



in this issue

ORANGE COUNTY CONVENTION CENTER center news and views

SPRING 2009

Center Update

First Quarter Highlights

Thank you to the show managers, exhibitors, attendees and contractors who have helped the Orange County Convention Center (OCCC) get the first quarter of the 2009 calendar year off to such a strong start. With 66 events and 357,704 attendees, the Center's staff has been busy and looks forward to an equally-productive second quarter with your continued support.

We would like to take this opportunity to remind you that if your event is within the next six (6) months, please take a moment to review our website for a list of vendors that are approved to supply event security services at the OCCC since the list changes periodically. You can access the approved security vendors list by [following this link](#).

Our final announcement for the spring 2009 "Center Update" involves one of the Orange County Convention Center's newest initiatives for making business operations greener - the phasing out of water coolers in all meeting rooms by December 31, 2009. The OCCC will continue to provide head table water service on a complimentary basis, as well as maintain 100+ water fountains in the Convention Center facility. Additional information about the OCCC's green program follows in this newsletter.

Area Development

Neighboring Hotels Make Extraordinary Progress

The Downtown Orange County Convention Center District is thriving with new construction, especially at its hotel properties. Two hotels, in particular - The Peabody Orlando and the Hilton Orlando - have seen rapid growth over the past year.

Meeting planners from all over the nation are already booking events at The Peabody Orlando in 2010 and beyond, when its \$450-million expansion will be complete. When the expansion of The Peabody Orlando is finished, it will feature - among many lush amenities - a total of 1,641 ultra luxurious guest rooms, direct connectivity to the OCCC's West and North/South Buildings, 210,000 square feet of state-of-the-art, flexible function/exhibition space and a 2,100-car parking garage. To read more about The Peabody Orlando Expansion, [click here](#).



Artist's Rendering of The Peabody Orlando's Finished \$450-million Expansion

Also making remarkable progress is the new Hilton Orlando. The Hilton Orlando remains on schedule to open in August 2009. Exciting changes and developments are visible each day as the hotel construction moves forward. The Hilton Orlando will have direct connectivity to the OCCC's North/South Building via a skybridge and, once complete, it will feature 175,000+ square feet of versatile function space, 1,400 deluxe guest rooms, two ballrooms, 21 meeting rooms and nine boardrooms. [Follow this link](#) for additional information about the new Hilton Orlando.



Artist's Rendering of the new Hilton Orlando

Green Initiatives

Solar Panels Arrive at the OCCC

The Orange County Convention Center, in partnership with OUC - The Reliable One, was awarded a \$2.5 million grant from the state of Florida to be used, along with other funding sources, to install a one-megawatt solar photovoltaic (PV) system. The largest rooftop PV system of its kind in the southeastern United States, the solar panel project will be complete and celebrated on May 20, 2009, during the general session of the Green Cities Florida 2009 conference at the Center.

In addition to the grant, OUC is contributing \$1.5 million to the project and will receive 10 years' worth of Renewable Energy Credits in that amount. The PV system utilizes high-efficiency, flat-plate collectors that occupy approximately 200,000 square feet of roof space on the North/South Building. The one-megawatt solar PV system will generate 1,300-megawatt hours of electricity per year, which is equivalent to the power used by 100 typical homes, and it will do so without producing any greenhouse gas emissions. The benefits of generating electricity with solar energy include reducing energy costs, while helping to reduce global warming and dependence on foreign fuels. [Click here](#) to read this solar panels article in full. For a listing of all Orange County Convention Center "green" initiatives, [follow this link](#).



Solar Panels on the OCCC's North/South Building rooftop

Press

Top Awards for OCCC Leader and Orlando

The Orange County Convention Center is pleased to report that its executive director, Tom Ackert, has been honored by the Central Florida Hotel & Lodging Association (CFHLA) with its "Charles Andrews Memorial Hospitality Award for Community Leadership". Mr. Andrews was a renowned hotelier in the Orlando area and was the founding member of what is now the nation's largest local hotel association.

The award recognizes an industry professional for personal contributions to the Central Florida community and the regional hospitality industry. Ackert was chosen for his accomplishments in leading the Orange County Convention Center, which has become the second largest convention center in the U.S. during his tenure. Ackert began his career with Orange County in 1977. As director, he is responsible for the operation of a facility that serves as a premiere international trade and exhibition venue, as well as one of the largest meeting and education centers in the world serving the association and corporate marketplace. He has overseen three major development projects, encompassing expansion of more than six million square feet of meeting, exhibition and support space. [Click here](#) to read full article.

