

Students Learn the Event Business in Cobo during NAIAS



Two groups of students were given tours of Cobo Center during NAIAS by the Cobo executive team. Thom Connors, general manager and Scott Balutowicz, director of human resources led a group of U of M's Ross School of Business (pictured here.)

Additionally, Claude Molinari, assistant general manager, led a group from Community High School in Ann Arbor, who sent the following thank you note: " I wanted to say thank you for making our extraordinary visit to Cobo Center happen. We were able to see real world applications of the entertainment and technical theatre curriculum we've been studying. It was also great to see and be able to talk with real people in their field. Cobo Center was amazing. Claude did an outstanding job welcoming and making our visit happen. At every step we felt welcome and were overwhelmed by the staff and all they offered to the kids. For you and Claude to take time out of your schedule to accommodate our small class is a true gift. Thank you so much. On a personal note, your help went so far to help me teach in a real world application. An example was being able to standing next to a rigging point and speak with a rigger was absolutely priceless. Also, Cobo shined. I was so proud to be from the region. One little story I wanted to share with both of you. The kids were very impressed as Claude took them around the Center with his energetic and kind demeanor. They watched as he watched, and commented that he could really see the big picture as he was walking around with them. There was a moment while he was walking with us where he reached out to acknowledge an employee with an affirmation, then swooped down to pick up a piece of litter, all while continuing to walk and talk to the students. That story made it into three of the students journal entries. Thank you again, Brice



President Barack Obama Visits Cobo Center during NAIAS 2016

This year's auto show not only broke a few records, it also included a visit from President Obama. Claude Molinari, assistant general manager of Cobo Center and Regional Director of Operations for SMG served as Cobo Center's liaison with the White House and Secret Service to address all security and coordination issues from the facility's side.

"It was a challenge to make sure everything ran smoothly. An entire hall of exhibits was closed down for the duration of President Obama's time on site. At the same time we had over 30,000 people in the building looking at the other displays. Parking was shut down and there was some impact on traffic, but everything went off without a hitch and I can honestly say it was one of the highlights of my career at SMG."

January
15-23

North American International Auto Show

SMG

ORTH AMERICAN
OF THE YEAR

NAIAS IN THE NEWLY RENOVATED COBO BREAKS RECORDS

2016 is off to a great start in the Motor City as the North American International Auto attendance rose again this year. This is the first year the event was held since the completion of the \$279,000,000 renovation and expansion of host venue Cobo Center.

"We had a lot of positive comments about the changes here at Cobo from the car companies and the dealers as well as attendees at the show", said assistant general manager Claude Molinari.

Major changes included the addition of a third large format video board on the exterior of the facility - this one 160'x30' - as well as the addition of an upscale coffee/wine bar called the Cork & Grind.

With 104,263 attendees on the final day of the auto show, the total ticketed attendance was 815,575 which edged out last year's total of 808,775 and gave this year the best attendance since 2003.

"That means they averaged nearly 91,000 people attending the

auto show each day. In other words, in 14 days we had more attendees than an entire NFL home game season - including pre-season games!" added Molinari.

According to the organizers of the show, the Detroit Auto Dealers Association, more than 70 percent of the displays at the show were new, which represented about \$200 million in investments from auto makers, suppliers and auto show partners.

In all, the DADA estimates that the show had a nearly \$430 million impact to the regional economy, which is up \$30 million from last year.

"The \$430 million in economic impact is nearly equivalent to having two Super Bowls in Detroit every year, a truly astounding figure when you stop and think about it," NAIAS Chairman Paul Sabatini.

More than 13,000 people also attended NAIAS's Charity Preview, raising \$5.2 million for eight local charities. Also, 5,068 journalists from 60 different countries were at the Press Preview on the first two days of the auto show, where 61 vehicles were introduced and six vehicles debuted.

"In the five years we've been involved with the show this was not only the best attended but also the smoothest running by far," said Molinari.

What's In Sight Must Be Right

Kudos to the entire Cobo Center team that worked tirelessly during January to contribute to the highly successful 2016 NAIAS. Congratulations!

Many thanks to Angela Meriedeth, this year's NAIAS social media intern from Wayne State University. Angela's conversational talents on Twitter and her tireless documenting of the event on Cobo Center's social media pages made this year's NAIAS campaign the most successful to date. Nicely done!

A hearty pat on the back to the Cobo finance team, who worked tirelessly throughout NAIAS to fulfill a record number of online event services orders from start to finish.

The WISMBR prize goes to the Cobo Center engineering team who work for months before and after NAIAS each year to put Cobo into the best condition from top to bottom, ensuring WISMBR detail in every nook and cranny. No small task.

