



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF VENUE MANAGERS REGION 5 NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2023

ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Early Bird
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ends April 3rd**

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EDUCATION**

and



INTERNATIONAL
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Regions 1, 2, 3, & 5
KANSAS CITY, MO | KANSAS CITY CONVENTION CENTER

April 30-May 2, 2023

Convention Hotel: The Crowne Plaza

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ASSOCIATION OF
VENUE MANAGERS
Regions 1, 2, 3, & 5
SUPER REGIONAL
KANSAS CITY, MO | KANSAS CITY CONVENTION CENTER

April 30-May 2, 2023

**Book now for the best
rate!**

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Regional"**

INSPIRATION, EDUCATION

and



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Register now for the best, early-bird deal.

Rooms are selling out fast so book soon to secure your room!

When registering for the conference, use the link on the registration page to book your stay or, if calling or booking online, use group Code VEN for the best rate.

Click on the images above to register and book your room! See you in KC!

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NEWS & VENUE UPDATES



Florida



**SODEXO LIVE! AND RUM ROOM
LAUNCH SUSTAINABILITY
PROJECT WITH HERB AND
VEGETABLE GARDEN AT MIAMI
BEACH CONVENTION CENTER**

MIAMI BEACH, FL Sodexo Live! and soon-to-

open Rum Room restaurant and Venu event space at the Miami Beach Convention center (MBCC) have announced the launch of a new Sustainability Project – **Herb & Vegetable Garden**, organized with Compost for Life Miami. The composting community initiative takes leftover organics from the conventions and events that take place at the Miami Beach Convention Center and turns them into compost. This compost is then used at the herb and vegetable garden, creating a sustainable food system that reduces waste and provides real garden-to-table dining for Rum Room patrons.

The herb and vegetable garden is located just outside Rum Room and Venu on the Miami Beach Convention Center campus. In February 2023, Sodexo Live!’s Executive Chef Samantha Cruz and team worked together to build the garden. The goal was to create a calm environment for the culinarians and team to tend to and nurture, while also educating the staff on gardening and sustainable practices.

“We’re thrilled to bring this garden to life at Rum Room and Venu to not only have access to fresh vegetables for our dishes, but to also extend our sustainability program at the convention center into these two new spaces in an exciting way,” said Danny Medina, Regional Vice President, Sodexo Live!.

The garden consists of 192 square feet of herb and vegetable beds and features organic soil mixed with compost from the convention center’s composting program. The vegetables currently planted in the garden include carrots, lettuce, onions, tomatoes, and peppers which are expected to be in full harvest by late July or early August. The vegetables will be used on the Rum Room, and Venu menus for guests to

enjoy, and foliage will be added to table garnishes and decorations.

The Sustainability Project – Herb & Vegetable Garden also involved sourcing wood pallets from food shipments and recycling them into the garden structure. It took approximately 10 days to clear, level, and build the garden from plywood. Solar-powered lights were installed on the wooden fence surrounding the garden.

Chef Samantha Cruz, who has 12 years of experience in fine dining and sports entertainment hospitality, is the new Executive Chef for the Rum Room and Venu event space. Rum Room (www.rumroommiamibeach.com) is an indoor and outdoor 80-seat restaurant with Old World and tropical 1920s Florida decor and an upscale menu that draws on both Florida's history and Miami's Haitian and Latin and Central American influences.

This latest project from Sodexo Live!, Rum Room and Venu event space is part of the MBCC's sustainability program in collaboration with the MBCC's venue management company OVG360. The reimagined Miami Beach Convention Center is committed to supporting sustainability and climate change actions as part of its corporate social responsibility program, as well as resiliency initiatives in the City of Miami Beach and Miami-Dade County by incorporating environmentally friendly building features and sustainable business practices for all meetings, tradeshow, events, conferences, and conventions held at the Miami Beach Convention Center. For more information, please visit www.miamibeachconvention.com/sustainability.



MIAMI BEACH CONVENTION CENTER ANNOUNCES APPOINTMENT OF CARLINA LOPEZ AS DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

MIAMI BEACH, FL – Miami Beach Convention Center (MBCC) is pleased to announce the appointment of Carlina Lopez as the Director of Finance. In her new role, Carlina will oversee all financial operations, including financial planning and analysis, accounts payable, accounts receivable, payroll, budgeting, and forecasting, while working closely with contract partners, customers, and the City of Miami Beach finance department.

"We are absolutely thrilled and excited in having Carlina Lopez join our MBCC Family," said Freddie Peterson, General Manager of the Miami Beach Convention Center. "Carlina's unparalleled wealth of experience, expertise and professionalism in all aspects of fiscal and financial management will be invaluable to our organization as

we continue to provide exceptional service to our customers, clients and partners."

