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What to expect at RECon 2019: From delivery, pop-share, health and wellness, to Marvel adventures - by Diana Perry

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Better buy that new pair of Allbirds you've been eyeing for ultimate foot comfort for the upcoming ICSC RECon convention this May in Las Vegas. To get a better idea of what to expect (other than foot pain) from a marketing/social media/tech/clicks to bricks angle I caught up with ICSC vice president of public relations, Stephanie Cegielski to get the full scoop.

"This year at RECon, ICSC will introduce new 'destinations' to showcase the industry-changing concepts that reflect the evolution taking place in centers across the country, including the increased focus on seamlessly integrating digital and physical retail real estate," said Cegielski. The new destinations in detail below:

"Retail in Focus" Destination – A spotlight on both specialty retail and emerging brands including Foxtrot Delivery Market (Chicago-based), Guesst (Pop-Share out of Manhattan), and Batch (Pop-Share out of San Francisco and in NYC), which demonstrate the clicks to bricks transformation we've all been talking about. These businesses are thinking past the pop-up shop and working with many up-and-coming products and brands to curate items within a single shop. This seems like a great incubator for clicks to bricks not quite ready to commit to their own store and allows them to test various markets.

The Innovation Exchange Destination – A technology-focused area showcasing companies: Virtual APT (VR and 360 degree videos for marketing), Athena Security (gun detection security powered by A.I.) and Toolbox Group - owners of mallcomm, Platform and The Mall Doctors which all help to bring retail real estate communities together (including managers, tenants, staff, suppliers, residents, stakeholders and customers).

Health and Wellness Center – Kaiser Permanente (merging everything medical online except care), Retro Fitness, LLC (affordable fitness with 150 locations) and others make their RECon debut here, "demonstrating the continued shift to health and wellness" – notes Cegielski. Walgreens will also be onsite supporting "Red Nose Day" to raise money for children in need. The Red Nose Day program has raised a whopping \$71 million in the last four years to end child poverty and works with

nonprofits like Boys & Girls Clubs of America, City Year, Charity: Water, Feeding America, Save the Children and others.

Cegielski also informed me that there are 125 new exhibitors this year spanning a variety of tenant classes. “Experiential, social media-friendly activations by companies such as Candytopia, Electrify America, Area 15 and a Marvel Adventure Lab Photo Booth will help showcase the energy of the evolving retail space,” she said.

Remember, what happens in Vegas...stays on social media.

Fun Fact: ICSC is hosting a social-media based contest to raise funds for charity and the ICSC Foundation where all registered attendees can enter a chance to win “a throwing contest” against the RECon keynote speaker, former Dallas Cowboys quarterback Tony Romo (on stage after his address).

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