion FC season opener kicks off March 13 against the Tampa Bay Rowdies, and the inaugural USFL season opener is set between the New Jersey Generals and Birmingham Stallions on April 16.



## BIRMINGHAM - Legacy Arena

The Legacy Arena at the BJCC has undergone a \$125M renovation since Spring 2020 and officially re-opened with the inaugural Birmingham Squadron G-League basketball game on December 5. Trans-Siberian Orchestra took to the stage as the Legacy Arena's first concert since the renovation, playing to a packed-out arena on December 15. Upcoming events include the 2022 AHSAA Basketball State Finals, Billie Eilish,

SEC Gymnastics Championship, Jeff Dunham, and Eric Church.



## MOBILE - ASM Global Mobile Recognizes Well-Deserved Retirement & Promotions

ASM Global Mobile, which consists of the Arthur R. Outlaw Mobile Convention Center, the Mobile Civic Center, and



Saenger Theatre, is proud to recognize a well-deserved retirement and several promotions.

After 31 years, Regional Director of Finance, Sharee Self, has announced her retirement. Sharee has been crucial to the success of the SMG/ASM Global buildings here in Mobile and has provided unparalleled leadership to others around the region. We are grateful for her dedication over the years and wish her the best in retirement. With Sharee's retirement, we are proud to announce the promotion of Karen Turner to Director of Finance.

Several other promotions include Phillip Mitchell, previously our Executive Chef to Director of Food and Beverage. Melanie Pierce, a longtime sales manager to Senior Sales Manager, and Lydia Jones, most recently our Communications Manager to Senior Digital Marketing Manager.

## **FLORIDA**

### **ORLANDO - ORLANDO'S CAMPING WORLD STADIUM ADDS \$60 MILLION IN CONSTRUCTION UPGRADES AND ENHANCEMENTS**

Camping World Stadium, the iconic Orlando venue originally built in 1936, recently wrapped \$60 million in construction upgrades and enhancements designed to significantly improve the guest and promoter experience. The scope of the upgrades included adding 3,800 permanent seats to the north Plaza Level, creating a brand-new premium Club Level on the east and west sides with 16,500 square feet of enclosed space, converting "open-air" premium spaces to modernized restrooms and concession areas, enhancing building systems like security, lighting controls, Wi-Fi, DAS, HVAC, adding numerous point of sale (POS) options and creating new operation and production spaces in back-of-house.

These latest upgrades follow the \$207.7 million reconstruction that completely modernized the stadium in 2014. Construction was funded by the Orange County Tourist Development Tax (a.k.a. "bed tax") in both instances. HNTB Corporation (architect) and Barton-Malow Company (construction manager) were both key partners in the \$60 million construction upgrades.

"Providing top-notch amenities for guests and promoters alike remains an ongoing focus for us and I'm thrilled that we've been able to deliver," said Orlando Venues Chief Venues Officer Allen Johnson. "We continue to see a huge return on our investment in Camping World Stadium and that, in turn, benefits our entire Central Florida community."

Camping World Stadium is gearing up for a banner year with an unprecedented six concerts already announced for 2022: Billy Joel (March 12), Garth Brooks (March 26), Paul McCartney (May 28), Def Leppard & Mötley Crüe (June 19), Bad Bunny (August 5) and Red Hot Chili Peppers (September 15). Beyond live music, the stadium will once again host the Monster Jam World Finals (May 21-22), its annual bowl games and other sporting events.

Orlando Venues, the City of Orlando department that manages Camping World Stadium, oversees four other public venues including Amway Center, Tinker Field, Mennello Museum of American Art and Harry P. Leu Gardens.





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## MIAMI - Discover Boating Miami International Boat Show Returned with Great Fanfare to Downtown Miami and Miami Beach

The [2022 Discover Boating® Miami International Boat Show®](#) was a huge success by all measures after returning to the Miami Beach Convention Center and Downtown Miami for five days of boating and yachting fun. As the largest boat and yacht event in the world, the show welcomed over 100,000 visitors and featured more than a thousand of highly sought after boating and marine products, generating big business for the recreational boating industry.

