

EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE
Embargo for 10:00 am
Wednesday, March 2, 2011

Contact: John Mozena
(313) 964-4447
jmozena@starrconstand.com

Reinvention of Detroit's Cobo Conference & Exhibition Center Unveiled Through Three-Year, \$221 Million Customer-Focused Renovation and Expansion Plan

DETROIT—March 2, 2011—The Detroit Regional Convention Facility Authority (DRCFA) today unveiled a three-year, \$221 million plan for the reinvention of Cobo Conference & Exhibition Center, Metro Detroit's regional convention facility. The bond-financed project is Phase III of a multi-year strategic plan to return Cobo Center to its historic role as one of North America's premier meeting and convention venues.

In creating its strategic plan, the DRCFA focused on restoring Cobo Center's competitiveness in the national meeting and convention landscape, revitalizing Cobo Center with an updated image and improving Cobo Center's financial viability through increased revenue opportunities and decreased costs.

The most visible upgrades to Cobo Center that were announced today include:

- The reinvention of Cobo Arena as a 40,000-square foot ballroom with supporting meeting, pre-function and back-of-house spaces. This new ballroom will feature a glass wall and open-air terrace facing Hart Plaza and Detroit's downtown to the east, as well as pre-function space with a panoramic view of the Detroit River and the international border with Canada to the south.
- The creation of a new "signature space" for Cobo Center in the form of a spacious three-story glass atrium that links the main floor of the venue with a new entrance facing the Detroit River, bringing the lower-level exhibition space more naturally into the flow of a meeting or convention and linking Cobo Center more fully to Detroit's revitalized riverfront.
- Significant renovation to the building's primary façade on the east side facing downtown Detroit. The primary element will be a high-tech "media mesh" that will function as a giant digital signboard welcoming conventions and guests to Detroit and to the new Cobo Center. Additional elements include a new entrance to the recently-developed food court, improved protection from the elements for arriving guests and increased use of glass in exterior walls to tie events at Cobo Center more closely into the surrounding city.
- Reconfiguration of most meeting and breakout room space throughout the venue, especially along the south side of the facility along the Detroit River, to meet the needs of today's meeting and event planners. The majority of the exterior walls along the river will be replaced by high-efficiency glass walls to take advantage of Cobo's riverside location and update Detroit's signature river skyline view for the 21st Century.

In addition to these major updates to Cobo Center, many other significant changes will be made to the facility that will improve customer experience, reduce customer costs, improve reliability, enhance safety and security, improve operational efficiency, save energy, reduce environmental impact and integrate Cobo Center better into the surrounding downtown, including:

- New communication systems

- Improved access control with three main entrance points, including direct lower level Motor Lobby access
- Parking enhancements, including a 20% parking space increase.
- More efficient environmental systems
- Enclosure of the loading dock
- Creation of an additional loading dock ramp to street level
- Additional electrical provision capabilities in exhibition spaces
- Finish upgrades, including wall coverings and carpet throughout
- Creation of service corridors where possible to move materials handling and other work out of public spaces
- New CCTV and fire protection systems

“We are making the changes to Cobo Center that our customers, stakeholders and competitive research have told us are necessary to return Cobo to an industry-leading status that will assist in attracting meetings and conventions to Metro Detroit,” said Larry Alexander, chairman of the DRCFA Board of Directors. “We are not satisfied with ‘good enough.’ This plan leapfrogs Cobo Center over competitive convention centers and gives Metro Detroit a cornerstone facility worthy of our region’s proven ability to host world-class events.”

Work will begin immediately on Phase III activities, with construction planned around existing commitments at Cobo Center so as not to disrupt customer events or access. All major project elements are planned to be complete by the 2014 North American International Auto Show in January, with full project completion expected by December of 2014.

About the Detroit Regional Convention Facility Authority:

The Detroit Regional Convention Facility Authority (DRCFA) was created in 2009 to operate Cobo Convention and Exhibition Center in Detroit under long-term lease from the City of Detroit. The DRCFA Board of Directors is comprised of five representatives selected by the Governor of Michigan, the Mayor of Detroit, and the county executives of Wayne, Oakland and Macomb Counties. The DRCFA receives funding from revenues at Cobo Center as well as support from the state’s Convention Fund. For more information, visit the Authority’s Web site at www.DRCFA.org.

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