

# Conventional Wisdom

The Official Newsletter of the Greater Columbus Convention Center

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GREATER COLUMBUS  
CONVENTION CENTER

## Greater Columbus Convention Center

### begins \$40 million renovation of Battelle Hall



The construction trailers have arrived. Protective fencing has been erected near the east and west entrances to the Connector. Hundreds of building trades representatives wearing hard hats will soon be converging on the facility and remain for more than a year.

The \$40 million transformation of 90,000-square-foot Battelle Hall into the largest ballroom in the state of Ohio has begun.

“We’re reinventing Battelle Hall as the largest ballroom in Ohio,” said SMG Regional General Manager Craig M. Liston. “There will be a new entrance integrating Battelle Hall with the rest of the facility, which will provide a sense of arrival at the Convention Center.”

Battelle Hall will become a magnificent carpeted ballroom featuring a special ceiling with fins that can be illuminated in 65,000 different color variations. Groups will be able to request that the fins project the colors of their organization’s logo or chosen decorative themes for their events.

Upon its intended completion in December 2009, Battelle Hall will offer 52,000 square feet on the main floor and nearly 25,000 square feet on the mezzanine level. Elevators and escalators will provide direct guest access to the mezzanine level.

Clients will appreciate the fact that as is typical of the Convention Center, the Battelle Hall space will be flexible and can be divided into five different configurations.

There will be floor-to-ceiling windows at the south entrance to the Convention Center and a widened walkway connecting the north part of the facility to

Battelle Hall. The pre-function space will give guests the opportunity to be welcomed and mingle before entering the ballroom for their main event.

In addition, there will be 10,000 square feet of meeting rooms and expanded public seating areas added on the facility’s first floor. A complete catering kitchen will be added to the first floor and another finishing kitchen will be built within Battelle Hall on the third floor. An Einstein Bros. Bagel shop to be operated by ARAMARK, the facility’s exclusive caterer, will open on the second floor in December.

“By renovating, we’ll be able to significantly increase the occupancy rate of Battelle Hall by booking more meetings, trade shows and large banquets in this attractive new space,” added Liston.



### Inside this Issue:

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- Community Return
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## Community Return

### GCCC employees participate in United Way Community Care Day & other projects

Greater Columbus Convention Center employees enjoy referring our guests to our hospitality partners as part of our involvement in the community and being supportive of the restaurants and organizations supporting us. We thank the many hospitality partners who so generously donated door prizes for our Employee Appreciation Picnic on August 17. The picnic featured food and beverages prepared by ARAMARK, a limbo contest, balloon-sculpture artist, face-painting artist, bingo and corn-hole games, and was organized by the Employee Council.



The facility is “going green” more each day, with one of the latest projects being the implementation of a single-stream recycling program, enabling employees to place all paper, plastic, metal and glass in portable



recycling containers for collection and sorting by Waste Management. Another initiative has been the participation of employees in a program in which they seek and utilize alternatives means of transportation to work. Employees walked, biked, car-pooled and rode the bus to work on these days as a replacement for being the single occupant of a vehicle.



Business clothing was collected for Dress for Success. The non-profit organization collects new and gently worn women’s suits, blouses, shoes and accessories for women in need of appropriate clothing to wear to job interviews.



St. Stephen’s Community House was the beneficiary of carloads

of Convention Center volunteers providing landscaping assistance on September 16 as part of the United Way Community Care Day.



Next, the months of collecting toothpaste, cologne, socks and other goodies for the residents of Traditions at Stygler Road came to fruition with the presentation of dozens of decorated shoeboxes full of treats to the residents. The facility is a skilled nursing and rehabilitation center.

## Chef’s Column

### Meet Executive Chef Lesla Holford



*Executive Chef  
Lesla Holford*

In this issue, we welcome ARAMARK’s new executive chef, who will have her own recipe column beginning with the next newsletter.