This was the first iteration of the Discover Boating Miami International Boat Show – a joint production between Informa Markets, the National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA), and the International Yacht Brokers Association (IYBA) – combining the Miami International Boat Show, the Miami Yacht Show and SuperYacht Miami to create one seamless experience for exhibitors, customers and the marine industry at-large.

“The 2022 Discover Boating Miami International Boat Show was a historic success, welcoming over 100,000 guests to the largest boat and yacht event in the world and placing South Florida as the top boating and yachting destination,” said **Andrew Doole, president of U.S. boat shows with Informa Markets**. “We are grateful to the National Marine Manufacturers Association, the International Yacht Brokers Association, and all of our local partners for working diligently with our team to deliver a seamless and enjoyable experience for all attendees.”

The 2022 Miami event is the first boat show to be integrated with the Discover Boating brand, which is the North American lifestyle brand for boating aimed at attracting the next generation of boaters and engaging current boaters.

“The reimagined, re-branded Discover Boating Miami International Boat Show was a resounding success and couldn’t have come at a better time, bringing all facets of the recreational boating industry together to deliver a world-class, one of a kind experience to boaters from all walks of life,” noted **Frank Hugelmeyer, NMMA president**. “We are grateful for our partners and look forward to building off of the 2022 event to continue to deliver the best of boating to hundreds of thousands of boating enthusiasts from around the globe for years to come.”

SuperYacht Miami, which was the place to be for those looking for the largest and most luxurious yachts, showcased Damen’s 182-foot Gene Chaser and 180-foot Gene Machine as well as Oceanfast’s 163-foot Thunder, among other luxurious superyachts.

"The docks were full and the exhibitors were pleased with the consumer response. It is clear that our partnership with the NMMA in the new and reimagined Discover Boating Miami International Boat Show will be a successful one for many years to come," said **Paul Flannery, chief operating officer with the International Yacht Brokers Association**. "Many thanks to Frank Hugelmeyer and his team at NMMA and the folks at Informa Markets for their hard work in making the 2022 Miami Boat Show a great success! Next year will be even bigger and better."

With the return to the Miami Beach Convention Center – powered by West Marine – visitors got the chance to get an up-close look at power boats, engine manufacturers, marine accessories, electronics, and retail pavilions. The boat show was the first exhibitor to occupy the entire Miami Beach Convention Center since reopening after the pandemic and featured the largest variety of the nation's leading boat brands and thousands of marine accessories, gear, technologies and engines.

Sustainability and innovation took center stage at the 2022 Discover Boating Miami International Boat Show at the Progressive Boat Show Experience at Pride Park. As the ultimate boater's destination, Pride Park featured experiential activations such as the AquaZone from Nautical Ventures, the Costa Conservation Village – which was dedicated to sharing information on how we all can protect and promote a healthy marine environment – and the Charged! Electric Pavilion, which featured state of the art electric propulsion systems, battery powered boats, and high-tech products from across the globe.

Emerging technology trends also made their way to the 2022 boat show, specifically in the arena of NFTs, electric boats, and cryptocurrency awards. **Cloud Yachts**, a digital yacht dealer, created a strategic partnership with Informa Markets to release a limited series of 100 yacht NFTs at the 2022 Discover Boating Miami International Boat Show. The NFTs are original artwork by the top superyacht designers. The limited series is currently available on [OpenSea.io/CloudYachts](https://OpenSea.io/CloudYachts).

Historically, the Miami International Boat Show, the Miami Yacht Show, and SuperYacht Miami have attracted over 100,000 visitors from approximately 35 countries around the globe to South Florida while generating an estimated \$1.34 billion for the state.

The 2023 Discover Boating Miami International Boat Show is slated to return on February 15-19, 2023.

For more information, please visit: [www.miamiboatshow.com](http://www.miamiboatshow.com).

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## PENSACOLA - JEFFREY ALAN SHARP NAMED GENERAL MANAGER OF SAENGER THEATRE

ASM Global, the premier venue management and services company, has appointed Jeffrey Alan Sharp as General Manager of the Saenger Theatre, located in Pensacola.

