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BOSTON CONVENTION CENTERS SET TO REOPEN FOR EVENTS AT FULL CAPACITY

Call it the light at the end of the Ted Williams tunnel. Massachusetts Gov. Charlie Baker and Boston Mayor Kim Janey announced that pandemic restrictions will be lifted as of May 29. The move paves the way for the Massachusetts Convention Center Authority to welcome groups back at full capacity by next week.

In reality, the calendars for top-notch venues including Boston Convention & Exhibition Center, The Lawn On D, Powered by Citizens Bank, the John B. Hynes Veterans Memorial Convention Center and the MassMutual Center in Springfield reveal a slow trickle before the dam bursts this fall.

Of note, several events in the trade show industry are slated to occur in Boston. They include:

American Orthotic and Prosthetic Association National Assembly, Sept. 10-12, at Hynes Convention Center

North American Spine Society Annual Meeting 2021, Sept. 29-Oct. 1, at BCEC

50th Annual Meeting of the Child Neurology Society, Sept. 29-Oct. 2, at Hynes

HLTH Conference 2021, Oct. 17 -20, at BCEC

World Cancer Leaders' Summit 2021, Oct. 25-27, at Hynes

American Society for Clinical Pathology Annual Meeting 2021, Oct. 27-28, at Hynes

Society for Pharmaceutical Engineering Annual Meeting 2021, Oct. 30-Nov. 3, at Hynes

American Academy of Optometry Annual Academy 2021, Nov. 3-5, at BCEC.

Not only is Boston home to some of the country's best hospitals and medical schools, including Harvard's, the BCEC was home to the Boston Hope field hospital at the height of the pandemic in Spring 2020. That experience will help guide the facility in preparing for hosting large gatherings in a post-pandemic world.

"Massachusetts has been a national leader in public health and the strategies implemented based on data have successfully led to this moment when we can safely say that it is time to get back to business and we, and our customers, are ready to go," said David Gibbons, MCCA executive director.

MCCA officials have been working with incoming event organizers for months preparing for the green light given this week. The next step is taking those initial plans and implementing them. HLTH has already said attendees will need proof of vaccination to enter. It's unclear yet how many other events in Boston — or elsewhere — will follow suit.

Capital improvements have been made across the facilities. Attendees will see new escalators, carpet, refurbished restrooms and high-efficiency LED lighting, noted Nate Little, MCCA's director of communications and external affairs. Not only will the refurbishments enhance the event experience, the projects also kept employees working throughout the pandemic.

Little added the slow rollout prior to the fall is in line with the regular timeframe to implement trade shows and conventions.

“We’ve reached the light at the end of the tunnel and are excited and relieved to find out it is not a train coming at us, as has been the case for 14 months,” said Little. “We’ve been working to ensure that when we could open we’d be ready and we are.”

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OUR VENUES

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