



JOHN S. KNIGHT CENTER
the center of an all-america® city!

October 9, 2020

The Honorable Governor Mike DeWine
Riffe Center, 30th Floor
77 South High Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215-6117

RE: Mass gathering limits on events and venues

Dear Governor DeWine:

On behalf of the John S. Knight Center staff, I hope this letter finds you doing well. I am writing to express my support of the proposal prepared and presented to you by the Ohio Travel Association and the Ohio Hotel & Lodging Association for the meetings and conferences sector.

The John S. Knight Center is the area's premier destination for meetings, conventions, trade shows and public exhibitions – **welcoming hundreds of thousands of guests each year during an average of 150+ annual events**. The Center has been a catalyst for positive economic impacts to the hospitality ecosystem and local economy, including tax revenue and significant job creation. In 2019, Summit County's hospitality industry supported:

- **15,948 direct employees**
- **\$147.2 million in state and local tax revenue**
- **\$348.2 million in direct compensation**
- **\$1.6 billion in direct sales**

Center events that attract regional, national and international attendees, result in additional expenditures on overnight accommodations, dining, retail and transportation – benefiting a wide array of Greater Akron businesses.

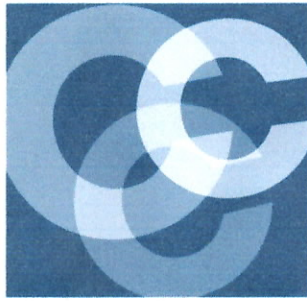
“While the overall economy is in a recession, the travel industry is in a depression – at 51%, travel industry unemployment is double the worst year of the Great Depression.” – US Travel Association

Like our convention and conference center colleagues throughout Ohio, we have a comprehensive reopening plan in place to address and comply with safety, sanitation and physical distancing protocols. This plan will allow for revenue streams to flow once again, while **putting talented people back to work, including more than 150 members of the Center's culinary and skilled-trades teams**.

It is imperative that these Ohio's venues have the ability to safely reopen, as we are an integral part of the state's overall recovery. Although our industry has been negatively impacted more than many others, **we are poised and committed to getting our workforce back on the job!** We agree with you – we are absolutely #InThisTogetherOhio.

Respectfully,

Gregg M. Mervis, President & CEO



CANTON CIVIC CENTER

An  Managed Facility

October 9, 2020

The Honorable Mike DeWine
Governor's Office
Vern Riffe Center for Government and the Arts
77 South High Street, 30th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215-6117

RE: Mass gathering limits on events and venues

Dear Governor DeWine,

I would be remiss if I didn't begin by thanking you for your steadfast leadership during this unfortunate pandemic. Your ability to balance the need to reduce the spread of Covid-19 while working to protect the livelihoods of Ohio's citizens is deserving of respect and admiration.

Event and entertainment industry professionals, such as me, are tasked daily with the health and well-being of all who utilize our facilities. It is our responsibility, day and night, weekends and holidays, to provide a clean, safe and enjoyable atmosphere. We are well trained in all aspects of our business to provide these services to maximize the enjoyment of our guests as well as the profitability to our respective communities. As was the case after 9/11/2001 with respects to security services, businesses and organizations in our industry understand and recognize the seriousness of Covid-19, and have worked tirelessly over the past 6 months to tackle the new challenges we face.

I fully support the plan put forth by the Ohio Hotel & Lodging Association and Ohio Travel association for a Safe Return to Hosting Meetings & Events. Your leadership and guidelines have encouraged closer and more meaningful relationships with local health officials and provided more critical thinking as it relates to the health of those we serve. I ask that you please consider instilling your confidence in us to properly manage our respective businesses to serve as a catalyst in the economic recovery. Our industry, like no other, is not a one size fits all model and can be managed in a way that promotes recovery, protects health and safety and continues to fight against Covid-19.

Thank you for your consideration,

Blake A. Schilling
General Manager
Canton Memorial Civic Center



RIC BOOTH
General Manager

525 Elm Street, Cincinnati, OH 45202
O: 513.419.7301 Ric_Booth@comcastspectacor.com

October 9, 2020

The Honorable Governor Mike DeWine
Governor's Office
Vern Riffe Center for Government and the Arts
77 South High Street, 30th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215-6117

Governor DeWine and Lt. Governor Husted,

Our industry has been gravely affected by the recent Covid-19 pandemic. We appreciate that many others throughout the state have also been prohibited from doing business and remain in a state of inertia. This communication though, is from the events industry as we are the operators of the Duke Energy Convention Center in Cincinnati.

The impact that has been felt in Cincinnati and Hamilton County region is massive. Thousands of workers have been laid off, furloughed or taken pay cuts. Hotels are empty. Restaurants are empty. There is little to no commerce being done in our City and the downtown area, the heartbeat of the County, looks like a ghost town.

We are part of a critical tax generator and this industry wants to get back to work. We want to do this safely while strictly following all state guidelines. Our request of your office is:

1. allow meeting and event venues to establish capacities based on their individual circumstances and environments, using updated COVID-19 compliant plans that meet current state requirements for all events and functions.
2. allow business meetings and events to be held with reasonable occupancy limits under their own auspices, rather than tying meetings to the requirement of providing banquet and catering. Group meetings of similar sizes could be conducted just as safely – perhaps in some instances even more safely – without the provision of food and beverage.
3. allow the meetings and events industry to help guide the way for safer gatherings through the dissemination and utilization of detailed guidelines, protocols, plans, standards and resources which are specific to each venue's circumstances and which exceed even the Responsible RestartOhio mandatory requirements and best practices.
4. inform the public that while Ohio will continue to place the utmost importance on continuing health and safety protections as our number one priority, meetings and events should be permissible when held in accordance with the state's requirements and industry standards which offer even more protections.

We also support and include the efforts of our partners in the Ohio Trade Show "Strong, Safe and Essential" document from September 25. These are our partners, our clients and our colleagues. The outline they present is comprehensive, clear and operationally sound. Much like our own plan "Together Again", which we submitted for a "variance to operate" a documented million-dollar event in Cincinnati, that was rejected by your office.

We respectfully request that pursuant to the authority granted you in R.C. 3701.13 to "make special orders... for preventing the spread of contagious or infectious diseases", you stipulate orders for the Event industry in keeping with those already published for the consumer retail and services sector so that we may move forward with our contracted and pending events. We can meet or exceed the guidelines for operation if we knew what is expected of us.