"Jeffrey is a tremendous leader within ASM Global and has been a major contributor to the overall success of the Pensacola Saenger Theater within the operations department for the past six years." Said Tim Jorgensen, Regional Vice President of Arenas, Stadiums and Theaters for ASM Global. "I am confident I can speak on behalf of our entire ASM Global team as well as our contract administrators and valued community partners when I say that we are all thrilled to promote Jeffrey to General Manager."



"I am looking forward to carrying on the one-hundred-year tradition of the Pensacola Saenger Theatre and being a part of the next one hundred years," said Jeff Sharp, new General Manager of the Saenger Theatre.

Jeffrey Sharp brings with him to this role, an AS in Aviation Flight Technology, an AS in Business Management and a BS in Human Resources Management from the University of West

Florida. Sharp is also a United States Army Veteran of Gulf War I. Jeff's background also includes Restaurant Management and Commercial Building Management. Having been with the Saenger since 2015, he started out as a part time Maintenance Technician, was promoted to Maintenance Supervisor, then Operations Manager, and ultimately the General Manager.

## GEORGIA



**COLUMBUS** - Robert "Rob" Landers, Director of the Columbus Civic Center, is at the heart of an art movement in Columbus, Georgia. At the age of 36, Rob is the youngest African American to hold the General Manager position for a venue of 10,000 in Columbus. Rob plays on his youthfulness, by staying in tune with the current trends that arenas and stadiums across the country are doing to attract visitors to their spaces. He has over a decade of experience in event operation, venue management, guest services and everything needed to make a huge event feel magical. Combining his energy and knowledge with his experience, Rob is eager to transform the look of the Civic Center. His vision is something that Columbus has never seen. He understands the importance of creating engaging experiences for his customers. And Rob appreciates the power of art. He draws his inspiration from his 7 year-old daughter, Ryann, who aspires to be an artist as she grows up. Rob sees how much Ryann lights up when she creates art and sees the work of

artists. His vision is to give as many local artists as he can the space to see their work displayed in a public setting. He's partnered with local art advocate, collector and enthusiast, Sherricka Day to make his vision a reality.

Rob and Sherricka began working together in the fall of 2021. They put out their first artist call for the projects they want to bring to life at the Civic Center. The response from the art community was huge. They received over 30 submissions from local artists and schools. Their initial thought was to choose one artist to paint the interior walls of the stairs. However, because of the submissions were so good, they decided to choose two artists, each doing one of the walls. Artists Katarina Garcia and Jeremy McCrary were the two that were selected. Their only requirement was to make the beige walls as bright and fun as possible!

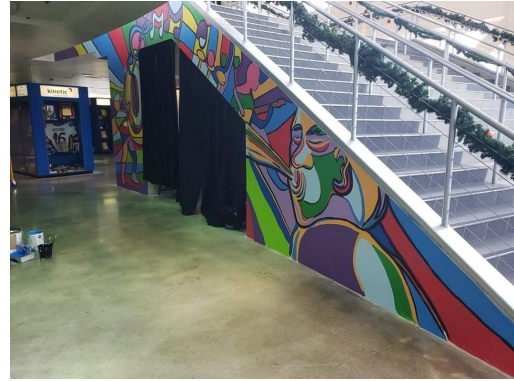
Katarina pulled her inspiration from Maya Hayuk, an American artist known for incorporating geometric designs into her murals. Jeremy went in a different direction. He was inspired by jazz and blues and decided to create a music scene. As much as the artists were different in their approach and inspiration, they were alike. They shared the same excitement about being the first artists to have work displayed at the Civic Center. They knew that with each paint stroke, they were opening the way for other artists to come behind them in the future. They felt seen. They felt heard. And they felt appreciated. In December 2021, the Columbus Civic Center saw its first ever art mural project come to life.

Sherricka said, "imagine what this does for the morale and retention of artists and art students in our public schools and university. What Jeremy and Katarina are doing adds vibrancy to the building, but it also connects our biggest meeting space in the city to other vibrant venues in our community. Also, they represent the diversity and differences in our community. Black and Puerto Rican, male and female, working together to make things happen."

Rob and Sherricka have already started on the next few projects for 2022, which include enhancing the walls in the concession stands and guest services area and other renovations. Under Rob's direction, they dream that the Civic Center will be more than just a place for people to go to for sporting events or to catch their favorite performing artist. They see a building at the



center of fond memories and one-of-a-kind experiences. A space at the center of imagination and creativity. The center of an art movement. Yep. The "Center of it All."



