



People

By Sarah J.F. Braley

Coffee With... Norman Ford



“ My technical background helps me analyze problems, because I learned to get to their roots.”

Norman Ford, director of business and operations for the Vicksburg (Miss.) Convention Center and Auditorium, is the new president of the board for the Association for Convention Operations Management. Before joining the 50,000-square-foot convention center, Ford worked at a nuclear power plant

How does somebody with a degree in nuclear engineering become a venue manager? I was unhappy. I also have a business degree and wanted to use it, so I readjusted my schedule and changed professions.

What about nuclear engineering informs your job at the convention center? An engineering background helps me understand the technical operations of the building, the lighting, the software systems. My technical background helps me analyze problems, because I learned to get to their roots. The nuclear part helps me study problems thoroughly before going after them with a solution.

What do you hope to achieve as president of ACOM? I want to continue to increase our membership and develop chapters around the country. We also are laying the groundwork to work with students around the country, to offer internships and mentorships. I want to help members energize themselves and their employees. We have a real excited board, and I want to foster that.

How has ACOM helped you? Through ACOM I have gained contacts in convention and visitor bureaus and hotels around the country. It's a big relief to know there are very few problems that nobody has faced before. ■

Calendar

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JUNE 7-9

Association for Convention
Operations Management
ACOM University,
Westin Casuarina Las Vegas
Hotel. Contact: ACOM,
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acomonline.org
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