

# Leading off in Las Vegas: World of Concrete 1st major US trade show since pandemic

By [Richard N. Velotta](#) Las Vegas Review-Journal  
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A rapidly recovering Las Vegas will be the focus of the global tourism industry Monday, when World of Concrete stages the first major trade show in the United States since the COVID pandemic wiped out the lucrative convention and meeting business.

The spotlight is especially welcome in Southern Nevada because World of Concrete will be the first big show at the Las Vegas Convention Center's [new \\$1 billion West Hall](#), a project completed during the region's visitation collapse to keep Las Vegas positioned as the country's meetings leader.

Roger Dow, president and CEO of the U.S. Travel Association, said a successful World of Concrete show will open the doors for other large meetings in Las Vegas and elsewhere as COVID spread declines, the numbers of vaccinated Americans grows and once-rigid safety protocols are relaxed.

"The rest of the country looks at this as the bellwether of large conventions," Dow said. "This is the first major convention since COVID in America."

Dow said that even if convention registration is half of what it was in 2019, it will be deemed a success.

“I’m hard-pressed to think of anything that’s been more than 5,000,” he said. “This will be the most-reported big convention in America, and to my mind, if that gets pulled off well, which it will — Vegas will do the job — it’s going to start opening the doors for lots of bigger stuff.”

Conventioneers will arrive for the education portion of the four-day show Monday, with trade show exhibits opening Tuesday in both the West and North halls.

World of Concrete normally convenes in January, just after CES delegates have left town. The show typically draws 60,000 masonry professionals.

“The World of Concrete is a major milestone in our recovery,” said Amanda Belarmino, an assistant professor at UNLV’s William F. Harrah College of Hospitality. “A successful recovery will include conventions.

“The ability to successfully and safely host the World of Concrete will be a signal to all travelers that Las Vegas is a safe and reliable destination,” she said. “Just as important will be our ability to provide a high level of service that will advertise to all travelers that we are open for business and ready to serve.”

Brendan Bussmann, director of government affairs for Las Vegas-based Global Market Advisors LLC, said the arrival of World of Concrete begins the next chapter of the recovery from “the Great Shutdown.”

“Meetings and conventions are key to the economic vitality of Las Vegas,” Bussmann said Thursday. “This is the start that will help bring back the midweek customer.”

World of Concrete, he said, is the first domino to fall in a packed meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions calendar for the remainder of 2021.

“While we still need to remain cautious as the world recovers from the pandemic, this is a welcome sign to better times ahead,” he said. “This is a further signal that Las Vegas is back open for business. While the leisure guest has surged back, this week kicks off the return of the business customer.”

Several big shows are on the horizon in Las Vegas in the next seven months. On the calendar are the Men’s Apparel Guild in California fashion show, Aug. 9-11; the National Mining Expo, Sept. 13-15; the National Association of Broadcasters — usually staged in April — from Oct. 9-13; the Specialty Equipment Market Association automotive aftermarket show, Nov. 2-5; and CES 2022, Jan. 5-8.

## **LVCVA preparing for months**

The Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority has been preparing for the World of Concrete show for months, making sure all health and safety protocols are observed. With Clark County [lifting most large-group social-distancing requirements Tuesday](#), LVCVA President and CEO Steve Hill believes Las Vegas is ready to jump-start conventions and meetings, which were blasted off the calendar by the COVID-19 pandemic in late March 2020.

Conventions and trade shows are among the city's most important tourism elements because participants fill hotel rooms and partake of the city's amenities at midweek instead of on weekends, when free and independent travelers arrive.

Virginia Valentine, president and CEO of the Nevada Resort Association, said conventions and trade shows will be key drivers of Southern Nevada's economy.

"World of Concrete is the gateway to Southern Nevada's economic recovery when you consider how important the convention attendee is to boosting hotel occupancy levels and driving midweek business throughout the resort corridor at restaurants, shows and entertainment venues, retail stores and other attractions and amenities," Valentine said.

"Trade show and convention delegates spend more while they're here than leisure visitors, and they do it Monday through Thursday when we need it most," she said. "The resort industry is beyond excited to welcome back this first key piece of trade show business in more than 14 months and set the standard for safe large-scale events."

In 2019, a record 6.6 million conventioners visited Las Vegas for a meeting. Trade shows annually contribute an estimated \$11.4 billion in economic impact to the region.

"We are thrilled to be welcoming World of Concrete exhibitors and attendees back to Las Vegas as our first major convention to return to our destination," Hill said in a release. "We greatly value our long-standing partnership with

Informa Markets and their shared commitment to health and safety protocols to ensure a safe, trusted and ‘Only Vegas’ experience for their attendees.”

## **More coming from Informa**

Informa, a British publishing, business intelligence and exhibitions group based in London with 150 worldwide office locations, including one in Las Vegas, is producing World of Concrete here as well as a handful of other shows.

Representatives of World of Concrete know they will be in the spotlight when doors open for the show.

“We’re ready to deliver a safe and successful event,” said Lauren Lamb, vice president of marketing for World of Concrete.