## ATLANTA - New Andrew Young International Mall & Terminal Opens on GWCCA's Championship Campus

Georgia World Congress Center Authority (GWCCA) today celebrated the opening of the new Andrew Young International Mall and Terminal. Featuring two key elements – an engaging pedestrian walkway and a permanent bus/rideshare location

– the Mall and Terminal are designed to create a welcoming gateway to the world-class offerings on the convention center campus and serve as a dynamic gathering place for visitors as well as residents of the surrounding downtown neighborhoods. The Mall and Terminal are built on a portion of Andrew Young International Blvd. that originated at Centennial Olympic Park and runs through the convention campus.

"The completion of the Andrew Young International Mall and Terminal continues the transformation of the most dynamic live-events complex in North America," said State Senator Butch Miller, chairman of GWCCA's Legislative Overview Committee. "Investment in infrastructure improvements such as these are key in maintaining Georgia's position as a premiere destination for the country's most high-profile events and will allow GWCCA to continue its role as a major economic driver for Georgia's tourism industry and future growth."

In addition to its primary role of blending pedestrian traffic with dedicated bus and rideshare options to aid attendee movement and relieve congestion along corridors surrounding the campus, the Mall and Terminal serve as a springboard for other developers seeking to create a shop-stay-play entertainment district.

"The Authority's vision of a more connected campus is now a reality," said Glenn Hicks, chair of GWCCA's Board of Governors. "On behalf of the entire Board, I commend Frank Poe, staff, and partners for delivering another on-schedule and under budget project."

"The Andrew Young International Mall and Terminal reimagines the arrival experience by providing our customers and their attendees the ultimate meeting destination in Atlanta for their events," said GWCCA Chief Commercial Officer Joe Bocherer. "Features such as these, coupled with the forthcoming convention hotel, distinguish GWCCA from its competitors."



## NEW ORLEANS – New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center Announces Winners of Second Annual Morial Awards

On Wednesday, March 16, 2022, The New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center (NOENMCC) hosted the annual Morial Awards in its Great Hall to recognize local businesses that have demonstrated innovative growth and economic impact, as well as exceptional contributions to the sustainability and growth of local communities and small businesses across the state of Louisiana. After careful review by the awards committee, Corporate Internship Leadership Institute was selected as "Corporation of the Year" and NANO, LLC was selected as "Small Business of the Year."



"We would like to express our congratulations to the winners and honorees of this year's Morial Awards," said Michael J. Sawaya, Convention Center President. "As a major economic generator, we are committed to the growth and prosperity of our region. Celebrating the successes and investing in the health of local businesses is a big part of our philosophy to support small and disadvantaged business enterprises, as well as local corporations. It is not every day that such an outstanding group of intellectuals and entrepreneurs can gather together, and we wish to thank everyone who joined us in celebrating these outstanding organizations."

Corporation of the Year recipient, Corporate Internship Leadership Institute (CIL), collaborates with companies, educational institutions and students to provide internship opportunities throughout the New Orleans metro region, Gulf Coast area and state of Louisiana. Facilitates professional development and soft skill building programs, coaching and mentoring to college students.

"The experience of being nominated for such a prestigious award was validation of the work we have done, winning the award is somewhat unreal. We are so excited and honored for this recognition and now work to uphold the standard of the Morial legacy," said Perry Sholes of CIL.

Architecture and interior design firm NANO, LLC took home the Small Business of the Year award. Founded in 2001, the New Orleans-based firm's extensive portfolio includes commercial, residential, educational, municipal and industrial projects, including a role as the architect of record for the Convention Center's ongoing \$557 million capital improvements project.

"As members of the New Orleans business community, this award means a lot to us," said NANO architect and co-founder Terri Hogan Dreyer. "It reminds us that the work we do for our clients can have a broader, positive impact that continues long after our part in a project is completed."

Gotech, Inc., and VPG Enterprises were also finalists and recognized for their achievements at the ceremony.

