



## New Convention Space Supporters View the Economy as a Reason to Build, Rather Than an Excuse Not To

RENEE DIIULIO, *senior editor*

**THERE IS NO DENYING** convention construction has been slow. A look at the last two editions of *Trade Show Executive's Semi-Annual Pardon Our Dust* shows that commitment to new space has been difficult to secure. Few new projects were undertaken, and construction figures dropped to new lows.

But some space supporters are starting to push harder, using the economy as a reason to build rather than an excuse not to. It's an old argument but one that has grown more appealing with a stagnating economy. At the same time, trade shows are back in a growth mode, with some reaching record highs [See *Trade Show*

*Executive's Monthly Dashboard of Trade Show Metrics*]

Not surprisingly, with such philosophical differences among sides, the discussions about such projects take longer. To try to avoid this and help build early support, the process behind convention center growth is changing.

Announcements are becoming grander — consider New York Governor Andrew Cuomo's vision to build the nation's largest convention center in Queens, NY — and arguments are taken directly to the public. Videos extolling the virtues of venues and the advantages of new space can be found on convention

center web sites, online news stations and even YouTube; a search for clips on convention center expansion yields just over 300 hits.

Of course, even during a space race (and we are not in such a situation at present), construction of such magnitude does not occur overnight. This edition of *Pardon Our Dust* has not seen a significant difference in numbers of projects, though they are up slightly. The report details information on projects underway at 10 North American convention centers (the same as in October) and lists 23 additional venues considering new space (22 in October), either through expansion

or fresh builds. On the construction calendar, three centers — the Baton Rouge River Center (LA); Kalahari Convention Center in Sandusky, OH; and St. Cloud River's Edge Convention Center (MN) — have already opened doors on new space this year.

## Breaking Ground

The years 2012 and 2013 are the busiest on the calendar, with five centers planning to complete construction in each of these years. Then things slow down considerably. Proposed projects will likely fill it out once again, but if approved, they can be expected to open at later dates, past Detroit's 2015 planned completion of the expansion/renovation to Cobo Center. Few can be expected to get shovels in the ground quickly.

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Obstacles vary, but each has its unique challenges that require time to overcome. Despite the hype, the discussion regarding Governor Cuomo's proposal is just starting, and though a new center may be financed by private money, there will be some government commitment necessary, requiring approvals. The proposed expansion of the Los Angeles Convention Center is currently linked to a stadium proposal tied to the city's acquisition of an NFL team (with varying predictions for success). And other centers, such as the San Diego Convention Center, continue to finesse designs and financing.

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## Construction Calendar

Of the 13 convention centers with construction on the calendar, five will complete their projects this year, four in the first half. Five centers plan to finish in 2013, two will wrap up construction in 2015 and one will open its doors in 2018. However, with 23 venues in the proposal stages for new projects, the calendar may fill out by our next report in October.



### 1ST QUARTER 2012

- ▶ Baton Rouge River Center, Baton Rouge, LA†
- ▶ Kalahari Convention Center, Sandusky, OH†
- ▶ St. Cloud River's Edge Convention Center, St. Cloud, MN†

### 2ND QUARTER 2012

- ▶ Roland E. Powell Convention Center, Ocean City, MD

### 4TH QUARTER 2012

- ▶ Anaheim Convention Center, Anaheim, CA

### 1ST QUARTER 2013

- ▶ New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, New Orleans, LA
- ▶ Nashville Medical Trade Center, Nashville, TN\*

### 2ND QUARTER 2013

- ▶ Music City Center, Nashville, TN\*

### 3RD QUARTER 2013

- ▶ Cleveland Medical Mart & Convention Center, Cleveland, OH\*

### 4TH QUARTER 2013

- ▶ San Jose Convention Center, San Jose, CA

### 1ST QUARTER 2015

- ▶ Renaissance Colorado Springs North, Colorado Springs, CO\*

### 2ND QUARTER 2015

- ▶ Cobo Convention Center, Detroit, MI

### 3RD QUARTER 2018

- ▶ Oklahoma City Convention Center, Oklahoma City, OK\*

† Project completed \* New builds

## Considering Construction

Building new convention space today — whether brand new or an expansion of existing space — is no easy task. Even when findings from a feasibility study favor new space, and tenant growth warrants it, the economics may be difficult. And then there are politics which can create obstacles that become insurmountable. Yet sometimes, that forces proponents to sharpen their pencils to build a more convincing case. The net effect is sometimes a better showcase. The 23 venues listed here have begun the process with high hopes for a bigger and better center. Which will make it through the growing pains? *Trade Show Executive* will continue to monitor the market, with our next report in October.