In meeting news, Orlando has received top ranking for Medical Meetings. According to the Center for Exhibition Industry Research (CEIR), healthcare and medical meetings represent approximately 23 percent of all U.S. conventions and a more recent CEIR report indicated that this segment was one of a handful that show an increase in attendance in 2008, a down-year for meeting and convention attendance. The vitality of healthcare and medical conventions and meetings may be news everywhere but Orlando, Florida.

A new study - the 2009 State of the Industry Report conducted by Healthcare Convention & Exhibitors Association - found that Orlando hosted more medical meetings and conventions in 2008 than any other destination in the U.S. More than 225 medical meetings - representing 173,000 attendees and providing \$111 million in attendee spending - were hosted by the destination, which among other features includes the seven million square-foot Orange County Convention Center. To read this entire article, [click here](#).

On The Road

Connecting with Clients from Coast-to-Coast

The members of the Convention Center Sales Team have enjoyed meeting and reconnecting with clients during the first quarter of 2009. From San Diego to Boston, the Team has hosted client appreciation events, attended conferences and met with clients all over the U.S. Here are is a sampling of this quarter's sales activity: RCMA in Grand Rapids, PCMA in New Orleans, MPI's MeetDifferent in Atlanta, sales calls in Boston, St. Louis, the San Diego area, New York, Dallas, Washington, D.C. and Atlanta, Destinations Showcase in Washington, D.C., the National School Supply Board Member Dinner in Dallas, the 2010 PITTCOON Exhibitor Meeting in Chicago, CBI in Baltimore, Conference Direct in San Diego, "Dancing with the Stars: On Tour" and a Magic vs. Wizards basketball in Washington, D.C. and the Arnold Palmer Invitational in Orlando.

This spring's travel includes New York, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., Texas, Chicago and New Orleans, the HCEA Annual Meeting in Tampa and the PCMA Leadership Conference in Austin.

Names & Faces

An Impressive Trio

The OCCC Sales, Marketing, Event Management and Exhibitor Services Division would like to introduce the newest members of its team:

Liz Trinkle, Sales & Marketing Administrative Specialist, is a recent graduate from the University of Central Florida. She holds a B.A. in Interpersonal and Organizational Communications with a focus on Asian Studies. Liz boasts an impressive and varied career track record which undoubtedly adds to her ability to multi-task in her new role at the OCCC. She has worked as the Project Coordinator for a water conservation company, a manager and member of the accounts payable team for Bernie's Coffee and Tea and as part of an Orlando wedding coordination company where - among other accomplishments - she designed an e-book. Outside of the office, Liz lives with her husband David and their two miniature dachshunds, Bloo and Periwinkle.

Event Manager **Jason Smith** is also a recent graduate of the University of Central Florida where he earned a B.S. in Event Management. Prior to joining the Convention Center staff on a full-time basis, Jason worked as a college intern in the OCCC's Event Management section. Jason's favorite part about working at the Orange County Convention Center is the constantly changing atmosphere. Jason says, "It is the only place you can work with corporate business one week and the next week work with surfers and comic book fanatics. The clients that we have are the best in the world and the mix of business that we have always makes the OCCC fun and exciting." When not at the Center, Jason enjoys golf and baseball.

Kimberly Langlais has also joined the Event Management section as an Event Manager. Past roles for Kimberly include the following: Entertainment and Event Manager at Nickelodeon, a performer at various shows at Disney - including a show at Disneyland Paris called "California Dreams" - and a Chicago-based international flight attendant for United Airlines where she brushed up on several foreign languages including Portuguese, French and Arabic. In her free time, Kimberly enjoys dancing, travel and adventure sports like white water rafting and sky diving. The best advice Kimberly has received since beginning work at the OCCC is to "wear comfortable shoes, be flexible and always go the extra mile."

Resource Center

Orlando Meeting Videos

Three new videos have been added to the OCCC website with meeting planners in mind. The "[Green Meetings](#)" video explores the many initiatives in place to ensure an environmentally-friendly event in the lush surroundings of Central Florida. As its title suggests, "[Choose Orlando](#)" reminds viewers of the "return on ideas" benefit that the OCCC and Orlando offer to meetings held here. Finally, the "[Medical Meetings](#)" video highlights the exciting developments taking place in Orlando, especially with regard to its new 600-acre medical city. To view any of these videos, [click here](#).

Partner Spotlight

Universal Orlando Resort

Located within four miles of the Orange County Convention Center, Universal Orlando Resort offers a universe of event possibilities. Whether your mission is to entertain and network with your customers, gain new business opportunities, or simply impress your guests, Universal Orlando Resort has the perfect solution for you. Universal Orlando Resort has two exciting new ways to "Rock your Orlando Convention" with the Hollywood Rip Ride Rockit launching this spring and the newly-opened Music Plaza. [Click here](#) to read more about Universal Orlando Resort's rockin' attractions.