These awards were established in celebration of Mayor Ernest N. Morial's achievements and his legacy as a civil rights activist, and political pioneer. As the first Black mayor of New Orleans in 1977, a position he held for two terms through 1986, he championed the Convention Center's construction and saw it as a way to promote economic development, especially for local and diverse small businesses.

As a part of the celebration, mayor Ernest N. Morial's son, former mayor Marc Morial, addressed the attendees, and hundreds of local business leaders.

"I would like to extend a congratulations to the winners of this prestigious award," said Marc Morial, who currently serves as the President and CEO of the National Urban League. "Your

tenacity and investment in the growth of communities and small businesses across this state align perfectly with the work my father did during his tenure as Mayor of New Orleans. It was truly a distinct pleasure to stand in my father's legacy at this event and in the building named in his honor."

These awards are just a part of what The New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center does year-round to support local businesses. The convention center is committed to increasing business opportunities for the local community's small and emerging businesses (SEB) and Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) by encouraging the hiring of local vendors for the purchase of goods and services.

In 2019, the Authority launched the Small and Emerging Business Program. In 2021, the convention center registered 252 new Certified Vendors and made \$11 million in payments and contract awards to SEBs and DBE's. In a recent report, the convention center revealed that 56% of its vendors in 2021 were either SEB's or DBE's showing a 30% increase from 2020.

For more information on the SEB program, [click here](#).



*Michael J. Sawaya, Convention Center President; Terri Hogan Dryer, Senior Managing Partner, NANO LLC; Dr. Julie Morial; Judge Monique Morial; Jerry Reyes, Chairman, Ernest N. Morial New Orleans Exhibition Hall Authority.*



*Michael J. Sawaya, Convention Center President; Dr. Julie Morial; Perry Sholes, Founder/Executive Director, Corporate Internship Leadership Institute; Jerry Reyes, Chairman, Ernest N. Morial New Orleans Exhibition Hall Authority; Judge Monique Morial.*



## **NEW ORLEANS – Eric A. Wright Appointed to Ernest N. Morial New Orleans Exhibition Hall Authority**

Local attorney Eric A. Wright has been appointed to the Ernest N. Morial New Orleans Exhibition Hall Authority ("Authority"), the governing board of the New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, by Governor John Bel Edwards. The Board consists of thirteen commissioners appointed by the Governor, and three appointed by the Mayor.

Wright is the Managing Partner at Wright & Gray Law Firm in New Orleans. Wright has more than 22 years of experience related to civil litigation. He has demonstrated particular expertise in representing small businesses and restaurants

throughout Louisiana.

"We are delighted to welcome Eric Wright into the Ernest N. Morial New Orleans Exhibition Hall Authority as Commissioner," said Authority Board Commissioner and President Jerry Reyes. "His experience navigating legal waters as well as his diligent work representing small businesses, the lifeblood of the Louisiana economy, makes him a fantastic addition to our governing board. Mr. Wright will assist us in continuing the implementation of our five-year \$557 million

comprehensive capital improvement plan that will establish the Convention Center's competitiveness for years to come."

When he is not practicing law, Wright spends his time teaching the next generation of lawyers in his firm and through his work as a Trial Advocacy Instructor at Tulane University Law School in its Trial Advocacy Program.

Originally from New Orleans, Wright is a graduate of Xavier University in New Orleans and of Tulane University Law School, where he received his Juris Doctorate in 1998. Wright is a member of several prestigious state and national organizations, including the Louisiana Association of Justice, the American Association of Justice, Lawyers of Distinction, as well as the National Bar Association and the Louisiana State Bar Associations.

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## **NEW ORLEANS – New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center \$557 Million Capital Improvement Plan Progresses**

The New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center (NOENMCC) Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), which will transform the facility to exceed the expectations of current and future users and support the destination in being more competitive, is progressing. Conceptual renderings show the unique "immersive interventions" under consideration, including the addition of a third level with flexible, multi-purpose space that has a dramatic view of the Mississippi River. Designs for the renovations to the Convention Center's 140 meeting rooms and public spaces, all of which are intended to celebrate elements of New Orleans' iconic culture, are further along.