Our industry is responsible and mature. We drive tax revenues and employ thousands of workers at all levels. Bringing this industry back to life, albeit at limited capacity, will breathe life back into our community. We honor and thank you for all you have done to keep Ohioans safe and healthy. Your efforts and steadfast positioning against Covid-19 is exemplary and not to be diminished.

Please help us with your guidance, communication and support for this integral industry in our region. We implore you to take this request with the utmost concern as it relates directly to the future viability of our City, our county and our beloved State of Ohio.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ric Booth", with a stylized, cursive script.

Ric Booth
General Manager

CC: The Honorable Lt. Governor Jon Husted



October 9, 2020

The Honorable Mike DeWine
Governor's Office
Vern Riffe Center for Government and the Arts
77 South High Street
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Governor DeWine,

Thank you for your leadership and guidance while keeping Ohioans and visitors to our great state safe. These are unprecedented times and caring for each other is essential to our path forward while we continue to **Responsibly ReStartOhio**. As each business sector safely reopens, we are reaching out for further consideration for the meetings and events industry.

Due to current attendance restrictions and limitations, the majority of events have been cancelled for 2020, with the drastic impact now extending into 2021 and beyond. Since the booking, planning and marketing for events happens well before arrival, even years, the current limitations are **impacting our future economy**. We need support now to ensure future events can be planned in our state. With each lost opportunity, is lost incremental tax revenue and jobs in the hospitality industry.

To provide perspective, in 2020, the lost economic impact from cancelled meetings in Hamilton County is \$95 million, which would have supported 19,000 jobs and provided a valuable tax revenue to our communities. Look forward to 2021, and due to attendee size limitations, the lost economic impact from groups already cancelled is \$18 million which would have supported 4,000 jobs. As each day passes, this number will grow without the opportunity to recover it or replace it.

Since March when our industry was shut down, venue and hotel professionals in our state have worked diligently on plans, processes, and practices to keep our guests safe, exceeding CDC and state recommendations. In fact, our Duke Energy Convention Center in downtown Cincinnati, was Ohio's first GBAC Star Accredited facility, the gold standard in the cleaning industry.

Yet, meetings & events are being restricted by the Banquet and Catering Facility Services guidelines limiting them to the 300-guest rule. Venues with the expertise and physical space to more than adequately meet social distancing requirements are being held back with this grouping. Please consider the following for events, meetings and trade shows:

1. Reevaluate the number of guests allowed to an event based on venue circumstances and environments, using updated COVID-19 compliant plans that meet current state requirements for all events and functions.
2. Allow business meetings and events to be held with reasonable occupancy limits under their own auspices, rather than tying meetings to the requirement of providing banquet and catering. Group meetings of similar sizes could be conducted just as safely – perhaps in some instances even more safely – without the provision of food and beverage.
3. Consider an end date to current guest count restrictions, which can be revaluated based on current COVID-19 trends. Our industry has clients with events late in 2021 using current guidelines to cancel their events. Our Cincinnati region has lost 26,000 hospitality industry jobs due to the pandemic, but the ongoing restrictions are cutting off our chances of viability in the future.

Thank you for these considerations. Just last year, the tourism industry in the Cincinnati region infused our economy with \$5 billion dollars and 80,000 jobs. We believe these measures would lead to a safe and responsible restart to meetings and events will help launch Ohio's road to recovery. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Julie Calvert".

Julie Calvert
President & CEO
Cincinnati USA Convention & Visitors Bureau



October 6, 2020

The Honorable Mike DeWine
Lt. Governor Jon Husted
Governor's Office
Vern Riffe Center for Government and the Arts
77 South High Street, 30th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215-6117

Dear Governor DeWine and Lt. Governor Husted,

Since opening in 2013, the publicly-funded and County-owned Huntington Convention Center of Cleveland annually hosts more than 200 events, filling more than 100,000 hotel room nights, and generating more than \$150 million in direct economic impact to Cleveland and Northeast Ohio, in addition to sustaining thousands of jobs in the hospitality industry.

While the people employed within the travel and tourism economy are grateful for the many lives saved by the actions engaged by State of Ohio during the COVID-19 pandemic, we are facing a critical moment for our industry with thousands of jobs and millions of dollars at stake. We encourage your office to consider allowing conventions, meetings and events to resume in a safe and responsible manner. To that point, the ASM Global Cleveland team has researched and implemented multiple protocols to provide a safe environment for guests, clients, and convention attendees.

Two months ago, the Huntington Convention Center earned Global Biorisk Advisory Council® (GBAC) STAR™ accreditation, APEX/ASTM Level 1 Certification, and LEED Gold (v4.1 O+M Existing Buildings). The facility has also implemented the ASM Global VenueShield program, a company-wide environmental hygiene protocol being utilized in more than 325 ASM Global-managed buildings worldwide.

Locally, our team is partnering with Destination Cleveland in the Cleveland Clean Committed Program to follow best practices in cleaning and disinfecting, physical distancing, engineering controls, work force, and customer safe practices.

Under the guidance of GBAC, a Division of ISSA, the worldwide cleaning industry association, the Huntington Convention Center implemented stringent protocols for cleaning, disinfection and infectious disease prevention. The ASM Global VenueShield program is being guided by scientific and medical research input from the Drexel University College of Medicine and its interdisciplinary team facilitated by the Drexel Solutions Initiative. VenueShield protocols implemented in the Huntington Convention Center include the use of PPE, food safety measures, air quality control, surface cleaning, physical/social distancing in meeting rooms and exhibit hall spaces, temperature checks, thermal cameras, hand sanitizers, electrostatic sprayers, reduced touch points, daily monitoring systems, and air purification, filtering and maximization of fresh air exchange.

The health, safety and security of our guests, partners, tenants, and employees remain our highest priority and we strongly encourage the State of Ohio to allow our industry to safely reopen in the near future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ron King".

Ron King
General Manager
Huntington Convention Center of Cleveland

**CUYAHOGA COUNTY CONVENTION
FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

1 ST. CLAIR AVENUE, NE
CLEVELAND, OH 44114

October 8, 2020

The Honorable Mike DeWine
Lt. Governor Jon Husted
Governor's Office
Vern Riffe Center for Government and the Arts
77 South High Street, 30th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215-6117

Dear Governor DeWine and Lt. Governor Husted,

Since opening in 2013, the publicly-funded and County-owned Huntington Convention Center of Cleveland annually hosts more than 200 events, filling more than 100,000 hotel room nights, and generating more than \$150 million in direct economic impact to Cleveland and Northeast Ohio, in addition to sustaining thousands of jobs in the hospitality industry.

