

# Look inside: Engineers tour Coliseum for new TDZ application

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The top executives of Memphis' largest engineering firm were climbing stairs, scaling catwalks and shining flashlights down vacated corridors of the Mid-South Coliseum Friday.

Charles "Chooch" Pickard, a preservation architect and urban designer who recently joined ArchInc as partner, led **Allen & Hoshall** president Harry Pratt and Micheal Young, president emeritus, on a tour of the Coliseum Sept. 1.

*To take your own virtual tour of the Mid-South Coliseum, click on our slideshow from the tour.*

**Allen & Hoshall** is part of the team that is assessing the Mid-South Fairgrounds for potential uses as part of a Tourism Development Zone (TDZ) application. The City of Memphis plans to submit the TDZ application to the State Building Commission by the end of the year.

**Allen & Hoshall** is No. 1 on the MBJ's Engineering Firms list, with 28 local licensed engineers and 40 engineering employees.

Pickard is vice president of the Coliseum Coalition, a group that thinks its efforts to reopen the historic arena have been bolstered by **Elvis Presley Enterprises'** contention that the market can support a 6,200-seat concert venue near Graceland.

"The Coliseum is in incredible shape and it's already paid for," Pickard said. "There's no need to tear down this civic asset. We just need to bring it up to standards."

Since the Coliseum closed in 2006, a common local perception is that it would be extremely costly to bring the vacant arena up to modern standards.

Last year, the Coliseum Coalition conducted a property condition assessment and found it would cost about \$24 million to reopen a modernized Coliseum in full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

During the tour, Pickard detailed the plan for making the arena ADA compliant. It includes installing two elevators and removing the top three rows of the arena's 9,100 seats to create eight accessible seating areas.



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The Mid-South Coliseum

Representatives with **Allen & Hoshall** declined to comment on their initial findings.

The next Fairgrounds public input meeting is Sept. 21 from 5-7 p.m. at the Kroc Center.

**Michelle Corbet**

Reporter

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