

**Rick Saas**

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**Subject:** FW: Dec. 14, 2005 Newsletter



# VENUES**today**

"The news behind the headlines"

**Dear April,**

**December 14, 2005 VOL. IV, Number XXXIX ISSN 1547-4143**

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## **QUOTE OF THE WEEK**

"Cherish and develop your donors." — advice from David Fleming, Weidner Center for the Performing Arts, which will cease presenting shows

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## VENUE NEWS

*Weidner Center for the Performing Arts, Green Bay, Wis.*



### UNIVERSITY PULLS THE PLUG ON WEIDNER PRESENTS

The decision to cut staff and programming severely at the Weidner Center for the Performing Arts on the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay campus could be a harbinger of change for the entire industry. Though the circumstances, including a lack of donors, rapid escalation of competition and a static consumer base, are possibly unique to the Weidner, the industry lesson is the same from the perspective of both the university vice chancellor and the center's director.

Simply put: "There is an end in sight," said David Fleming, who as executive director has struggled to turn the PAC around for the past two years.

"Nothing is forever. Everything changes. You have to be able to adapt to changes. I think the one thing I would say is we may have waited too long," said Tom Maki, university vice chancellor, business and finance.

The 2,000-seat, 13-year-old Weidner Center had its heyday. It opened debt-free in 1993 and for the first decade was highly successful, presenting Broadway and national acts of a high caliber. It was not subsidized, covering its own operating costs.

Fleming, who replaced Tom Gabbard who now manages the Blumenthal Performing Arts Center in Charlotte, N.C., has struggled to develop a donor base within the community to revive the Weidner. "As with any performing arts center that tries to fulfill an operating mission, fundraising is a piece of the picture. Here, fundraising has never really caught on. When large Broadway shows were here for multiple weeks, enough revenue was generated that a very small portion of the budget, 3-5 percent, was raised through fund raising. People, frankly, became complacent. When things turned around, shortly after 2000, the basis for philanthropy had not been established. Frankly, every door we went to was slammed in our face," Fleming said. The perception was, "You're making money and you're part of the university," he said. It was particularly disappointing because he felt the objective was reasonable, just 20-25 percent of the budget from donations, but "the response has been a great hollow sound. We get zero from the university. No institutional support, no hotel/motel tax. Nothing like that is happening here."

In the beginning, the Weidner had a great reputation and great success. Both Fleming and Maki called it world-class, first class. Fleming was among the founders this year of TIPCON (The Independent Presenters Consortium), and is a member of the Association of Performing Arts Presenters. The building was able to sock away \$4 million in cash reserves during the good years, Fleming said. That actually worked against them because donors refused any request for contributions as long as cash reserves existed. When the reserves were exhausted to cover daily operations, the university said that's it, you're out of money.

"The operating budget has been going down rapidly. At its height, it was \$13 million. As little as four years ago it was at \$8 million. Currently it's \$3.5 million," Fleming said, though Maki pegged that at almost \$6 million this year, and if the university continued down the same path, the subsidy required would be \$1.5 million.

The only definite decisions at this point, announced Dec. 12, are to cut staff and cease presenting shows. Fleming said they have been telling agents and promoters that it didn't look good for a 2006-2007 season for the past month. It's a major blow to the industry, he said. The Weidner booked about \$2 million in artists fees annually, Fleming said.

Maki said the future reality of the Weidner has not been set, declining to elaborate on the several alternatives being discussed. "It's too early," Maki said. "We cut some of the staff. Initially we're looking at eight positions: a retirement, a resignation, and six others who will be gone." That decision is purely financial, he said. "We were going down a path that is no longer successful. It was successful financial model until the last four years. I think the whole industry to a certain extent is changing, and we're part of that. It's really tough. I'm sure we're not alone."

The Weidner is one of only two major performing arts centers on University of Wisconsin campuses, Maki added. The other is the 1,300-seat Irvin L. Young Auditorium in Whitewater. The Weidner is not part of the academic program. While Maki realizes there are university-subsidized performing arts centers on much larger university campuses, like the University of Illinois, that's not the norm in Wisconsin and certainly not for a campus with only 5,000 students, he said.