The Cuyahoga County Convention Facilities Development Corporation (CCCFDC) is a nonprofit formed by the Cuyahoga County Council for the purpose of promoting the revitalization of Greater Cleveland/ Cuyahoga County and enhancing the economic growth and employment opportunities in the area on behalf of the County. The CCCFDC oversees the operation and management of the Huntington Convention Center of Cleveland. In addition to overseeing operation and management of County-owned assets, the CCCFDC and its board of directors approves the annual budget appropriation for each facility and works closely with the management team, ASM Global, hired by Cuyahoga County.

On behalf of the CCCFDC and the Huntington Convention Center team, we encourage your office to consider allowing conventions, meetings, and events to resume in a safe and responsible manner in the State of Ohio. To that point, the Huntington Convention Center team has researched and implemented multiple protocols to provide a safe environment for guests, clients, and convention attendees. We are currently serving as host for the Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas with multiple civil and criminal courtrooms and have implemented stringent protocols to ensure the safety of the participants.

The health, safety and security of our guests, partners, tenants, and employees remain our highest priority and we strongly encourage the State of Ohio to allow our industry to safely reopen in the near future.

Sincerely,



George A. Hillow, CPA
Executive Director
Cuyahoga County Convention Facilities Development Corporation



The Honorable Mike DeWine
Vern Riffe Center for Government and the Arts
77 S. High St., 30th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Re: Mass gathering limits on events and venues

Dear Governor DeWine,

On behalf of The Convention & Visitors Bureau of Greater Cleveland dba Destination Cleveland, please accept this letter supporting the plan developed by Ohio Travel Association and the Ohio Hotel and Lodging Association for a Safe Return to Hosting Meetings & Events, which asks the State of Ohio to revisit the mass gathering limitations on the size and type of events that convention centers, arenas, auditoriums, ballrooms, and other indoor public assembly venues may host.

Destination Cleveland understands and supports the State of Ohio's efforts to minimize the effects of COVID-19, including the state-mandated shutdowns and limitations on mass gatherings. Though successful in slowing the spread, the economic impact has been devastating. Since mid-March, every meeting or convention scheduled to take place in Cleveland has cancelled, resulting in a \$113M* loss in economic impact. Overall, we anticipate a loss of 56 to 75 percent of visitor direct spending in Cuyahoga County for 2020. That equals billions of dollars in lost revenue for our businesses and for government in the form of taxes.

In 2019, convention and business travel yielded an economic impact of nearly \$214M.* The nearly 300 meetings and conventions that we brought to and hosted in Cleveland last year contributed to changing perceptions of Cleveland as not only a place to visit but a place to live, work and do business. Additionally, in 2019, leisure and business travel and tourism supported nearly 70,000 jobs and generated \$1.2B in tax revenue.** For nine consecutive years, travel and tourism has been a growth industry for our region and Ohio.

Over the last six months, Destination Cleveland has worked our industry partners to ensure adherence to the State's orders and reopening guidelines. In partnership with the City of Cleveland, Cuyahoga County and local healthcare institutions, we developed and launched the CLEAN COMMITTED program to help ensure a continued safe and responsible reopening of our region's hospitality, entertainment and tourism industries. Nearly 700 businesses have pledged to follow a set of cleanliness practices agreed upon by experts at Cleveland Clinic, University Hospitals, The MetroHealth System and the Cuyahoga County Board of Health. The CLEAN COMMITTED initiative complements the engineering controls, cleanliness and hygiene practices and workforce and consumer safety protocols outlined in your Responsible Restart Ohio program. Cleveland's travel, tourism and hospitality industry has been and remains committed to minimizing the spread of COVID-19 and protecting the health and well-being of patrons and employees.

The travel economy is vital to the prosperity of our region. With many formal procedures in place to make meetings and events safe, we implore you to revisit your current guidelines, restricting event venues to no more than 300 guests, regardless of size. We appreciate your willingness to work together to restart this crucial piece of our county's economy.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "David Gilbert".

David Gilbert
President & CEO

* Determined using Destinations International economic impact formula
** 2019 Annual Economic Impact of Tourism in Cuyahoga County, (Tourism Economics)



October 21, 2020

The Honorable Mike DeWine
Governor's Office
Vern Riffe Center for Government and the Arts
77 S. High St., 30th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Re: Mass gathering limits on events and venues

Dear Governor DeWine,

We are grateful for the work the State of Ohio has undertaken to slow the spread of COVID-19. As you know, the events industry was the first affected by state mandated shutdowns with limits placed on the 2020 Arnold Sports Festival in March. Unfortunately, it looks like our industry will also be the last to recover with continued limitations on events and venues.

With many formal procedures in place to make meetings and events safe, we implore you to revisit your current guidelines and help restart this crucial piece of our city's economy. We fully support the plan produced by the Ohio Travel Association (OTA) and the Ohio Hotel and Lodging Association (OHLA) for a Safe Return to Hosting Meetings & Events, which asks the State of Ohio to revisit the mass gathering limitations on the size and type of events that convention centers, arenas, auditoriums, ballrooms, and other indoor public assembly venues may host.

Since the public health order limiting mass gatherings, 252 groups scheduled to meet in Columbus have canceled, representing 294,848 total rooms and an estimated direct visitor spend of \$243 million. According to Tourism Economics, the Columbus MSA lost 47,000+ jobs from February through April in the leisure and hospitality sector. Our own staff has seen a 34% reduction. Reports from the Office of City of Columbus Auditor Megan Kilgore show year-to-date bed tax collections are down 53%, or \$8.8 million, over the same period the year prior.

As the destination marketing organization for the Columbus region, Experience Columbus, in partnership with the Greater Columbus sports Commission, is dedicated to growing visitor spending and enhancing the visitor experience. Annually, visitors make 43 million trips to Greater Columbus for conventions, trade shows, sporting events and leisure visits, spending \$7.6 billion and supporting 78,600 jobs. Bed tax collections as a result of these visits reached an all-time high of \$49.7 million in 2019, which supports not only Experience Columbus and the Greater Columbus Sports Commission, but also the Greater Columbus Arts Council, nearly 40 health and human service organizations, the Affordable Housing Trust and Franklin County Convention Facilities Authority.