The arrival of Lesla Holford offers guests of the Greater Columbus Convention Center the opportunity to encounter new food fare with flair during their events.

Chef Lesla joined ARAMARK, our facility’s exclusive caterer, on August 1. She was formerly the executive chef for the University of Akron for more than three years,



Sherry Chambers, CMP

## Sales & Marketing Update

### Tradeshow Week names Columbus second-most affordable destination

Even before the doors to our facility opened, many of our clients realized the great value, service and flexibility that booking an event at the Greater Columbus Convention Center provides for their exhibitors and attendees.

It's rewarding when an independent industry source reaches the same conclusion. The entire hospitality community can take pride in sharing the news that *Tradeshow Week* ranked Columbus as the second-most affordable trade show destination in the country.

The conclusion was reached based on a review of the federal 2008 Domestic per Diem Rates for meals and incidentals, Smith Travel Research's survey of domestic hotel rates, and the

magazine's own 2008 survey of U.S. and Canadian labor rates.

The average hourly rate for labor charged to exhibitors in Columbus is \$53. The per diem meal cost is \$49 and the average hotel rate is \$86.06.

There were 45 cities included in the poll. Only Des Moines ranked above Columbus.

One of our clients, John

Holmes, executive director of OFA – an Association of Floriculture Professionals, was quoted in the magazine. He affirmed the convenience of the Convention Center's linear layout with exhibit halls located on the east side of the main concourse, and the meeting rooms directly opposite them

on the west side of the concourse.

Our exhibitor-friendly venue is the primary trade show destination in Columbus. We hope this ranking may prompt others in the industry to experience what many of our new and repeat clients have already discovered in Columbus!



OFA Short Course

where she oversaw all the culinary departments and catering venues.

When she was only 17, Chef Lesa began her culinary career. She joined the staff of what is now northeast Ohio's largest locally owned natural and organic foods market and restaurant, Akron's Mustard Seed Market & Café. There, she discovered her niche and a mentor, with her interest in cooking growing right along with the business. She was encouraged to attend The Culinary Institute of America (CIA) in Hyde Park, New York – and did. In addition, Chef Lesa has also been affiliated with Tucson's award-winning Canyon Ranch Resort.

Upon her graduation from the CIA, Chef Lesa lived in Columbus before returning to Akron and

assisting the Mustard Seed with its new restaurant and a second location. Mustard Seed's owners also were highly involved in lobbying the U.S. Congress about the need for legislation regulating organic foods, which in 1990 resulted in the developing of guidelines by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

"I was part of the group which became the first certified organic retailer in the state of Ohio," she said.

Her experiences have led her to adopt the philosophy of providing healthier, great-tasting food in her new position at our facility.

"I want to focus on the food and let the food speak for itself," she said.

Another initiative Chef Lesa plans to cultivate is an increased rapport with nearby farmers and suppliers.

"I'd like to buy locally, green and organic when possible," she mentioned.

Now an Upper Arlington resident, Chef Lesa has previously restored a century-old home and enjoys refinishing older furniture and riding her bicycle. She and her husband, Andrew, are the parents of a 9-year-old daughter named Elsa. Andrew is an attorney who is building his base of clients in his new Columbus office.



Ajay Nair,  
Owner of Mischief

## Meet the Merchant Mischief offers quality leather, luggage and gifts in Food Court

Now that the weather is getting cooler, you might be in the market for

a new leather coat. Check out the selection at Mischief, the quality leather, luggage, gift and accessories shop in the Food Court & Shops.

Owned by Ajay Nair and managed by Trent Snider, the shop also offers briefcases, handbags, leather care products, suitcases, belts, wallets, travel and luggage accessories, cell phone covers, pens, leather animal figures, sunglasses, office accessories and more.

“The flow of people coming for conventions is what attracted me to the Convention Center,” Nair said. “We need new customers all the time and the Convention Center provides this type of opportunity.”