The community was gung-ho about the \$18-million Weidner in the beginning, which is why it opened without a penny of debt, he said. It was expanded to the tune of \$5 million to increase the size of the stagehouse for "Miss Saigon" and to increase the size of the lobby to handle the mobs of fans, Fleming added.

But dynamics change, including increasing competition from a new performing arts center, Fox Cities Performing Arts Center, in Appleton, 20 miles away, to the new showroom at the Oneida Indian casino to the new 10,000-seat Resch Center in Green Bay.

In fact, the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay is currently building the \$20-million Kress Events Center, a 4,000-seat events center for sports and intramural activity. "The students wanted that and are putting in half the construction money and all of the operating dollars," Maki said. It will open in early 2007.

The Weidner had a Broadway series last year, but it did not do very well, Fleming said. "The market has been constant as far as the number of people willing to attend. In the Weidner's heyday, we had a subscription base of over 10,000 for weeklong runs of Broadway. In the last three and a half years, four new venues have been built in the market, adding 20,000 seats within a 25 mile radius. If I have a week of Broadway

against two nights of the Eagles that takes \$100 tickets, that takes a toll on the market," he said.

"Our primary competition is still people sitting home on their couches pushing buttons. Unfortunately, that audience has increased," Fleming added.

Bottom line, "the university is stopping any presenting activity here," Fleming said. Through a 501C3 auxiliary, the Weidner was a university presenting facility, with a full presenting schedule that's included everything from classical to Broadway to lecture for 13 years. "The university is risk adverse," Fleming said.

"The staff has been fired; the programming has not been done for next year; nothing is going to happen," Fleming said. "We're maintaining through the end of the season. At the end of May, we're joking we'll be telling the last performer to turn the lights out on his way out.

"We're told the university will use it for faculty and student recitals and community rentals. There will be a custodian here." Fleming lauded the staff of about 20 as one of the best he's ever worked with. "It's a fabulous building, an incredible theatrical machine," he said.

"One of the things that set this venue apart for promoters was that we were a turnkey operation," Fleming continued. "A lot of promoters that come here don't even show up. We do everything for them, close out the show and send them a check. They're as happy as can be. Without the infrastructure in place, it could be a real challenge for a promoter to come in here and do that easily. That's how we remained competitive, offering services. We don't have a large market to support the level of activity we're doing."

In this day and age, every community wants its own performing arts center and local venue, Fleming said. "If the market is not elastic enough, you can overbuild and kill the goose laying the golden egg. There was a goose laying golden eggs here. The market is inelastic. Expansion was rapid during a period of economic decline. The results were inevitable, especially in our case when there was no basis in philanthropy to pick up the slack."

Maki stressed that "it is not our idea to just use it for classrooms. We want to use it and have been using it for fine arts performances. We need to use it in a responsible manner for a 5,000-student campus." Asked if there will be a new manager, he said that is to be determined. "Someone has to be responsible." Fleming is among the group leaving Jan. 12.

"There is no last event," Maki emphasized. "There have been rumors the building will go dark. Not true. The university will have to do minimal funding, with a much-reduced operating budget, supplemented by other things. We will keep operation of the building separate from ticket sales."

Meanwhile, University Chancellor Bruce Shepard and Green Bay Area Chamber of Commerce President Paul Jadin announced that they have appointed a task force of community leaders to develop recommendations for the long-term future of the Weidner Center and other performing arts venues in the area. The actions are needed to address serious financial challenges facing performing arts venues locally and nationally, according to Shepard.

"This is a tremendous success story and a tragedy. There was a great rise to prominence and an equally great crash," Fleming concluded.

His final advice: "Cherish and develop your donors." — Linda Deckard  
Interviewed for this story: Tom Maki, (920) 465-2210; David Fleming, (920) 465-2726



***Rich Krezwick, Tom Mobley, Patrick Leahy***

#### **FACES & PLACES: KREZWICK, MOBLEY, LEAHY TAKE ON HOME OFFICES**

**Rich Krezwick** is concluding his 10-year run at the helm of Boston's premier arena, the **TD Banknorth Garden**, while **Tom Mobley Jr.** is joining **Global Spectrum** and **Patrick Leahy** has exited **Clear Channel Entertainment** to form his own firm, **409 Management and Consulting LLC**. All three will be working from home for the foreseeable future.