It is clear that the travel economy is vital to the prosperity of the city. However, while many entities have been able to return to near-normal levels of service, the majority of event venues remain restricted to no more than 300 guests no matter their size.

Throughout these recent months, we have worked closely with your team to ensure that our industry is following all necessary mandates. We have even gone a step further with the launch of our Live Forward Pledge – a free opportunity for businesses to indicate their commitment to following local, state and federal health and safety guidelines – which has been signed by nearly 200 businesses since May, and citywide coordination of the GBAC STAR™ Accreditation – the cleaning industry's only outbreak prevention, response and recovery accreditation for facilities – at our highest visitor touchpoints.

We remain committed to helping slow the spread of COVID-19 and do not believe that our goals are not mutually exclusive. We appreciate your willingness to work with us on these efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian Ross". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping "B" and "R".

Brian Ross, CTA
President and CEO
Experience Columbus

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Linda Shetina Logan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Linda Shetina Logan, CTA
Executive Director
Greater Columbus Sports Commission

Cc: The Honorable Jon Husted, Lt. Governor
Director Lydia L. Mihalik, Ohio Development Services Agency
Acting Director Lance Himes, Ohio Department of Health

October 9, 2020

The Honorable Governor Mike DeWine
Riffe Center, 30th Floor
77 South High 43215-6117

Dear Governor DeWine,

Thank you for keeping all Ohioans safe during the past six months. Like other owners and operators of public assembly venues across Ohio, the Franklin County Convention Facilities Authority (*FCCFA*) recognizes the seriousness of Ohio's current public health challenges, and we remain committed to being a positive force in the fight against the *COVID-19* pandemic. At the same time, the *FCCFA* is also ready to contribute to Ohio's recovery by safely reopening our Greater Columbus Convention Center and Nationwide Arena facilities, consistent with public health and safety standards.

We fully support the plan produced by the Ohio Travel Association (*OTA*) and the Ohio Hotel and Lodging Association (*OHLA*) for a *Safe Return to Hosting Meetings & Events*. The *OTA/OHLA's* plan asks the State of Ohio to revisit the mass gathering limitations on the size and type of events that convention centers, arenas, auditoriums, ballrooms, and other indoor public assembly venues may host. The *OTA/OHLA's* plan seeks these specific policy guidelines for hosting events:

1. Allow meeting and event venues to establish capacities based on their individual circumstances and environments, using updated *COVID-19* compliant plans that meet current state requirements for all events and functions.
2. Allow business meetings and events to be held with reasonable occupancy limits under their own auspices, rather than tying meetings to the requirement of providing banquet and catering. Group meetings of similar sizes could be conducted just as safely – perhaps in some instances even more safely – without the provision of food and beverage.
3. Allow the meetings and events industry to help guide the way for safer gatherings through the dissemination and utilization of detailed guidelines, protocols, plans, standards and resources which are specific to each venue's circumstances and which exceed even the *Responsible RestartOhio* mandatory requirements and best practices.
4. Inform the public that while Ohio will continue to place the utmost importance on continuing health and safety protections as our number one priority, meetings and events should be permissible when held in accordance with the state's requirements and industry standards which offer even more protections.

Upon the State's adoption of these guidelines, we can safely return to regularly hosting meetings and events in our convention facilities, and responsibly restart Central Ohio's travel and visitor economy.

Sincerely,



Don L. Brown, Executive Director
Franklin County Convention Facilities Authority

Cc: The Honorable Jon Husted, Lt. Governor
Director Lydia L. Mihalik, Ohio Development Services Agency
Acting Director Lance Himes, Ohio Department of Health
OHLA Executive Director Joseph Savarise
OTA Executive Director Melinda Huntley
FCCFA Board Members



October 8, 2020

The Honorable Mike DeWine, Governor
The Honorable Jon Husted, Lt. Governor
Governor's Office
Vern Riffe Center for Government and the Arts
77 South High Street, 30th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215-6117

Dear Governor DeWine and Lt. Governor Husted,

I had the great honor of being selected as a member of the Responsible Restart Ohio Travel & Tourism Advisory Group, where I served as the Chair of the Meetings & Conventions subgroup. Thank you for the opportunity to provide your office with key input on safely restarting the travel and tourism segment of the Ohio industry.

The live events industry came to a standstill locally in Columbus and throughout Ohio with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020. Annually, visitors make 43 million trips to Greater Columbus for conventions, trade shows, sporting events and leisure visits, spending \$7.6 billion and supporting 78,600 jobs.

Hotel bed tax collections as a result of these visits reached an all-time high of \$49.7 million in 2019. According to Tourism Economics, the Columbus MSA has lost 47,000+ jobs through Q2 2020 in the leisure and hospitality sector. This specifically includes over 200+ jobs at the Greater Columbus Convention Center alone through layoffs.

Since the public health order limiting mass gatherings in Ohio, 239 events scheduled to meet in Columbus in 2020 have cancelled, representing 270,021 total hotel room nights and an estimated direct visitor spend of \$221 million.

The swift, decisive actions taken by your administration to combat this pandemic have saved thousands of lives and as an industry and citizenry, we are eternally grateful. However, while remaining ever mindful of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic still surrounding our populace, we are at a critical juncture for our industry. This juncture is not just one of economics but the very survival of the industry.

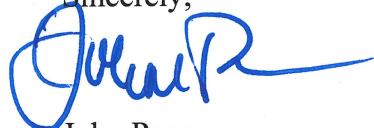
The reopening of the travel economy will help lead Ohio back to recovery. As such, I strongly encourage your office to allow this industry to greater reopen in a safe and responsible manner. In my position as general manager of the largest convention center in Ohio, I fully support the efforts submitted to your office by the Ohio Travel Association & Ohio Hotel & Lodging Association for a safe return to meetings and events.

The health, safety and security of our employees, visitors and guests are paramount. The Greater Columbus Convention Center has implemented VenueShield, a comprehensive companywide safety and environmental hygiene program designed to operate venues in the current COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. VenueShield is being utilized in the more than 325 ASM Global managed venues worldwide. ASM Global venues include convention centers, arenas, stadiums and theatres and span five continents, 21 countries, with 61,000 staff under employ.