### DISCUSSION

- ▶ Allen County War Memorial Coliseum & Exposition Center, Fort Wayne, IN
- ▶ Alliant Energy Center, Madison, WI
- ▶ Anaheim Convention Center, Anaheim, CA
- ▶ Frontier Airlines Center, Milwaukee, WI
- ▶ Mayo Civic Center, Rochester, MN
- ▶ Queens Convention Center, Queens, NY\*
- ▶ Tucson Convention Center, Tucson, AZ

### FEASIBILITY STUDY

- ▶ Baltimore Convention Center, Baltimore, MD
- ▶ Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center, San Antonio, TX

### FINANCING

- ▶ Bismarck Civic Center, Bismarck, ND
- ▶ Gaylord Colorado Resort & Conference Center, Aurora, CO\*
- ▶ Gaylord Mesa, Mesa, AZ (project on hold)\*
- ▶ Northern Kentucky Convention Center, Covington, KY
- ▶ Miami Beach Convention Center, Miami Beach, CA
- ▶ San Diego Convention Center, San Diego, CA

### LEGISLATIVE APPROVAL

- ▶ Boston Convention & Exhibition Center, Boston, MA
- ▶ Fox Cities Convention Center, Appleton, WI\*
- ▶ KI Convention Center, Green Bay, WI
- ▶ Legends Bay Casino-Resort-Spa, Sparks, NV\*
- ▶ New York State Convention Center, Albany, NY\*

### DESIGN/SITE SELECTION

- ▶ Boise Centre, Boise, ID
- ▶ Los Angeles Convention Center, Los Angeles, CA
- ▶ Winnipeg Convention Centre, Winnipeg, MB, Canada

\*New builds



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The Northern Kentucky Convention Center, which currently offers 46,200 square feet of exhibit space and 13,288 square feet of meeting space, would like to add about 20,000 square feet of ball-room/flex space adjacent to the exhibit hall and 14 to 20 meeting rooms measuring roughly 1,300 square feet each. The goal is to complete the as-yet-unapproved project by 2017, 2019 at the latest to be able to secure shows.

The venue currently averages approximately 160 events annually but loses shows that outgrow the available space, according to Gretchen Landrum, executive director of the center. In a podcast aired by Strategic Advisors, LLC, she discussed the positive economic impact that comes with increased convention business, an argument echoed by many supporters of proposed builds.

### Reasons to Build

In a video looking ahead to what industry watchers expect to be a successful bid for expansion of the Winnipeg Convention Centre, a former president of the center recalls how the original development of the venue helped to clean up and revitalize the city.

When announcing his intent to make New York the number one convention site in the nation during his 2012 State of the State address, Governor Cuomo said, “This will bring to New York the largest events, driving demand for hotel rooms and restaurant meals and creating tax revenues and jobs, jobs, jobs.”

Noting that convention space expansion, particularly at the Jacob K. Javits Center, has been talked about for years in New York, he said, “But today is different, because today I propose we do something about it.”

As the economy brightens, many more may take up the similar but well-worn argument: build it and visitors will come. *Trade Show Executive* will continue to watch and report on the happenings in this market. Read the next edition of *Pardon Our Dust* in October.

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Reach Gretchen Landrum at (859) 261-1500 or [glandrum@nkycc.com](mailto:glandrum@nkycc.com); Klaus Lahr, president and CEO, Winnipeg Convention Centre, at (204) 957-4501, [klausl@wcc.mb.ca](mailto:klausl@wcc.mb.ca)



