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**Baird Center announces production team for Grand Opening Gala**

*The gala will be held on May 16, 2024*

**MILWAUKEE – (October 9, 2023)** –The Baird Center, which is undergoing a \$456 million expansion, will host a spectacular gala in the new, state-of-the-art rooftop Baird Ballroom on May 16, 2024. In order to welcome in the new era of the Baird Center for all of Milwaukee, an all-star production team has been assembled to produce the event.

“This gala is going to mark the beginning of a new chapter for our city and our industry. For me, it was non-negotiable that we have the best possible production team in place to not only make the evening spectacular, but to really showcase, embrace and celebrate all that Milwaukee is,” said Marty Brooks, president and CEO of the Wisconsin Center District. “The broad diversity of experience and background that our production team brings leaves no doubt that the Grand Opening Gala of the Baird Center will be a not-to-be-missed event.”

The production team for the 2024 Baird Center Grand Opening Gala includes:



**David Caruso, Dynamic Events by David Caruso, experience director**

In his impressive 21+ year career as an event planner, designer, speaker, media personality, curator and consultant, David Caruso creates spaces and experiences that foster joy and connection. As a native Milwaukeean, his decision to return to his hometown raised the bar for events and experiences in his city. He has received awards for his work both regionally and nationally, including Event Planner of the Year by the National Association for Catering and Events (NACE). David also hosts the TV show Good Things Brewing in partnership with VISIT Milwaukee, is a founding member of The Giving Circle, which directly supports survivors of sexual and domestic violence; and serves on the board of directors for the United Performing Arts Fund.



**Oscar Sanchez, Ambrosia Events, event manager**

Oscar Sanchez founded Ambrosia Events in 2013, an event planning company and event rentals that specializes in planning and producing extraordinary social and corporate events.

With over 15 years of experience working in the events industry in Mexico and the US as a chef and event planner, he is known for his creativity, leadership, and willingness to go further for the better of our community. He has a never-give-up attitude that has helped him to grow Ambrosia to be one of southeastern Wisconsin's premier event planners, rental, and florists.



**Samantha Mitchell, Samantha Starr Events, event manager**

Samantha Mitchell is the founder and principal planner of Samantha Starr Events, with more than a decade of event planning experience. Samantha Starr Events offers luxe event styling and design for celebrations and special events for party people in Milwaukee and beyond. Samantha has made a name for herself in both the corporate and nonprofit sectors, as well as through community volunteerism. In 2019, Samantha was recognized as one of Wisconsin's 49 Most Influential Black Leaders by Madison365. She is a bridge builder and enjoys bringing the community together through her love of art, culture, and food.



**Mike Underwood, Underwood Events, logistics manager**

Underwood Events is a creative corporate event planning and destination management company known for events and experiences that magnify brands and communicate messages. They build innovative strategies that align their clients' attendees and goals to produce experiences that are consistently on-point, on-time, and on-budget. Trendy events are fleeting, but authenticity is forever. The relationships Underwood Events builds with clients are based on mutual respect, openness, and a drive to produce a genuinely personalized, brand-relevant, indelible experience. The team is led by President and Founder, Mike Underwood.



**Connie Bolle, Levy Restaurants, food and beverage liaison**

Connie Bolle joined the team as the director of catering sales at Levy Restaurants, the Wisconsin Center District's exclusive food and beverage provider, in April 2019. She was previously the sales director with the Bartolotta Restaurant Group in Milwaukee. Before rejoining Levy in 2019 she spent over 14 years with Levy Restaurants, including stints at the Walt Disney World Resort, the Miami Heat, Chicago Off-Premise Catering, and more.

Connie is passionate about food, restaurants and true hospitality. She is also a Bourbon aficionado, college football guru and 2021 Kidney Donor, having donated her kidney through the National Kidney Registry on behalf of a nurse from St. Luke's Aurora Hospital.

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### **Baird Center**

The [Baird Center](#), located in the heart of downtown Milwaukee, is the hub of convention business in Wisconsin and is ideal for trade and consumer shows, conventions, banquets, business meetings and celebrations. The current convention center offers 188,695 square feet of contiguous exposition space and 37,500 square feet of ballroom space, accommodating up to 1,000 vendors and 10,000 guests while also offering more intimate spaces for groups as small as ten.

The convention center is undergoing a \$456 million expansion to double its size, allowing the convention center to host multiple events simultaneously and offer flexible space arrangements to meet various clients' needs. The expansion will be completed in Q1 2024. For more information about the expansion, visit [www.BuildingMore.com](http://www.BuildingMore.com). The Baird Center is owned and operated by the Wisconsin Center District and is experience-obsessed and dedicated to providing unforgettable, buzzworthy moments for all clients and guests. For more information and to book an event, visit [www.bairdcenter.com](http://www.bairdcenter.com).