Additionally, the Greater Columbus Convention Center is LEED (Leadership In Energy & Environmental Design, Existing Buildings Operations & Maintenance) and is finalizing Global Biorisk Advisory Council® (GBAC) STAR™ accreditation. GBAC is a division of ISSA (International Sanitary Supply Association), the worldwide cleaning organization. GBAC STAR™ provides third party validation that venues meet the highest level of cleanliness and safety.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'John Page', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

John Page
General Manager

October 9, 2020

The Honorable Mike DeWine
Governor's Office
Vern Riffe Center for Government and the Arts
77 South High Street, 30th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215-6117

RE: Mass gathering limits on events and venues

Dear Governor DeWine,

My company, Fern, is a 110 plus-year-old company with locations throughout the United States – we were founded in Cincinnati and have always been headquartered here. Our future has never been more threatened than today, and we survived past pandemics, world wars, the Great Depression, and a host of recessions and other disasters.

As a longtime leader in the Live Events industry and having served as president of the Exhibition Services and Contractors Association, the chairperson of the Center for Exhibition Industry Research, a board member of the International Association of Exhibition and Events, and in roles with other organizations, I know the industry and its players very well. I am fully confident that our industry and its organizations have developed plans that create a safe environment for people to meet that exceed the protocols of almost every other aspect of current life.

The impact of our businesses not operating is significant, and not merely in the ways you would expect. As I recently wrote in the Cincinnati Enquirer (<http://bit.ly/ABEnquirer>), the impact of live events goes deep into our economy: "As important as the direct jobs supported by the live events industry is the importance of trade shows to our local businesses, large and small. Many businesses in our region can trace a significant amount of their annual business to participation in trade shows. The impact is even more pronounced for small businesses. As long as shows aren't happening, the pipeline of future business for these companies is diminished, creating a viscous cycle which will result in more lost jobs and economic uncertainty well beyond the events and hospitality industry."

Fern has worked with partners throughout the country to establish nationally accepted programs for cleaning and distancing at shows and events, most notably the GBAC program (<http://bit.ly/GBACInfo>).

EXPERIENCE FERN

645 Linn Street
Cincinnati, OH 45203
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www.fernexpo.com

Fern also has an established extensive industry-wide testing and health verification platform, Fern HealthCheck, in partnership with ShareMy.Health (<http://bit.ly/FernHealthCheck>). Fern's processes and procedures for internal and customer use are also extensive (<http://bit.ly/FernCOVID>). We are a risk-averse industry, and precautions almost always exceed those recommended by various authorities in all types of situations.

On behalf of the hundreds of full-time Fern employees (who are mostly currently displaced) and the thousands we employ throughout the year, I ask you to please consider revising the limits on mass gatherings in a way that will allow us to get back to work safely. We support the information and requests in the attached letter from the Ohio Travel Association and the Ohio Hotel & Lodging Association.

My primary plea in my recent op-ed published in the Cincinnati Enquirer, linked above, was related to the public helping mitigate the impact of COVID-19. We are committed as a company and industry to fight the spread of COVID-19 in every aspect of life. We know that we can safely ensure safe practices at live events while facilitating commerce, providing education, building relationships, and encouraging tourism in the great state of Ohio.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Aaron Blutworth
Chief Executive Officer

cc: The Honorable Jon Husted, Lt. Governor
Director Lydia L. Mihalik, Ohio Development Services Agency
Acting Director Lance Himes, Ohio Department of Health

Attachments

EXPERIENCE FERN

645 Linn Street
Cincinnati, OH 45203
[O] 513-333.7060
[F] 513.333.7067
www.fernexpo.com



11/19/2020

The Honorable Mike DeWine

Governor's Office
Vern Riffe Center for Government and the Arts
77 South High Street, 30th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215-6117

RE: Mass gathering limits on events and venues

Dear Governor DeWine,

With the onset of Covid-19 our successful and growing business literally crashed after 38 years. We've never seen anything like it – literally every meeting and/or special event was cancelled or has been postponed until restrictions are eased up and attendees feel safe.

Fortunately thanks to the PPP we were able to pivot somewhat to outdoor events and virtual meeting but despite all our efforts our business levels only recovered ~20% over the summer. Unfortunately the program has now expired and we face restructuring + a significant RIF unless "things change"...

Ergo, please permit me to join the Ohio Travel Association ▪ Ohio Hotel & Lodging Association by encouraging you to consider:

- allowing meetings and events venues to establish capacities based on their individual circumstances and environments, using updated COVID-19 compliant plans that meet current state requirements for all events and functions
- allow business meetings and events with reasonable occupancy limits under their own auspices, rather than tying meetings to the requirement of providing banquet and catering. Group meetings of similar sizes could be conducted just as safely – perhaps in some instances even more safely – without the provision of food and beverage
- allow the meetings and events industry to help guide the way for safer gatherings through the dissemination and utilization of detailed guidelines, protocols, plans, standards and resources which are specific to each venue's circumstances and which exceed even the Responsible RestartOhio mandatory requirements and best practices
- reinforce to the public that while Ohio will continue to place the utmost importance on the necessary continuing health and safety protections as our number one priority, meetings and events are indeed permissible when held in accordance with the state's requirements and industry standards which offer even more protections

Simply put, sir, we need your support AND it's the right thing to do.

~\(_/~

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Mark Greene
PRESIDENT

Cc: The Honorable Jon Husted, Lt. Governor; Director Lydia L. Mihalik, Ohio
Development Services Agency; Acting Director Lance Himes, Ohio Department of Health

AD HOC EVENTS
FULL-SERVICE HOTELS
FACILITY MANAGEMENT
SYSTEMS DESIGN & SALES
INSTALLATION & REPAIR

October 22, 2020

The Honorable Mike DeWine
Governor's Office
Vern Riffe Center for Government and the Arts
77 South High Street, 30th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215-6117

Dear Governor DeWine,

On behalf of the alliance of Ohio arenas within District 2 of the International Association of Venue Managers (IAVM), we are writing in conjunction with the Ohio Travel Association and the Ohio Hotel and Lodging Association regarding mass gathering limits on events and venues.

Our public assembly venues bring people together and play a vital role in our communities. We are also an economic force multiplier, with our events helping to fill area hotels, restaurants, and retail establishments. At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, we were the first to close, and we will be among the last to reopen. Individually, facilities will likely lose millions in gross revenue from cancelled events for 2020. In addition, without guests our communities will miss out on hundreds of millions of dollars, devastating local economies.