Krezwick will no doubt take another industry post. "I'll figure that part out. It really is dependent on the opportunity," he said following the Dec. 10 announcement he was leaving Dec. 31. "I'm going with the best opportunity and if that's in Boston, that's terrific. I have a passion for what I do and I want to make sure it's a nice fit." Krezwick has two teenagers in Boston high schools. He's looking forward to a little vacation time with friends and family over the holidays.

Krezwick started in the industry at the Spectrum in Philadelphia in 1979. He worked for SMG for 12 years, spent five years in the radio business in New England, and then moved to the Garden. His last title was president and CEO of the Garden and executive vice president of the Boston Bruins.

As to the reason he is leaving, Krezwick is honoring a gag order. Delaware North Companies owns the Boston Bruins and owns and operates TD Banknorth Garden. The official press release states that John Wentzell, senior vice president and general manager of the TD Banknorth Garden, will assume full operational responsibility for the venue effective immediately. "The change is a temporary one that will be in effect until a successor is appointed for Richard Krezwick, former president of TD Banknorth Garden, who will be leaving the company by January 1, 2006," the release states. Wentzell is also well-known in the industry, with a resume dating back 23 years and including work with Comcast-Spectacor.

The release states that "the company says it will be considering all options in naming the new permanent president of its TD Banknorth Garden operations." Speculation in

the three local Boston newspapers suggest Jeremy Jacobs' son Charlie, who joined the operation two years ago, is being groomed to take over. Jeremy Jacobs is chairman of Delaware North Companies, "one of the largest privately held companies in the United States with revenues approaching \$2 billion and 40,000 associates serving half a billion customers in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand."

Meanwhile, Mobley is joining a Comcast Spectacor company. Mobley is currently general manager and CEO of the Washington (D.C.) Convention Center Authority, a post he vacates in January, date to be determined. "It's a different arrangement for me," Mobley said, though it is one he feels well prepared for. He will be senior vice president, convention centers, for Global Spectrum. "If I go back in my career, I've gone from the Jacksonville (Fla.) Convention Complex which is 78,000 square feet, to 2.2 million square feet in Chicago at McCormick Place, to D.C.'s 725,000 square feet of exhibit space. I started in Baltimore, 115,000 square feet. I've built them (Jacksonville), run them, and torn them down (D.C.)."

Mobley spent two years at the Washington Convention Center. "For a year and a half I've been working on getting the headquarters hotel approved. That's ready to go. That allowed me an opportunity, sort of a break in the action. I felt comfortable taking a change in direction," Mobley said. "The hotel is not approved, but it's very close. It's at the public policy level, out of our hands."

He will be based in D.C., working out of his Capitol Hill home in Southeast Washington. "That's one of the advantages Global offered. They are flexible. I can basically live where I want." His wife made the move to consulting six years ago and also works out of the house. "We're going to test our 37-year marriage working out of the same building. I'll be in a corner of the den for the time being," he said, laughing.

This is a new position for Global Spectrum, said Mich Sauers, president. The firm currently manages 14 convention centers. Hiring Mobley personifies "a commitment to that sector of the market; we'd like to see it grow. Tom is recognized throughout the industry," Sauers said.

Also a veteran of more than 20 years in the business, Leahy opted to start his own firm, a one-man show working in the suburbs of Cincinnati. He left Clear Channel Entertainment the first of December, part of the reorganization resignations. He spent 16 years building and operating amphitheatres, and prior to that, four years in the arena management side of the business. His last position with CCE was executive vice president for Clear Channel Entertainment - Music Group Venues, a title he assumed in 2003.

He said he has two clients and several potential partners lined up, but he declined to name them. His company is named after the address of the main building used by promoters in the Cincinnati region. It's meaningful to anyone who has done business in town and Leahy expects he will do some business locally, even outside entertainment.

"Every opportunity is also a challenge. You try to take advantage of them as best you can. [The reorganization] worked out to be a good opportunity to see what else in the world there is to do with the next 20 years."