# Trade Show Executive

## Pardon Our Dust – CONVENTION CENTERS

Exhibition Facility by Location	Pre-Construction Exhibit & Meeting Space	Post-Construction Exhibit & Meeting Space	Phase / Expected Completion Date	Key Features	Management
<b>CALIFORNIA</b>					
<b>Anaheim</b>					
<b>Anaheim Convention Center</b> 800 W. Katella Ave. Anaheim, CA 92802 <a href="http://www.anaheim.net/conventioncenter">www.anaheim.net/conventioncenter</a>	<b>Prime Exhibit Space:</b> 813,000 sf <b>Meeting Space:</b> 125,000 sf <b>Breakout Rooms:</b> 52	<b>Prime Exhibit Space:</b> 813,000 sf <b>Meeting Space:</b> 125,000 sf <b>Breakout Rooms:</b> 52	<b>Phase:</b> Start May 2012 <b>Completion Date:</b> December 2012	Expansion will add 100,000 sf of outdoor and special event space. Part of Anaheim Resort Complex including Disneyland and numerous hotels.	Tom Morton, Executive Director, (714) 765-8920, tmorton@anaheim.net; David Meek, Convention Center Mgr., (714) 765-8951, dmeek@anaheim.net
<b>San Jose</b>					
<b>San Jose Convention Center</b> 150 W. San Carlos St. San Jose, CA 95110 <a href="http://www.sanjose.org">www.sanjose.org</a>	<b>Prime Exhibit Space:</b> 223,000 sf <b>Meeting Space:</b> 49,495 sf <b>Breakout Rooms:</b> 31	<b>Prime Exhibit Space:</b> 223,000 sf <b>Meeting Space:</b> 74,495 sf <b>Breakout Rooms:</b> TBD	<b>Phase:</b> Construction <b>Completion Date:</b> Fall 2013	Expansion to add 35,000 sf ballroom space and 25,000 sf of flexible meeting space; includes renovation and integration of the existing convention center.	Managed by Team San Jose. Mark McMinn, Director of Sales, (408) 792-4521, mmcminn@sanjose.org
<b>COLORADO</b>					
<b>Colorado Springs</b>					
<b>Renaissance Colorado Springs North</b> 9494 Federal Dr. Colorado Springs, CO 80921 <a href="http://www.marriott.com">www.marriott.com</a>	New Facility	<b>Prime Exhibit Space/ Meeting Space:</b> 50,000 sf <b>Breakout Rooms:</b> 18	<b>Phase:</b> Construction, 80% complete <b>Completion Date:</b> January 2015	300 guest rooms.	Managed by John Q. Hammons Hotels & Resorts, (719) 265-8500
<b>LOUISIANA</b>					
<b>New Orleans</b>					
<b>New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center</b> 900 Convention Center Blvd. New Orleans, LA 70130 <a href="http://www.mccno.com">www.mccno.com</a>	<b>Prime Exhibit Space:</b> 1,100,000 sf <b>Meeting Space:</b> 200,000 sf <b>Breakout Rooms:</b> 140	<b>Prime Exhibit Space:</b> 1,100,000 sf <b>Meeting Space:</b> 200,000 sf <b>Flex Space:</b> 60,300 sf <b>Breakout Rooms:</b> 140	<b>Phase:</b> Construction <b>Completion Date:</b> January 2013	\$50 MIL ballroom/ exterior renovation through 2013; 10 GIG Internet backbone, executive lounge, newly renovated ballrooms. Walk to 20,000 hotel rooms, restaurants and Arts District.	Tim Hemphill, VP, Sales & Marketing, (504) 582-3023, themphill@mccno.com; Keith Levey, Director of Sales, (504) 582-3023, klevey@mccno.com
<b>MARYLAND</b>					
<b>Ocean City</b>					
<b>Roland E. Powell Convention Center</b> 4001 Coastal Hwy. Ocean City, MD 21842 <a href="http://www.ococean.com">www.ococean.com</a>	<b>Prime Exhibit Space:</b> 67,000 sf <b>Meeting Space:</b> 45,000 sf <b>Flex Space:</b> 25,000 sf <b>Breakout Rooms:</b> 22	<b>Prime Exhibit Space:</b> 93,190 sf <b>Meeting Space:</b> 45,000 sf <b>Flex Space:</b> 25,000 sf <b>Breakout Rooms:</b> 22	<b>Phase:</b> Design/site preparation <b>Completion Date:</b> Phase I, Spring 2012	Located along the Isle of Wight Bay. 25,000 sf ballroom can be used for exhibits. Free parking.	Fred Wise, CHAE, Director of Sales & Marketing, (410) 289-8181, fwise@ococean.com
<b>MICHIGAN</b>					
<b>Detroit</b>					
<b>Cobo Convention Center</b> One Washington Blvd. Detroit, MI 48226 <a href="http://www.cobocenter.com">www.cobocenter.com</a>	<b>Prime Exhibit Space:</b> 700,000 sf <b>Meeting Space:</b> 178,000 sf <b>Breakout Rooms:</b> 80	<b>Prime Exhibit Space:</b> 725,000 sf <b>Meeting Space:</b> 190,000 sf <b>Breakout Rooms:</b> 80	<b>Phase:</b> Construction <b>Completion Date:</b> Spring 2015	5 exhibit halls; 4 on main level have 600,000 sf contiguous space. Riverview Ballroom and 5 banquet rooms offer riverfront views. Adjacent arena.	Managed by SMG. Thom Connors, General Manager, (313) 877-8777, tconnors@cobocenter.com; Tom Albrecht, Director of Sales, (313) 877-8777, talbrecht@cobocenter.com

