



First Financial Center Appoints Byron Johnson as Director of Operations

Experienced Venue Operations Leader Joins the Newly Reimagined Downtown Convention Center



CINCINNATI, OH (August 2026)— The First Financial Center, managed by Legends Global, the premier partner to the world's greatest live events, venues, and brands, has appointed Byron Johnson as director of operations, bringing 17 years of experience in large-scale venue operations to the leadership team.

Johnson joins the organization at a pivotal moment, following the Center's January 21, 2026, reopening after a transformative \$264 million renovation.

Johnson has spent his career in the events and venue management industry. Most recently, he served as director of public safety and security for the Raleigh Convention and Performing Arts Complex, overseeing the Raleigh Convention Center, Red Hat Amphitheater, and Martin Marietta Center for the Performing Arts. His experience

spans operations, guest experience, capital projects, and large-venue performance management.

The reopening of the downtown First Financial Center introduced a dramatically reimagined facility designed to elevate the region's convention and tourism landscape. The upgraded center now features fully renovated exhibit halls and meeting rooms, enhanced natural light and circulation, and major behind-the-scenes improvements that increase energy efficiency and connectivity. Since its reopening, it has hosted several large-scale events and national conventions. It recently hosted the largest Omega Psi Phi International Grand Conclave in the fraternity's history, attracting over 30,000 visitors to Cincinnati and generating tens of millions in estimated economic impact for the region.

Rodney Faulk, general manager of the First Financial Center for Legends Global, which manages the venue, said Johnson's appointment comes at an important time for the facility and the broader downtown convention district. "We are delighted to welcome Byron to the First Financial Center leadership team. His depth of experience and proven success across diverse venues make him uniquely qualified to lead our operations during this exciting chapter of growth for Cincinnati. As significant investments continue to

shape the future of our convention center and community, Byron's leadership will be instrumental in advancing our operations, enhancing the guest experience and setting new standards. We are confident his expertise, vision and commitment to excellence will strengthen our organization and position us for continued success."

"I am thrilled to join the First Financial Center team as Director of Operations and to help lead the venue into its next chapter following its exciting reimagining," said Johnson. "I look forward to collaborating with the talented team led by Rodney Faulk and Brian Clark and contributing my experience in venue leadership to support our clients, guests and community. I'm excited to help strengthen the Center's position as a premier destination for world-class meetings, events and entertainment."

Download image [here](#).

About First Financial Center

Located in the heart of downtown Cincinnati, First Financial Center recently underwent a \$264 million transformation to become the Midwest's premier meetings and events destination. Reopening in January 2026, the 750,000-square-foot facility features 200,000 square feet of contiguous exhibit space, two ballrooms, 28 state-of-the-art meeting rooms, and a new rooftop terrace. Adjacent to the new Elm Street Plaza, the center is designed for seamless accessibility, energy efficiency, and world-class event experiences. A new 700-room Marriott convention headquarters hotel broke ground in July 2026 and is slated to open in Fall 2028, connecting directly to the Center via skybridge.

About Legends Global

Legends Global is the premier partner to the world's greatest live events, venues, and brands. We deliver a fully integrated solution of premium services, including feasibility & consulting, owner's rep, sales, partnerships, venue management, hospitality, merchandise, and content & booking. Through our white-label approach, we keep our partners front and center while leveraging the power of our global network: over 450 venues, 20,000 events, and 165 million guests annually. To learn more, visit us at www.LegendsGlobal.com and follow us on [LinkedIn](#) and [Instagram](#).

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