

Cobo Center Stays Relevant by Leading Industry Trends

The June edition of Successful Meetings Magazine contained an article: *Defying Convention: 7 Ways Convention Centers Are Changing to Stay Relevant*. Interestingly enough, the new Cobo Center provides customers will all seven leading trends for today's rapidly changing industry:

1. **Making Flexibility a Priority** - the Cobo renovation is creating many thousands of square feet of flex space, including the new atrium entrance, the Atwater Lounge, the City View Lounge, and the new ballrooms, including the Grand Riverview Ballroom.
2. **Centers Are an Extension of the Destination** - the Detroit Shoppe, Sweet Dreams, Detroit Made Kitchen, locally sourced menus and Motown music playing on the concourse during events all give visitors a sense of place and distinct flavor of Detroit.
3. **Art and Creativity Move Front and Center** - "Convention centers today must provide practical...space, but art and atmosphere are just as important," said John Adams, SMG RVP and GM of Colorado Convention Center. To that end, the DRCFA Art Subcommittee meets regularly to strategically plan the future endeavors for Cobo to engage the community with artful enterprise.
4. **Public Areas for Public Discourse** - Cobo has several new areas fitting this category: Cobo Square, atrium, City View Lounge. Next step: seating and lounge areas that are social media friendly. Conversations pods promoting a sense of community.
5. **Convention Centers Must be Healthy and Stimulating** - Cobo meets all of this criterion: windows, expansive terraces and balconies open to river views and cityscapes.
6. **Conference Centers Anchor Neighborhood Development** - during the Cobo transformation, much of the surrounding downtown Detroit area is in development: Detroit Riverwalk, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Firehouse boutique hotel, London Chop House. Next: Joe Louis Arena site.
7. **Rising Demand for Altruistic Activities** - Cobo customers work with the DMCVB to match attendees with local charitable agencies, for example, the Presbyterian Assembly attendees tutored local students and donated school supplies to local schools.

Green Events in Cobo may soon include composting



The Green Committee in Cobo Center is currently exploring partnership opportunities with local area compost companies to provide raw food kitchen waste for composting and use in local urban farm initiatives.

"With the installation of our Green Roof and herb garden areas, the next natural step in rolling out our Green program here at Cobo is to develop our composting program," said Cedric Turnbore, chairman of the Cobo Center Green Committee. Stay tuned!



QUICK THINKING BY COBO ENGINEERS SAVES MILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN REPAIR COSTS DURING AUGUST FLOODS

On August 14, two days after southeast Michigan experienced up to six inches of rain in three hours, causing an estimated half of its homes to flood, Michigan Governor Rick Snyder declared a disaster for metro Detroit counties effected by the historic flood. Homeland Security prepared an assessment of damages to support a formal declaration from the governor that led the way for federal disaster aid for residents and business owners.

Just before the sewers backed up and caused the water to bubble up in the toilets on the 100 level of Cobo Center, the building automation system alerted Cobo Center Security Control that the city of Detroit water treatment system was overwhelmed and that action was required to prevent backflow into Cobo. The main runoff pipe for storm and sewer is protected by a sluice gate that acts as a check valve. This unit has been called into action only twice in 17 years prior to Monday, according to facility records. The sluice gate does not close

automatically, and the pumps that empty the Cobo Center holding tanks would never have been able to keep up with the backflow if the gate was not closed. If the gate remained opened, every sink, toilet, urinal and drain on the 100 level meeting rooms and Michigan Hall would have overflowed and flooded the center.

"The potential for damage to the facility was enormous," said Thom Connors, regional vice president and general manager SMG/Cobo Center. "Our engineering team spent countless hours prior to this event installing critical warning systems throughout the facility, but they only work in tandem with the dedicated and quick thinking Cobo team."

Under the direction of Engineering Manager Al Vasquez, Bill Caverly, engineering supervisor and electrician Byron Osborn raced to the sluice gate and manually closed it, at the cost of a nice pair of dress pants (sorry Bill.)

During this time, the 2014 Buick & GM Dealer Meeting was being held in Cobo Center with executive training sessions and next year concept car reveals on the 100 level. The quick thinking engineering team averted an interruption and extensive damage for the event and Cobo Center.

The Detroit Regional Convention Facility Authority and Cobo Center executive team express deep gratitude to the vigilant, quick-thinking engineering team for the proactive arrest of the flood. At a time when a large percentage of buildings in southeast Michigan incurred extensive damage, the newly renovated Cobo Center was spared thanks to dedicated team work.

"Damage costs could have been in the millions," said Claude Molinari, assistant general manager Cobo Center. "This was great team work, pure and simple."

What's In Sight Must Be Right

Kudos to Cobo Center parking attendant, Michael Schoffner, who made such an impression of a customer that she sent a note to his supervisor thanking Cobo for her good experience in the Washington Blvd. Garage, noting that she hopes he will be working when she returns to the garage because he is extremely friendly. Now that's customer service!

September 20 is the Tour de Troit bike ride that promotes healthy living through running, bicycling and bicycle safety. Thanks to all of the Cobo Center staff that volunteered again this year in a demonstration of Cobo community spirit. Go team!

A big Cobo WISMBR greeting goes out to Willie Mae Johnson who is returning to service with ABM Janitorial. Let's all welcome her aboard!