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<b>OHIO</b>					
<b>Cleveland</b>					
<b>Cleveland Medical Mart &amp; Convention Center</b> Cleveland, OH 44114 <a href="http://www.clevelandmedicalmart.com">www.clevelandmedicalmart.com</a>	New Facility	<b>Prime Exhibit Space:</b> 230,000 sf <b>Meeting Space:</b> 90,000 sf <b>Breakout Rooms:</b> TBD	<b>Phase:</b> Site preparation <b>Completion Date:</b> Fall 2013	Cleveland MMCC is the world's first market facility designed specifically for the healthcare industry.	Brian Casey, General Manager, <a href="mailto:bcasey@mmart.com">bcasey@mmart.com</a> ; Tony Prusak, Dir. of Convention Sales, (216) 920-1430, <a href="mailto:tprusak@mmart.com">tprusak@mmart.com</a>
<b>OKLAHOMA</b>					
<b>Oklahoma City</b>					
<b>Oklahoma City Convention Center</b> Oklahoma City, OK <a href="http://www.okc.gov/maps3/projects/conventioncenter.html">www.okc.gov/maps3/projects/conventioncenter.html</a>	New Facility	<b>Prime Exhibit Space:</b> TBD <b>Meeting Space:</b> TBD <b>Breakout Rooms:</b> TBD	<b>Phase:</b> Site preparation <b>Completion Date:</b> Fall 2018	Based on the current budget, the facility will offer approximately 235,000 sf of exhibit, meeting and ballroom space.	Robin O'Connor, Director of Sales & Services, Oklahoma City Convention and Visitors Bureau, (405) 297-8906, <a href="mailto:roconnor@visitokc.com">roconnor@visitokc.com</a>
<b>TENNESSEE</b>					
<b>Nashville</b>					
<b>Music City Center</b> Nashville, TN <a href="http://www.nashvillemusiccitycenter.com">www.nashvillemusiccitycenter.com</a>	New Facility	<b>Prime Exhibit Space:</b> 350,000 sf <b>Meeting Space:</b> TBD <b>Breakout Rooms:</b> 50	<b>Phase:</b> Construction <b>Completion Date:</b> April 2013	Exhibit hall is acoustically designed to double as concert hall; 2 ballrooms; 36 loading docks; designed to meet LEED Silver certification.	Charles Starks, Executive Director, (615) 742-2002, <a href="mailto:charles.starks@nashville.gov">charles.starks@nashville.gov</a> ; Kay Witt, Senior VP of Sales, Nashville Convention & Visitors Bureau, (615) 259-4739, <a href="mailto:kayw@visitmusiccity.com">kayw@visitmusiccity.com</a>
<b>Nashville Medical Trade Center</b> 601 Commerce St. Nashville, TN 37203 <a href="http://www.nmtc.com">www.nmtc.com</a>	New Facility	<b>Prime Exhibit Space:</b> 140,000 sf <b>Meeting Space:</b> TBD <b>Breakout Rooms:</b> TBD	<b>Phase:</b> Construction/Pre-leasing <b>Completion Date:</b> 2013	Project involves construction of multiple stories on existing site. Will feature permanent showrooms, temporary exhibition space and training and education facilities; connected to 673-room hotel.	Managed by Market Center Management Co., Ltd. David Osborn, General Manager, (866) 878-8778, <a href="mailto:dosborn@mcmcm.com">dosborn@mcmcm.com</a>

### CONVENTION CENTER CONSTRUCTION SNAPSHOT:

<b>No. of North American Convention Centers</b>		<b>Meeting Space to be Added</b>	<b>127,000 sf</b>
Undergoing Construction	10	Through Expansions	37,000 sf
Considering Construction	23	New Builds	90,000 sf
<b>Prime Exhibit Space to be Added</b>	<b>821,190 sf</b>	<b>Flex Space to be Added</b>	<b>60,300 sf</b>
Through Expansions	51,190 sf	Through Expansions	60,300 sf
New Builds	770,000 sf	New Builds	None



## got news?

As you near the final stages of an acquisition, change in management, expansion, launch or other important news, let us know in advance that news is about to break.

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