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Morning Roundup: A source takes us inside the Republican National Convention and the dramatic transformation of Quicken Loans Arena, Peace Through Business in Columbus, Tesla unveils cheaper SUV

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First

Here's what it took to get Quicken Loans Arena ready for the convention. This spring, David O'Neil took a leave of absence from his role as director of communications at state Auditor [Clarence Mingo's](#) office to serve as deputy press secretary for the Republican National Convention, which kicks off next week in Cleveland. I caught up with him Thursday to have him walk me through the quick and dramatic transformation of Quicken Loans Arena, which hosted game six of the [NBA](#) finals on June 16.

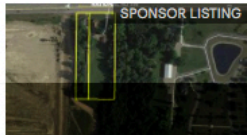
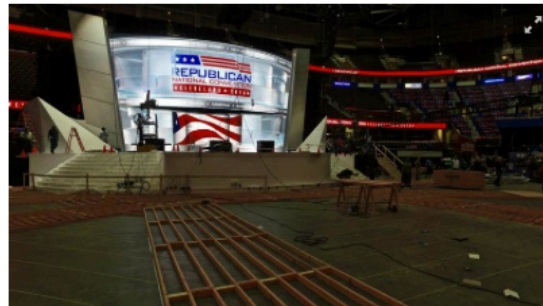
In his words:

David O'Neil is working as...
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DAVID O'NEIL

- We were in there bright and early on Friday June 17. We have to be completed by (this) Saturday at 6 p.m.; that's when the Secret Service will begin their security sweep of the arena. That gave us 29 days to complete the build-out. By comparison, the Democrats in Philadelphia had eight or nine weeks to complete their task and, as we all know, it takes Democrats longer to get things done.
- With the Cavs playing ... we had to do this in four weeks and before this year it's never been done in less than five weeks.
- Freeman Co. is the contractor, they are responsible for the conversion of what is essentially a basketball arena into a convention hall. When you walk in, now you can't even tell a basketball team plays there. Cavs signage has been covered up with RNC signage,

the floor is a carpeted area with seating for 2,500 delegates and a giant stage was built on the left side of the arena floor.

- We have changed the locker rooms into offices for our production team and for all of the things you need for a convention to work – additional office space to space for copiers, setting up a small business inside a basketball arena. You're going to have 20,000 people in there for four straight nights and 15,000 media members in town that will be working around the clock, so you have to make sure those folks are able to be fed and have places to work. They'll be at the convention center a mile from the arena, with busses going to and from.
- We also have media row; it used to be known as radio row, but with explosion of social/digital we've taken a garage adjacent to the arena and turned it into studio space for everyone from CNN to NBC News to Snapchat to Google to Twitter. Any important media outlet will be stationed in media row; it's the first time we've ever done that and there is no such media row in Philly this year.

"Politics, parties and protests." Meanwhile, the *Plain Dealer* [has this primer](#) for you convention junkies. And the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland has announced that thanks to the support of AT&T Inc. (NYSE:T), [admission will be free](#) to all guests from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Thursday.

Change agent. Local CPA [Lori Kaiser](#) of Kaiser Consulting next week will host a woman business owner from Rwanda, [Jeannette Nduwamariya](#), through the [Peace Through Business](#) program. It aims to empower women around the world through training and mentorships. "I have been e-mentoring Jeannette for six months and helped her write her business plan," Kaiser wrote in an email. "The business plan was how she got selected to visit the U.S. and continue on (in) the program." Kaiser says she's the only program mentor in Ohio. Next week she and Nduwamariya, who wants to expand her gas station business B4ALL Ltd., will spend five days together and take part in business, cultural and leisure activities. They'll also visit the [Women's Small Business Accelerator](#). Other parts of the program include an international summit and a graduation gala where participants become "change agents" and return home to empower others. Kaiser says she wants to get more Columbus business owners involved in the program. You can find her [website here](#).

A cheaper SUV for \$66K. Remember Tesla's [car for the masses](#)? Now there's a [cheaper SUV being revealed](#) by the maker of electric cars (NASDAQ:TSLA). Cheap is relative, though. The Model X SUV, called the 60D, starts at \$74,000, but is knocked down to \$66,500 after a \$7,500 federal tax credit. The new version is \$9,000 less than the 75D, marking the second price cut Tesla has made to its vehicles, [according to the Silicon Valley Business Journal](#).