

NEWS

Dir. of Ocean City (Md.) Conv. Center Heading to Tampa Conv. Center

By Jonathan Trager

Rick Hamilton, Director of the Roland E. Powell Convention Center in Ocean City, is heading south to lead the Tampa Convention Center.

Hamilton, 60, will start in his new position on Dec. 5. He has worked in Maryland for two years.

A resident of Florida for 18 years who served as Director of the Ocean Center Arena & Convention Center in Daytona, Hamilton told *USAE* that he's glad to get back to the Sunshine state.

"I'm looking forward to get back to Florida," said the golf player. "I've always admired the city in Tampa. I've always wanted to be there."



Rick Hamilton

In Ocean City, Hamilton oversaw the town's 160,000-square-foot convention center. In his new position, Hamilton will take over a 600,000-square-foot waterfront facility.

One cause for excitement is that Tampa is preparing to host the 2012 Republican National Convention, Hamilton said. The convention will take place at the end of

August at the St. Pete Times Forum.

The announcement that Hamilton will depart from Ocean City came shortly after the approval of the second phase of a 32,000-square-foot expansion of the city's convention center.

"The facility is in wonderful condition with phase one of the expansion underway," he said. "It's quite an accomplishment to get phase two approved and it's nice that it hap-

pened during my tenure. That's something I'm going to take a lot of pride in and I'll continue to watch its progress."

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Hamilton, who has a son, has served in a variety of industry roles besides his stint in Daytona.

He first served as a meeting planner at the University of Tennessee. He also worked his way up from stagehand and parking lot attendant at the Knoxville

Civic Auditorium & Coliseum to eventually assume the top spot as Director.

"Rick's wealth of experience will help Tampa continue to be a premiere destination," said Tampa Mayor Bob Buckhorn, according to the *Ocean City Dispatch*. "I am confident he will be a great addition to our team moving forward and especially as Tampa hosts the 2012 Republican National Convention."

"Every time you make a move like this, you never know how it will turn out," Hamilton said. "I'm very flattered they chose me, and this is a wonderful opportunity."

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along with a comprehensive discussion on travel policy, savings opportunities and calculating the return on investment (ROI) of a managed travel program.

The **North American Association of Commencement Officers (NAACO)**, a professional association of commencement and convocation officers from colleges and universities throughout North America, has partnered with association management and marketing firm, **Creative Marketing Alliance (CMA)** for a strategic growth initiative to enhance member value. CMA will work with NAACO to expand educational and networking opportunities for members, develop new member benefits and increase its membership base and industry visibility through a targeted social media and public relations campaign. By providing membership services, financial and event management, sponsor and exhibitor recruitment and marketing communications activities, CMA will continue NAACO's mission to provide a community structure for commencement and convocation professionals to exchange ideas, share traditions, explore new opportunities and connect with colleagues.