Carlina brings years of progressive experience in financial management, leadership, and operational tasks to her new role. Prior to joining the MBCC, she served as Director of Finance/Controller at the Doubletree Miami Airport and Convention Center, where she oversaw financial planning, budgeting, and variance analysis, among other responsibilities. Carlina also worked for JW Marriott Miami for 11 years, where she held several different roles, including General Cashier, Accounts Receivable Supervisor, Credit Manager, and Assistant Controller.

"I am honored to join the MBCC team and look forward to contributing to the organization's continued success," said Carlina Lopez. "I am committed to performing above expectations and expanding my contribution to the work environment."

Originally from the Dominican Republic, Carlina is bilingual in English and Spanish, and also holds a Master's degree in Accounting with Forensics Specialization from St Thomas University (STU).

Carlina's appointment as Director of Finance is effective immediately, and she will work closely with David Nunes during the transition period to ensure a smooth handover of responsibilities. David Nunes, the current Director of Finance, will retire on April 30th, 2023, after over 8 years of dedicated service to the organization. The MBCC team is grateful for his contributions to the success of the organization and wishes him all the best in his retirement.



GWCCA'S SIGNIA BY HILTON ATLANTA TOPPED OFF IN MARCH

ATLANTA, GA –The month of March marked a tremendous milestone for Georgia World Congress Center Authority and its latest development project, Signia by Hilton Atlanta. The new addition to the Atlanta skyline was topped off with the completion of the building's framework. A collaboration between GWCCA, the largest combined convention, sports, and entertainment campus in North America, along with global hospitality company Hilton, and multinational project development and construction company Skanska, Signia by Hilton Atlanta is set to open in January 2024.

Owned by GWCCA and managed by Hilton Management Services, the 976-room Signia by Hilton Atlanta is the city's largest downtown ground-up hotel development project in 40 years. The 453-foot high hotel built on the repurposed foundation of the Georgia Dome will connect to the Georgia World Congress Center. The publicly-owned property has created nearly a thousand new employment opportunities during its construction and will deliver millions in direct economic benefits and additional tax revenues to the state and the city during its operation.

Over one million man hours have been worked on this project since the groundbreaking in 2021. Over 94 percent of the companies who are working on the project are either headquartered in Georgia or have offices in Georgia.



GWCCA CELEBRATES SUSTAINABILITY WITH LOCAL PARTNERSHIP

ATLANTA, GA – Sustainability is a priority with Georgia World Congress Center Authority. That is why GWCCA celebrates its partnership with re:loom, a program of Initiative for Affordable Housing, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization in Decatur, Georgia. GWCCA team members have been volunteering at the re:loom store throughout the month of March, where

they work on repurposing recycled fabrics to make new products for the community.

re:loom's goal is to empower individuals to reach personal goals and achieve independence. One of the ways the organization does this is by providing employment through repurposing a variety of textiles, everything from recycled company uniforms to promotional banners, to produce products to sell in the community. In turn, this supports the Initiative for Affordable Housing team in growing a positive impact on homelessness in Atlanta.

Throughout the month of March, and into the future, GWCCA team members have been volunteering with re:loom, working on the front end of the process of repurposing fabrics to make goods. Senior event manager Brittany Martin was touched by the experience of lending a helping hand. "I would say it feels really full circle and fulfilling to just understand that this small bit of fabric can really play a major part in someone's life story... We're all just a part of each other's stories." GWCCA Director of Strategic

Partnerships Savannah Williams added, “There is a story to each piece of textile, and it goes to supporting women who have been homeless. It brings hope and also creates a better environment for our children.”

Georgia World Congress Center is a LEED Gold Certified building, but GWCCA’s efforts to achieve sustainability do not end at the borders of its campus. Being able to work with re:loom in the future will help reduce waste from shows, events, and expos at GWCC. “To have a partnership like this is great for Georgia World Congress Center Authority, because sustainability is a priority for us. We want to keep as many items away from the landfill as possible, so we’re excited to work with re:loom,” Williams said.



Louisiana



NEW ORLEANS ERNEST N. MORIAL CONVENTION CENTER ANNOUNCES NOMINATIONS ARE OPEN FOR ANNUAL MORIAL AWARDS

NEW ORLEANS, LA – The New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center and the Urban League of Louisiana [announced last week that nominations are open for the 2022 Morial Awards](#). These prestigious awards recognize a small business and a corporation that have demonstrated innovation and economic impact over the course of the last year, as well as exceptional contributions to the sustainability and growth of communities and emerging enterprises across the state of Louisiana. Submissions are due by March 27 and the winners will be recognized at a ceremony on May 25, 2023.

“Small business growth in New Orleans is a central focus for the Convention Center,” said Jerry Reyes, Chairman, Ernest N. Morial New Orleans Exhibition

Hall Authority. “These awards underscore our continued commitment to supporting local vendors while honoring the legacy of the Convention Center’s namesake, Mayor Ernest N. Morial. We look forward to recognizing this year’s winners for their achievements.”