We ask you to please reconsider the current limitations on meeting and event venues, including hotels, convention centers, and others, to host gatherings of reasonable capacity and certain types of events which can be safely executed. This is crucial to help our venues, and others like us, to survive this crisis and get back up and running as safely and quickly as we can. These include:

- ✓ allowing meeting and event venues to establish capacities based on their unique respective environments, using updated COVID-19 compliant plans that meet current state requirements for all events and functions;
- ✓ allowing the meeting and event industry to help guide the way for safer gatherings through the dissemination and utilization of detailed guidelines, protocols, plans, standards, and resources specific to each venue's circumstances and which may even exceed the Responsible RestartOhio mandatory requirements and best practices; and
- ✓ reinforcing to the public that while Ohio will continue to place the utmost importance on the necessary continuing health and safety protections as our number one priority, meetings and events are indeed permissible when held in accordance with the state's requirements and industry standards which offer additional protections.

We remain committed to be a positive force in the fight against COVID-19 and other public health threats. However, the potential continued shutdown of our venues will have a direct and immediate impact on local economies. While some venues are able to host very limited business under the current state orders, many are operating at unsustainable levels. If this continues, they will be forced to make detrimental decisions leading to additional loss of jobs and tax revenues on a permanent basis. We recognize the seriousness of the current challenges faced by our communities. We support efforts to continue protecting health and safety with the goal of maintaining Ohio as a destination of choice and contribute to Ohio's recovery.

For additional information, please do not hesitate to contact Mike Gatto, Senior Vice President of Columbus Arena Sports & Entertainment, at MGatto@ColumbusArenas.com or (614) 374-4617 (mobile).

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Ohio Alliance

cc: The Honorable Jon Husted, Lt. Governor
Director Lydia L. Mihalik, Ohio Development Services Agency
Acting Director Lance Himes, Ohio Department of Health
Executive Director Don Brown, Franklin County Convention Facilities Authority





October 9, 2020

The Honorable Mike DeWine
Governor's Office
Vern Riffe Center for Government and the Arts
77 South High Street, 30th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215-6117

Dear Governor DeWine,

As Mayor of the city of Sharonville, I thank you for the many positive and difficult decisions taken by your office to both reduce the spread of COVID-19 and to protect the many important jobs that make up our economy.

While it is understood that many business sectors have felt the negative impact of this virus, our convention, hotel and hospitality industry has been so adversely crushed that their/our future viability to operate is at stake.

The effects here in Sharonville and in Hamilton County have been immense. Thousands of industry workers are jobless or furloughed. Restaurants and hotels, who have managed to persist, do so at non-viable levels. Our Sharonville Convention Center, an anchor and driver for our region within this industry, has experienced record cancellations of hundreds of events for both this year and next. These are losses representing millions of tax dollars and spending for our city and region.

I urge you to consider our ability to safely return to business, with reasonable capacity levels and safety measures in place. We are proud to partner in support of the Ohio Travel Association and the Ohio Hotel & Lodging Association's plan to more readily reopen this important business sector and are aligned with their core guidelines:

1. -allow meeting and event venues to establish capacities based on their individual circumstances and environments, using updated COVID-19 compliant plans that meet current state requirements for all events and functions.
2. -allow business meetings and events to be held with reasonable occupancy limits under their own auspices, rather than tying meetings to the requirement of providing banquet and catering. Group meetings of similar sizes could be conducted just as safely – perhaps in some instances even more safely – without the provision of food and beverage.

City of Sharonville
October 9, 2020

3. - allow the meetings and events industry to help guide the way for safer gatherings through the dissemination and utilization of detailed guidelines, protocols, plans, standards and resources which are specific to each venue's circumstances and which exceed even the Responsible RestartOhio mandatory requirements and best practices.
4. -reinforce and inform the public that while Ohio will continue to place the utmost importance on continuing health and safety protections as our number one priority, meetings and events should be permissible when held in accordance with the state's requirements and industry standards which offer even more protections.

Our City has remained a staunch supporter and partner in working with the state and your office to save lives and to return to work responsibly. At the same time, we feel your guidance is needed to help elevate the viability of this very important business sector and to ensure the long term viability and survival

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Hardman', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Kevin Hardman, Mayor
City of Sharonville

Cc: The Honorable Jon Husted, Lt. Governor
The Honorable Louis W. Blessing, Senator
Representative Jessica E. Miranda
Joseph Savarise, Executive Director, Ohio Hotel & Lodging Association
President, Julie Calvert, Cincinnati Convention & Visitors Bureau



Cincinnati/Sharonville
Convention Center

October 8, 2020

The Honorable Mike DeWine
Governor's Office
Vern Riffe Center for Government and the Arts
77 South High Street, 30th Floor
Columbus, OH 42315-6117

RE: Mass Gathering Limits on Events and Venue / Convention Centers

Dear Governor DeWine,

The Hyatt Place – Sharonville Convention Center located in Sharonville, OH is a 125-room state of the art hotel facility built in 2017 connected to the Sharonville Convention Center [SCC]. This hotel was developed in large part by my company to help accommodate the thousands of travelers attending events and meetings at the SCC each year. The SCC is the lifeblood for our hotel, and we both serve in a symbiotic relationship to ensure the continued growth of our respective businesses. We cannot survive without the other.

The onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, as you know, has wreaked havoc on the travel industry. With the shutdown on the travel economy over the past 6+ months, many hotels and related businesses are on the verge of closing for good. We are no exception.

We have learned a great deal about the SARS-CoV-2 virus since March of this year. There have been good advancements in treatments and mitigation of the disease. We believe, with proper social distancing, mask wearing, ventilation, and sanitation, the ability of the disease to transmit from person to person becomes drastically reduced. It is time to reconsider the full opening of our convention centers throughout the state of Ohio.

Our convention centers are vast spaces with high ceilings, state of the art ventilation, and large enough to accommodate even thousands of people in safe settings. I urge you to allow these centers to open back up with the approval of local health inspectors to ensure the safety of all visitors, guests, and patrons of our convention centers. Our CVB's need to tell convention groups that their conventions can return to Ohio. Conventions and

meetings are the backbone for the hotel industry and serve as a crucial piece for all of us stay afloat.

