

OHIO BLACK EXPO WILL OPEN NEXT - Columbus Dispatch, The (OH) - August 28, 1988 - page 4G

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Ohio Black Expo has taken on a new name and will move to a new, larger location next weekend. Officials hope both moves will draw more state and local recognition for the annual event.

Officials decided last year to change the name of the event from Columbus **Black Expo**, said Rhonda Robinson, executive director of the exposition.

They also decided to move it from Mount Vernon Plaza on the East Side, where it had been held the past seven years, to Veterans Memorial, because it had outgrown the plaza location, she said.

The **Expo** also has been expanded to three days from one.

The changes are a result of a survey of participants that officials conducted last year.

"We asked what they would like to see, and many expressed the need to showcase somewhere else," Robinson said.

"While Mount Vernon is a vital segment of the population, it is not all of Columbus," Robinson said. The Downtown site is in the heart of the business district and is more representative of all participants, she said.

New this year will be a series of seminars on Saturday in which experts from around the country will lead discussions on a variety of topics, including **black** business, social and political issues.

Admission to the seminars is free with **Black Expo** general admission, which is \$3 for people age 13 and over. Admission is free on Friday.

At 9 a.m. Friday, a special workshop for senior citizens will focus on health, housing, economics, hunger and insurance.

There also will be an art exhibition featuring **black** artists' sculpture, oil, water color and photography works.

Exhibition hours are 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. Friday, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Saturday and 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Sunday.

About 300 businesses and service organizations are expected to display their products and services at a two-day exhibition, to be held in the North Exhibit Hall of Veterans Memorial. Hours are 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Saturday and 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Sunday.

Other **Black Expo** events include a Community Awards Reception Thursday, in which several of **Ohio**'s minority citizens will be recognized for their business, civic and artistic contributions.

That event will be held in the Wayne Brehm Room at Veterans Memorial, beginning at 6 p.m. Keynote speaker will be Tony Brown, syndicated columnist who is known best for Tony Brown's Journal, a top-ranked **black** affairs television series. Admission is \$25.

There also will be films, an African book display, **black** entertainers, a fashion show and a **black** teen talent show during the weekend.

Last year, **Black Expo** attracted 35,000 visitors, but with the additional space and attractions, Robinson expects more than 70,000 will attend this year's exhibition. The theme is "Taking Care of Business 1988."

According to Robinson, the goal of the event is to "promote **black** business, and make the public aware of goods and services that minority businesses have to offer."

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