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Cobo Launches In-House Tech Services Department

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Detroit, MI – A new technology department was formed by Cobo Center’s management to directly provide the building’s extensive digital capabilities to trade show organizers.

Cobo’s Technology Services department went live in late June with an in-house team to give customers access to the Detroit center’s digital signage, video production studio with satellite uplink capability, mobile building app, and robust WiFi network, which is already scheduled for a bandwidth increase.

“The creation of Cobo Center Technology Services is part of a larger overall plan designed to enhance the customer experience,” said General Manager Claude Molinari.

The new department consolidates services that have been provided to show organizers by the Cobo staff and SMG’s On-Site Commando unit. “Cobo Center manages a turn-key operation where the show manager, or their vendor, provides the content, which our technicians broadcast through our network infrastructure,” Molinari told Trade Show Executive. “Our technicians also can, and often times do, create the content on behalf of the users.”

The new department at Cobo formalizes the current exclusive arrangement where center employees operate the equipment on behalf of the customers. Molinari said the in-house participation allowed for quick responses with manufacturer support on “warranty and infrequent malfunction issues.”

Currently, technology services are exclusives at 159 of the 252 venues listed in the Trade Show Executive World’s Top Convention Centers (WTCC) directory; in Canada, the same service is an exclusive in 15 of 25 venues.

Cobo’s infrastructure provides organizers with a hefty arsenal of technology to support their events. The recently completed \$279 million renovation included installation of a new 802.11ac wireless network designed to accommodate 32,000 devices. And plans are on the schedule to boost Internet bandwidth, upgradable to 10G.

The Technology Services department will also provide access to an extensive digital signage network that includes digital message boards and the exterior marquee, which measures 4,800 sf. The sign system, which can accommodate social media feeds and sponsored videos, has been a successful revenue generator for show organizers, according to Molinari. “In our first year of digital signage operation, Cobo Center generated more than \$800,000 in advertising revenue,” he said. “Our customers quickly caught on to the fact that these signs can create substantial revenue streams.”

The latest WTCC ranked Cobo as the 17th largest convention center in the nation with 723,000 square feet (sf) of prime exhibit space. The center is home to the annual North American International Auto Show as well as a number of trade shows in the manufacturing and auto sectors.

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