Thank you for taking the time to see our point of view. A healthy economy in Ohio is one where travelers from all around the nation and world come to visit and take part in meetings and events located in our biggest communities. Travel brings a sense of vitality to our region and enhances the ability of businesses to operate in Ohio. Without visitors we will lose to our neighbors around us who have figured out a way to host these types of events. I believe you can help us get this key part of our industry set back in motion so we can resume a sense of normalcy in 2021.

Thank you and best regards and in good health,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bimal Patel". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Bimal" and last name "Patel" clearly distinguishable.

Bimal Patel
President & Owner
Rolling Hills Hospitality, Cincinnati, OH
Hyatt Place Sharonville Convention Center
bimalp@rhhospitality.com



5795 W. Badura Ave, Ste #110
Las Vegas, NV 89118
www.smartcitynetworks.com

October 9, 2020

The Honorable Governor Mike DeWine
The Honorable Lt. Governor Jon Husted
Governor's Office
Vern Riffe Center for Government and the Arts
77 South High Street, 30th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215-6117

Re: Mass gathering limits on events and venues

Dear Governor DeWine and Lt. Governor Husted:

Our meetings and conventions industry has been gravely affected by the recent COVID-19 pandemic. We appreciate the many others across the country and the state of Ohio who have also been stopped from doing business and remain in a state of inertia. This communication though, is from the events industry as Smart City Networks is the operator of technology services at 35 convention venues across the country. In Ohio, we operate the technology services for both Duke Energy Convention Center in Cincinnati and the Greater Columbus Convention Center in Columbus.

The impact of the mass gathering restrictions across the United States has been staggering to the convention and tourism industry. Tens of thousands of workers have been laid off, furloughed, or taken pay cuts. Hotels are empty. Restaurants are empty. There is little to no commerce being done in the downtown area of major cities and that impact has been felt in the Cincinnati and Columbus regions as well.

We as an industry are part of a critical tax generation system and this industry wants to get back to work. We want to do this safely while strictly following all state guidelines. Our request of your office is:

1. Allow meeting and event venues to establish capacities based on their individual circumstances and environments using updated COVID-19 compliant plans that meet current state requirements for all events and functions.
2. Allow business meetings and events to be held with reasonable occupancy limits under their own auspices, rather than tying meetings to the requirement of providing banquet and catering. Group meetings of similar sizes could be conducted just as safely – perhaps in some instances even more safely – without the provision of food and beverage.
3. Allow the meetings and events industry to help guide the way for safer gatherings through the dissemination and utilization of detailed guidelines, protocols, plans, standards and resources

which are specific to each venue's circumstances and which exceed even the Responsible RestartOhio mandatory requirements and best practices.

4. Inform the public that while Ohio will continue to place the utmost importance on continuing health and safety protections as our number one priority, meetings and events should be permissible when held in accordance with the state's requirements and industry standards which offer even more protections.

We also support and include the efforts of our partners in the Ohio Trade Show "Strong, Safe and Essential" document from September 25. These are our partners, our clients, and our colleagues. The outline they present is comprehensive, clear and operationally sound. We also support efforts, such as Spectra's "Together Again" plan at the Duke Energy Center, which was submitted for a "waiver to operate" a documented million-dollar event in Cincinnati, that was rejected by your office.

We respectfully request that pursuant to the authority granted you in R.C. 3701.13 to "make special orders... for preventing the spread of contagious or infectious diseases," you stipulate orders for the Event industry in keeping with those already published for the consumer retail and services sector so that we may move forward with our contracted and pending events. Our industry can meet or exceed the guidelines for operation if we knew what is expected of us.

Our industry is responsible and mature. We drive tax revenues and employ thousands of workers at all levels. Bringing this industry back to life, albeit at limited capacity, will breathe life back into our community. We honor and thank you for all you have done to keep Ohioans safe and healthy. Your efforts and steadfast positioning against COVID-19 is exemplary and not to be diminished.

Please help us and our venue clients with your guidance, communication and support for this integral industry in our region. Ohio can be the shining example to the rest of the country of how to reopen this vital business segment smartly, safely and efficiently.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Mark Haley
President

cc: John Page, ASM, Greater Columbus Convention Center
Ric Booth, Spectra, Duke Energy Center



October 9, 2020

The Honorable Mike DeWine
Governor's Office
Vern Riffe Center for Government and the Arts
77 South High Street, 30th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215-6117

RE: Mass gathering limits on events and venues

Dear Governor DeWine,

The travel and tourism industry has been devastated by the spread of COVID-19. The arena and convention industry has been especially hard hit. The Huntington Center, an 8,000 seat sports arena that hosts minor league hockey, concerts and family shows and the SeaGate Convention Centre, a 100,000 sq. ft. center that hosts local, regional and national events have been essentially closed to the public since March 11, 2020.

We had 37 full time employees and over 350 part-time seasonal employees at our peak during normal times. We now employ seven full time employees and zero part-time seasonal employees since our closing. Between our two facilities we normally host over 600,000 guests in each calendar year. This represents over \$52 million dollars in economic impact to our downtown and surrounding businesses in northwest Ohio. Our revenue and attendance are down over 95% since March.

First and foremost, safety is our top priority. We have the staff training and the knowledge of operating our facilities to keep them clean and safe for guests to enjoy events. We will put strict policies and procedures in place to make our buildings safe and sanitary. However, we cannot financially make ends meet with only being allowed 300 guests in our facilities.

I respectfully request that you reconsider the attendance caps for our buildings so we can welcome back events in a safe manner. We need guests to attend events to get our industry back in service. It is critical for our employees now on furlough and for our local economy.

Sincerely,



Steve Miller
ASM Global General Manager
Huntington Center & SeaGate Convention Centre



500 Jefferson Avenue • Toledo, OH 43604
Main: 419.255.3300 • Fax: 419.724.5670
huntingtoncentertoledo.com



SEAGATE CENTRE

401 Jefferson Avenue • Toledo, OH 43604
Main: 419.255.3300 • Fax: 419.255.7731
toledo-seagate.com



Ohio Travel
ASSOCIATION



September 24, 2020

The Honorable Mike DeWine
Governor's Office
Vern Riffe Center for Government and the Arts
77 South High Street, 30th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215-6117

RE: Mass gathering limits on events and venues

Dear Governor DeWine,

The businesses, organizations and professionals that make up Ohio's travel economy are grateful for the many positive steps taken by the State of Ohio to balance the need to reduce the spread of COVID-19 with the desire to protect the jobs and livelihoods of the more than 400,000 individuals employed in this sector in our state. The ability to do business in the travel, attractions, meetings, and events sector has allowed these businesses to contribute to Ohio's economic recovery.

