

Market seeks to extend state support

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HIGH POINT — Organizers of the High Point Market want to preserve their financial assistance from state legislators amid the coronavirus pandemic during this year's session of the N.C. General Assembly.

Leaders of the High Point Market Authority are considering strategies to advocate for, at minimum, maintaining the \$3 million allocated for the trade show from state coffers. The state funding is used for transportation services to ferry marketgoers

to and from the downtown showroom district and to promote and market the world's largest home furnishings trade show.

High Point Market Authority President Tom Conley

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said trade show organizers also hope to tap into federal COVID-19 relief money for the Market, which has been buffeted by fallout from the pandemic.

The crisis compelled Market organizers to cancel last April's trade show and reconfigure and slim down the trade show staged this past October. Organizers recently announced that the spring trade show this year will be shifted from April to June to give the area, state and nation more time to deliver vaccinations and recover from the pandemic.

"We are very grateful for the state funding," Conley told The High Point Enterprise. "The challenges are greater than ever for this industry and for trade shows in general."

Legislators convened this past Wednesday in Raleigh for this year's General Assembly session. The major goal is to have a balanced state budget for the 2021-22 fiscal year in place

by July 1.

The High Point Market serves as a mainstay of the local economy and is the largest-single economic event in North Carolina each year. Typically, the market draws 75,000 to 80,000 visitors each spring and fall and has an annual economic impact of \$6.7 billion, according to a Duke University study.

Conley told The Enterprise that the High Point Market Authority has bipartisan support in the local legislative delegation for state funding.

Meanwhile, a veteran state legislator from High Point will continue his key role on an influential House committee during the 2021-22 General Assembly session.

Rep. John Faircloth, R-Guilford, will remain as a co-chairman of the House Appropriation Committee, which decides the specifics for state spending priorities and projects. House Speaker Tim Moore, R-Cleveland, announced the committee leadership appointments last week.

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