

UNIVERSAL UNDERCOVER

A publication by Universal Fabric Structures, Inc.



UFS Pavilions House Press Corps for Republican National Convention

In July, Universal Fabric Structures played a key role in helping the City of Philadelphia host the Republican National Convention. The numbers tell the story. UFS accommodated 45,000 people in a 1.5 million square foot parking lot, using 9 modular pavilions to provide a total of 330,000 square feet of fully climate-controlled indoor workspace. It all adds up to one of UFS's biggest challenges ever.

The convention was held at the First Union Center, the newest facility in Philadelphia's Sports Complex and home to both the Philadelphia 76ers and the Philadelphia Flyers. The Center is surrounded by vast plains of asphalt, which UFS developed into a 21st century high-tech tent city in the short space of three weeks. From beginning to end — when the pavilions were disassembled, repacked and on their way to other venues — the project spanned an incredibly short eight weeks.

Actually, as Republican convention officials were careful to point out in



enthusiastic interviews with the press, it was a misnomer to refer to the UFS structures as tents. In fact, they were sophisticated fabric pavilions, about six stories high. As UFS representative and project coordinator Grant Cleverley explained, "These structures could stand here safely for 30 years."

Modular Clear-Span Design Provides Maximum Usable Space

The modular pavilions were built by union labor to all applicable national and local building codes. Featuring a clear-span design with no inertial posts or columns, each was constructed of a series of aluminum A-frame arches. The base plates of the arches were anchored using 5-foot spikes driven through the asphalt and

The Republican candidates and the City of Philadelphia both received extensive national exposure during the convention. But the greatest coverage belonged to the UFS pavilions, which housed approximately 200 media outlets and many other convention functions. Photo courtesy of The Philadelphia Inquirer, John Costello, Inquirer Staff Photographer

securely into the ground below. Poly-vinyl sheathing was hydraulically stretched across the top and around the sides of the frames to create the exterior walls, and the entire assembly was strengthened by guy wires and cable rigging. Glass doors were installed at the entrances and inside the pavilions had elevated, carpeted floors, as well as electrical and HVAC utilities.

Enclosing an area larger than six football fields, the UFS pavilions housed all the round-the-clock operations supporting

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(Article for company newsletter)

UFS Pavilions Home to Republican Convention Press Corps

Universal Fabric Structures played a key role in helping the City of Philadelphia host the Republican National Convention last month. The numbers tell the story. UFS accommodated 45,000 people in a 1.5 million square foot parking lot, using 10 modular pavilions to provide a total of 330,000 square feet of fully climate-controlled indoor workspace. It all adds up to one of UFS's biggest challenges ever.

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Modular Clear-Span Design Provides Maximum Usable Space

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Enclosing an area larger than six football fields, the UFS pavilions housed all the round-the-clock operations supporting the convention. Specifically, they provided offices and workspace for

approximately 200 media services, including the ABC and Fox networks, 55 Internet companies and 40 talk-radio booths. In addition, they housed the congressional press gallery offices, the Philadelphia 2000 host committee workspace, a large conference center, a hospitality lounge, a restaurant, the convention print shop and other convention-related functions.

Pavilions Withstand Heavy Rains to Earn Top Marks

Philadelphia is known for its hot, humid summer weather. Consequently, air conditioning systems were specified to maintain an internal temperature of 68 degrees in all areas. In addition, the structures are designed to be 100 percent waterproof and withstand winds of up to 90 mph. As it turned out, the Philadelphia weather tested the pavilions to the limits of their performance capabilities. During several days of high winds, thunderstorms and heavy rains that caused widespread flooding and evacuations, the pavilions were secure, tight and dry. The single exception — one minor leak in nearly 37,000 square yards of coverage — was promptly corrected.

The Republican National Convention called on UFS essentially to provide a complete, functional event center and maintain a comfortable working environment for the media. As it turned out, that was complicated by two storms of extraordinary intensity: the whirlwind of a four-day nationally broadcast convention and monsoon-like downpours. Numbers once again put it all in perspective. According to Grant Cleverley, “It was one of our 10 biggest challenges ever, and we brought in structures from Brazil, Las Vegas, Massachusetts, Florida and Belgium to meet it. But of the 20 largest vendors, the RNC rated UFS in the Top 3 for overall satisfaction.”

Photo Captions

(caption for RNC outside): The Republican candidates and the City of Philadelphia both received extensive national exposure during the convention. But the highest profile may have belonged to the UFS pavilions, shown here under construction, which soared six stories in height.

(caption for RNC full view): The Republican candidates and the City of Philadelphia both received extensive national exposure during the convention. But the greatest coverage belonged to the UFS pavilions, which housed approximately 200 media outlets and many other convention functions.