At the same time, many of these businesses are still severely limited in the size and type of business they can host. Ohio has opened new opportunities for larger events, including youth, collegiate, amateur, club and professional sports; performing arts; and other venues. We urge consideration of the ability for meetings and event venues of all types, including hotels, convention centers, and others, to host gatherings of reasonable capacity and certain types of events which can be safely executed.

Recent developments underscore the severe and potentially permanent impact the current restrictions will have on Ohio's travel economy. A recent industry analysis found that more than a quarter of hotel loans in the CMBS lending market are headed to foreclosure. (*Historical CMBS Report: An Update on Hotel Commercial Real Estate, Trepp, Aug. 2020.*)

On Sept. 16, the I-X Center Corporation delivered news which underscores the urgent need to provide some flexibility for meeting and event venues when it announced the permanent closure of the 2.2 million square foot I-X Center in Cleveland. Loss of this venue will have a direct and immediate impact on the local economy, as it has hosted large events that cannot be accommodated in that destination's convention center without displacing other important business.

The member businesses of the Ohio Travel Association and Ohio Hotel & Lodging Association continue to be impacted in a similar manner. While these businesses are able to host very limited business under the current state Orders, many are operating at unsustainable levels and will be forced into the same decisions and outcomes – leading to more losses of jobs and tax revenues on a permanent basis.

Throughout the pandemic, our organizations have remained a partner in working with the state on efforts to save lives. We have also shared input on safe steps that can be taken to allow meetings and events business that is commensurate with the activity happening in other sectors.

(continued)


We ask for your support in revisiting some of those ideas now, to apply the many lessons we have learned in the past six months. These include:

- **allowing meetings and events venues to establish capacities based on their individual circumstances and environments, using updated COVID-19 compliant plans that meet current state requirements for all events and functions**
- **allow business meetings and events with reasonable occupancy limits under their own auspices, rather than tying meetings to the requirement of providing banquet and catering. Group meetings of similar sizes could be conducted just as safely – perhaps in some instances even more safely – without the provision of food and beverage**
- **allow the meetings and events industry to help guide the way for safer gatherings through the dissemination and utilization of detailed guidelines, protocols, plans, standards and resources which are specific to each venue's circumstances and which exceed even the Responsible RestartOhio mandatory requirements and best practices**
- **reinforce to the public that while Ohio will continue to place the utmost importance on the necessary continuing health and safety protections as our number one priority, meetings and events are indeed permissible when held in accordance with the state's requirements and industry standards which offer even more protections**

Our organizations and our members have shared much information with state and local officials since the onset of the pandemic in early March. We continue to update that guidance and are including an updated overview to help illustrate the effort meetings and events venues are putting into fighting COVID-19. (See attached).

Businesses and organizations throughout the travel economy recognize the seriousness of the current challenges faced by our communities. We support efforts to continue protecting health and safety and make Ohio a destination of choice. We remain committed to being a positive force in the fight against COVID-19 and other public health threats. But we are also ready to apply what we have all learned with the reopening steps that have been taken in the past several months to contribute even more to Ohio's recovery.

Thank you for your consideration,


Melinda Huntley
Executive Director
Ohio Travel Association


Joseph Savarise
Executive Director
Ohio Hotel & Lodging Association

Cc: The Honorable Jon Husted, Lt. Governor
Director Lydia L. Mihalik, Ohio Development Services Agency
Acting Director Lance Himes, Ohio Department of Health

Attachments

Cleveland's I-X Center closes, another casualty of Covid-19 pandemic

Sep 16, 2020

Mary Vanac

Staff Reporter

Cleveland Business Journal



The I-X Center in Cleveland, one of the largest convention centers nationwide, has closed because of the coronavirus pandemic after 35 years of operation.

"The global pandemic has decimated the event industry as well as many other businesses and has ultimately led to this decision," I-X Center Corp. said Wednesday in a statement.

The City of Cleveland acquired the 2.2 million-square-foot building in 1999 by threat of eminent domain, expecting to build another runway for Cleveland Hopkins International Airport next door.

The city changed course and instead leased the building to I-X Center Corp., which operated the building as an exposition center, the center said in its statement.

A Cleveland spokesperson did not return an email seeking comment about the future of the building or the effects its closure would have on city finances.

Since 1985, the I-X Center has hosted major events, such as the Cleveland Home and Remodeling Expo and the I-X Center Amusement Park, which attracted more than 2 million visitors each year.

In the late 1980s, the building was recognized by Guinness World Records as the largest single-building convention center in the United States with 1.6 million square feet of exhibit space, the center said in its statement.

The massive building was built in 1942 as the Cleveland Bomber Plant but was known through most of its history as the Cleveland Tank Plant, according to the center's website.

Owned by the U.S. Defense Department during World War II, the facility was operated by General Motors as the Fisher Body Aircraft Plant No. 2, where it made B-29 bombers.

The center has been closed since mid-March when Gov. [Mike DeWine](#) and the Ohio Health Department banned mass gatherings of more than 100 people to slow transmission of the coronavirus that causes Covid-19.

In late March and early April, the exposition center furloughed 76 full- and part-time employees and about 100 seasonal employees, according to a WARN letter to the state.

In May, I-X Center Corp. notified the state that the furloughs were expected to last longer than six months.

Companies are required to file WARN letters with the state under the federal Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act (WARN Act) when they expect a mass layoff.

Some of the furloughed workers are members of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Local 507, according to the WARN letter.

After the governor signed an executive order in late August indefinitely extending the ban on mass gatherings, the center's staff canceled the rest of its 2020 events.

"The I-X Center has been an integral part of making Cleveland a world-class destination for trade shows and events due in part to its size, location adjacent to Cleveland Hopkins International Airport and ease of access to multiple interstates," the center said in its statement.

"With its annual trade shows and public events, the I-X Center generated millions of dollars annually in economic impact to Northeast Ohio."



I-X CENTER CORP.

Boeing's KC-97G Stratofreighter has been on permanent display at the I-X Center since 2017. The Ferris wheel behind the freighter also is a permanent fixture at the 2.2 million-square-foot exposition center operated by I-X Center Corp. and owned by Cleveland.