

## NEW CONSUMER SHOW VENUE COMES TO SOUTHWESTERN ONTARIO

*City of Hamilton supports new alternative event centre to attract more consumer shows to the suburbs*

**HAMILTON** - One of Copps Coliseum's major consumer shows is moving to a private exhibition facility, thanks in part to another wing of city government.

But the move of the annual winter Hamilton RV Show to the Careport Centre on Longwood Road South is seen as a winning proposition for the city. The new 170,000-square-foot exhibition space in McMaster's Innovation Park means a show that outgrew Copps can still be staged locally, says Duncan Gillespie, CEO of Hamilton Entertainment and Convention Facilities Inc. (HECFI).

"The RV show simply outgrew Copps," he said. "Our mandate is to help businesses grow and we did that. Having a much bigger facility here means that business won't go someplace else. Now more people will come and spend money in Hamilton." He pointed out the Food and Drink show has outgrown the Convention Centre space and will move to Copps, another example of the city fostering a show's development.

The RV show is one of several events Continuum Productions Inc. plans to host at the new Careport Expo Centre, a huge converted section of a warehouse on Longwood. Continuum president Dwayne McKillop approached the city's economic development department for advice in setting up the exhibit space.

"We certainly didn't want to undercut Duncan Gillespie," said Neil Everson, Hamilton's head of economic development. But he said the department is there to help businesses get started and the Careport facility gives the city the largest exhibition space between the International Centre near Pearson International Airport and Niagara Falls.

"That 170,000 square feet complete with 14 loading doors and 2 large drive in doors is a big chunk of space on one level and makes Hamilton very competitive in attracting events." Continuum's McKillop said he expects one other event that has used city exhibition space to move to Careport, but stressed it would be like the RV show -- either moving there or to another city as it grew.

He said the conversion of warehouse space to exhibit hall is about 50 per cent complete and will be ready for the first event in November of 2009. The Centre currently has 9 events on the schedule for 2010 and McKillop is pleased with the excitement and support given around this project from the city and from local businesses. McKillop, who grew up in Waterdown and attended St. Mary's High School in Hamilton, has worked for two decades in event production and during his career has been part of the management team running the Toronto Boat Show and Toronto National Home Show.

With 450,000 cars passing by the facility each day, Careport's location just off Highway 403 at the top of the Aberdeen exit combined with plenty of free parking makes it a desirable show centre. This is not a new model as many of today's current centres were once old airport hangers, warehouses and abandoned stores or factories. McKillop feels that this centre really fills a need in the suburbs and is a good compliment to the other offerings in the area to attract business to Hamilton.

Continuum is also producing the Ideal Home and Garden Show, March 5-7, 2010, the largest show of its kind in southwestern Ontario. "The local home related businesses in the marketplace have really jumped on board with this regional home show and Canada Blooms has partnered with the show to brand the feature gardens as a preview to Blooms." McKillop reported.

He teamed up with well-known local businessman Demetrius Tsafaridis on the Careport project. Careport Warehousing is part of Tsafaridis's CareGo Group of Companies.

For more information on Continuum Productions Inc. or Careport Centre, please call 877-313-SHOW (7469)

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