Born in New Delhi, India, Ajay likes to relax by reading. He has operated Mischief locations for a decade following a career in engineering and construction consulting.

“Construction is my passion. Anything that has creativity fascinates me, and that keeps me going,” he said.

You’ll also find Ajay’s wife, Saroj, working in the store. Their two sons are graduates of The Ohio State University College of Engineering.

Ajay plans to generate sales within Mischief by obtaining “new merchandise all the time,” he said. “We provide the best value for the money. You’ll find good quality and variety at great prices.”

## In the Spotlight

### Trecia Thomas

Trecia Thomas is one of the “night owls” working overnight at the Convention Center.

As a third shift employee in the housekeeping division of the Operations Department, she finds the hours perfect for her lifestyle.

“I’ve always been on third shift,” she said. “I applied for a job here because I’ve done this type of work before at the Huntington Center.



Trecia Thomas

My work hours don’t clash with my daughter’s.”

LaTeia is Trecia’s daughter and mother of her two treasured grandchildren. Trecia enjoys attending 12-year-old granddaughter Dajah’s volleyball games and the basketball games of 7-year-old grandson Taylon. A Columbus resident, Trecia also enjoys going bowling with her family.

As far as the Convention Center, she is fond of both her job and her co-workers.

“I like the job and the people,” Trecia said. “I’ve learned a lot from the people I work with and my supervisors, especially Larry McDaniels and Karen DeBerry.”

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The Greater Columbus Convention Center is owned and developed by the Franklin County Convention Facilities Authority (FCCFA).

# Center Stage 2008

## November 2008

- 1 Professional Event Services
- 1 Britt World Wide
- 1 John Robert Powers
- 2 Midwest Moves Hip Hop Workshop
- 3 Bureau of Education & Research
- 3-5 People to People Ambassadors
- 5-7 Ohio Capital Conference for Housing
- 6 The Success Group Ltd.
- 7-9 Ohio State Youth Fellowship of the Church of God
- 8 Professional Event Services
- 9-12 53rd OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show
- 11 Turner Construction Company Dinner
- 12-13 Bureau of Education & Research
- 13 Business First Monthly Awards Luncheon
- 13 Cohen CPA
- 13-14 Paragon Management Associates
- 13-16 MarkerNET, Inc. Fall Leadership
- 14-15 Team Leadership Seminar
- 15 Americheer’s Ohio Cheerleading and Dance Championships
- 15 John Robert Powers
- 17 Ohio Board of Regents Drop-Out Prevention Summit
- 17-24 Moreno/Lyons/Ohio Star Ball
- 18-19 Nationwide Insurance Company
- 18-23 Ohio Star Ball
- 19 Nationwide Insurance Company
- 19-20 PCI Focus Group
- 19-21 NATTAP Conference
- 20 Bureau of Education & Research
- 22 John Robert Powers
- 22 Satoria/Fashion Show
- 22-23 Professional Event Services
- 22-23 Edge Productions/ACT Auditions
- 23 Cheerleaders of America Holiday Kickoff Championship
- 26-30 Irish Dance Teachers Association Annual Dance Competition
- 28 The Green House
- 29 100 Black Men of Columbus Holiday Party

## December 2008

- 3-5 Ohio Farm Bureau Federation
- 3-5 Ohio Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation & Dance Team
- 5 ITT Technical Institute
- 5-6 Team Leadership Seminar
- 5-6 Stores Online
- 6 Time Warner Cable
- 6 2008 Jingle Bell Run/Walk
- 6 American Cheer Power Christmas Open Championship
- 8-9 Bureau of Education & Research
- 8-11 OTF Conference & Show 2008
- 9-10 PMI of Central Ohio
- 11-12 Ohio State Bar Association
- 12 Chemical Dependency Professional Board
- 13 Gordon Food Service Holiday Party
- 14 Universal Cheerleading Association Masters of the Mat
- 17-18 Nationwide Insurance Company
- 20 TS Trim Holiday Party