The Morial Awards were established to celebrate Mayor Ernest N. Morial’s legacy as a civil rights activist and political pioneer. Becoming the first Black mayor of New Orleans in 1977, a position he held for two terms through 1986, Morial championed the Convention Center’s construction and positioned it to

promote economic development, especially for local and diverse small businesses.

“The Urban League of Louisiana is committed to building generational wealth for underserved communities and increasing parity. That is why we are proud to partner with the Morial Convention Center to support small and diverse business growth in a highly competitive environment and to recognize businesses that share our commitment and who are overcoming obstacles and finding success,” said Judy Reese Morse, President and CEO of the Urban League of Louisiana.

Last year, architecture and interior design firm NANO, LLC took home the 2021 Small Business of the Year award. And the Corporate Internship Leadership Institute — a nonprofit organization that helps college students gain work experience through internships and other programs — was named Corporation of the Year.

The Convention Center works year-round to create opportunities to help Louisiana’s small and emerging businesses (SEB) and disadvantaged business enterprises (DBE) succeed. Through the Small and Emerging Business Program, the Ernest N. Morial New Orleans Exhibition Hall Authority encourages the hiring of local vendors to provide goods and services at the Convention Center and is making it easier for these vendors to access new business opportunities through the SEBConnect app and through its website at exhallnola.com. Since the program launched in 2019, 1,300 certified vendors have registered and more than \$40 million has been awarded to area SEBs and DEBs. In 2022, roughly one-third of all payments and contracts awarded were to SEBs and DEBs.

Applications are currently open for this year’s Morial Awards, and submissions are due on March 27 at 5:00 p.m. For applications and eligibility information, visit exhallnola.com/morial-award/select/.



Terri Hogan Dryer, Senior Managing Partner, NANO LLC receives the Small Business of the Year award from Convention Center President Michael J. Sawaya, Dr. Julie Morial, Judge Monique Morial and Authority Chairman Jerry Reyes during the 2021 Morial Awards.

North Carolina

PERSONNEL CHANGES AT BLUMENTHAL PERFORMING ARTS

CHARLOTTE, NC – Blumenthal Performing Arts is pleased to make an announcement regarding the departure of Bill Dantos, Vice President of Theater Operations, who will be leaving the organization at the end of this month. Bill has been an esteemed member of the Blumenthal community for 16 years, and

his leadership and commitment will be greatly missed. The organization acknowledges that his departure will leave a significant void in the organization.

During his tenure, Bill has played a crucial role in the success of Blumenthal Performing Arts. His tireless efforts have significantly contributed to the organization's growth and expansion. He has overseen the construction of two theaters and now manages the operation of six theaters, including the Belk Theater, Knight Theater, and Booth Playhouse. Bill has also been instrumental in numerous offsite events such as Charlotte Jazz Festival, Breakin' Convention, Charlotte International Arts Festival, and Immersive Van Gogh.

The organization is deeply grateful for Bill's contributions and will greatly miss him. In his farewell message, Bill expressed his gratitude to the team for their support and dedication to the organization's success. He also emphasized the invaluable lessons and connections he has gained during his time at Blumenthal, which he will cherish forever.

Although Bill's departure marks the end of an era at Blumenthal Performing Arts, his legacy and contributions will continue to inspire and shape the organization's future for years to come. The Blumenthal team extends their best wishes to Bill in his future endeavors.

Tennessee



MEMPHIS, TN – Public Safety Director, Adarryll Dent, at Rensant Convention Center in Memphis, TN completed the AVSS 2-year program this year. The Academy for Venue Safety & Security is a two-year program that provides introductory and advanced learning in key topics and core competencies for venue safety and security professionals. Adarryll came to Rensant Convention Center with an extensive background in security and an innovative edge that earned him recognition from the FBI.

Because of the facility capabilities at Rensant Convention Center, and Adarryll's ongoing relationships with law enforcement, Rensant Convention Center hosted a Chemical Biological Countermeasures Virtual Reality Demonstration in 2021. That event was the first of its kind in the country and held in partnership with the FBI. That meeting led our public safety team to make valuable connections with first responders, fire departments and local police departments. Adarryll's dedication to the security of our staff and guests is shown through his on-going training in programs like AVSS and the innovative opportunities he creates to better equip his staff and local law enforcement.

SAVE THE DATE



Super Regional
Conference
(Regions 1, 2, 3
& 5)
Kansas City, MO



Venue
Management
School (VMS)
& Graduate
Institute
Tampa, FL



VenueConnect
2023
Pittsburgh, PA

Interested in joining a Region 5 committee?

Reach out to IAVMR5@gmail.com

HELP US INCREASE OUR
REGION 5 MEMBERSHIP BEFORE
VENUE CONNECT 2023

MEMBER WHO REFERS THE MOST APPLICANTS
BEFORE VENUE CONNECT WILL WIN A

\$500 PRIZE!



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