"We are very pleased with the progress towards making the balance of our Capital Improvement Plan come closer to reality. With the selection of AECOM Hunt/Broadmoor we have an incomparable team with the design firms of Populous and Nano LLC", said Convention Center President, Michael J. Sawaya. "The renderings exemplify our vision for this project and put us on the right track to continue the transformative process of making the Convention Center a gathering place for all."

In June 2021, the Ernest N. Morial New Orleans Exhibition Hall Authority selected **AECOM Hunt/Broadmoor**, a joint venture between a global infrastructure consulting firm and New Orleans-based construction company, as its Construction Manager at Risk (CMAR) for the final planning, development and construction of the major upgrades remaining for the \$557 million CIP approved in 2018. Since that time, the Center has worked with Populous, a global architectural design firm specializing in creating environments & venues that draw communities and people together, and New Orleans-based architect Nano LLC, to develop designs for these projects, with input from the Center's Client Advisory Council.

The CIP has already delivered a 7.5-acre pedestrian park, the renovation of all thirty-five sets of the facility's restrooms, installation of New Orleans neighborhood-themed charging stations, the upgrade to all new energy efficient LED exhibit hall lighting, internal infrastructure improvements such as an informational technology overhaul, and physical plant renovations including four new chillers, two new cooling towers, 6 boilers, and a new systems monitoring station. The Convention Center is projected to begin the \$40 million roof replacement project in Q3 2022.

"It is encouraging to see our vision coming to life," said Exhibition Hall Authority President, Jerry Reyes. "These improvements and enhanced amenities will be beneficial for visitors and residents alike and make New Orleans more competitive in the national event and meeting marketplace. The more meetings and events NOENMCC can host, the greater the economic impact we will be on the city and region."

**CMAR** is a project delivery system that entails a commitment by the construction manager to deliver the project within a guaranteed maximum price (GMP). The construction manager acts as consultant to the owner in the development and design phases and as the equivalent of a general contractor during the construction phase. It binds the company to a negotiated budget and construction performance. They are chosen under a strict process defined by the State of



Louisiana based on qualifications and team experience, rather than a low bid. Although this is a relatively new process for the state of Louisiana, CMAR has already become well-known with projects such as the **Capital Region I-10 widening project**, and the Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport

For more information on the capital improvement project, visit  
- <https://mccno.com/about/#development>.

## **VIRGINIA**

### **VIRGINIA BEACH - Virginia Beach Convention Center and Sodexo Live! Renew Long-Term Agreement**

**Sodexo Live!**, the leading hospitality partner to the world's most iconic venues, announced a multi-year renewal of its partnership with the **Virginia Beach Convention Center**. This agreement encompasses the culinary operation for all 500,000 square feet of meeting and event space at the venue, for groups as intimate as five people and as grand as 30,000.

Under the esteemed local leadership of General Manager Beth Williamson and Executive Chef Desiree Neal, the Sodexo Live! culinary team is a vital part of the fabric of the Virginia Beach hospitality community, as it has been the partner of choice since the Virginia Beach Convention Center's opening in 2005. The leadership tandem of Williamson and Neal has also been in place during that 17-year tenure, a rarity in the foodservice industry.

#### **A Garden Oasis for Fresh Produce**

Sodexo Live! actively supports the Center's award-winning sustainability efforts, which include an onsite garden that Chef Desiree started in 2008. It began as a small fresh herb garden and now features ten raised garden beds and one flower bed to attract bees and birds to pollinate the fruits and vegetables.

#### **Investing in the Future**

Through the newly cemented agreement, Sodexo Live!, which also services the neighboring Virginia Beach Sports Center, commits to providing significant capital contributions for enhanced guest services at the Virginia Beach Convention Center, including new POS/CC systems, action stations, presentation items and equipment upgrades.

Bryan Miller, General Manager of the VBCC, said "The VBCC has had a great partnership with Sodexo Live! (formerly Centerplate) for many years and are excited to continue this relationship! The Sodexo Live! team has many well-established relationships within the local community and are dedicated to the success of the VBCC. We're eager to install some vital upgrades and implement new and innovative concepts over the course of this new contract.

## **ALLIED NEWS**

Hi Allied Partners - We want to hear from you.  
Send any news or updates to [iavmr5@gmail.com](mailto:iavmr5@gmail.com)



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