Having operated venues for a city and for a promoter, Leahy sees the operations as similar. "You have an internal client and an external client. Being a building operator for a promoter, sometimes you're a little conflicted on how you're going to handle certain situations. Depending on how your organizational hierarchy is established, that too can cause a little bit of a conflict. Then you have that wild card known as the act. That

comes into play, sometimes for better, sometimes for worse, in decision-making. It depends on whether or not everyone is pulling on the same side of the rope."

And that is his future goal, to line the team up. Leahy said it is important to be audience-centric, fan centric, whether considering the price value proposition or the smooth introduction of a sponsor into the entertainment. "At the end of the day, the guy that buys the ticket and goes to see the show or goes to the museum or goes to the amusement park, votes with his wallet on whether you succeed or fail. It's all about a value proposition for the consumer and fan."

"I can, at the very least, develop programs and environments that are appealing. I've been somewhat overwhelmed with some of the folks I've dealt with over the years who are interested in trying to understand how to gain entry into the marketplace and some who are trying to figure out how they can grow in the marketplace," Leahy said of reaction to his announcement. His new company will work with venues and vendors that do business within the venues. "I'd like to think somewhere along the line there may be an opportunity to bridge that gap between what the artist manager is looking get at the venue and what the promoter is looking to deliver from an experience standpoint. It's a very competitive landscape. People have a choice."

409 Management & Consulting will provide specialized managed services, strategic planning and project management in the areas of venue operations, food & beverage management, venue planning, operational design and development, business development, special event creation and general management. Leahy is an active member of the International Association of Assembly Managers (IAAM) and currently serves on the IAAM Academy for Venue Safety and Security and served on the original IAAM Safety and Security Task Force. — Linda Deckard

*Interviewed for this story: Rich Krezwick, (617) 624-1101 or Krezwick@aol.com; Tom Mobley, (202) 249-3350; Mich Sauers, (727) 456-1171; Patrick Leahy, (513) 677-2486*

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## BOOKINGS



### HOTtickets

#### MCCARTNEY IN VEGAS PAYS OFF

**HOT TICKETS** is a weekly summary of the top acts and ticket sales as reported to **Venues Today** e-newsletter. Following are the top20 concerts and events, the top 5 in each seating capacity category, which took place since Nov. 23, 2005. To submit reports, e-mail [HotTickets@venuestoday.com](mailto:HotTickets@venuestoday.com) or fax to (714) 378-0040.

The **Hot Tickets** this week as reported to **Venues Today**:

#### 15,001 or More Seats

- 1) *Gross Sales:* \$5,058,113; *Event:* Paul McCartney; *Venue:* MGM Grand Garden, Las Vegas; *Attendance:* 29,535; *Ticket Range:* \$262.50-\$105; *Promoter:* Evening Star Productions (CCE); *Dates:* Nov. 25–26; *No. of Shows:* 2
- 2) *Gross Sales:* \$4,932,519; *Event:* U2; *Venue:* **Bell Centre, Montreal, Quebec**; *Attendance:* 43,294; *Ticket Range:* \$194.70-\$58.41; *Promoter:* Clear Channel Canada, The Next Adventure; *Dates:* Nov. 26–28; *No. of Shows:* 2
- 3) *Gross Sales:* \$2,420,274; *Event:* Bon Jovi; *Venue:* **Madison Square Garden Arena, New York**; *Attendance:* 30,040; *Ticket Range:* \$99.50-\$49.50; *Promoter:* AEG Live, Concerts West; *Dates:* Nov. 27–28; *No. of Shows:* 2
- 4) *Gross Sales:* \$2,390,452; *Event:* Bon Jovi; *Venue:* **Wachovia Complex, Philadelphia**; *Attendance:* 31,134; *Ticket Range:* \$95-\$47.50; *Promoter:* AEG Live, Concerts West; *Dates:* Dec. 2–3; *No. of Shows:* 2
- 5) *Gross Sales:* \$2,295,285; *Event:* Paul McCartney; *Venue:* **Glendale (Ariz.) Arena**; *Attendance:* 14,802; *Ticket Range:* \$255.05-\$55.05; *Promoter:* Evening Star Productions (CCE); *Dates:* Nov. 23; *No. of Shows:* 1

#### 10,001 - 15,000 Seats

- 1) *Gross Sales:* \$1,412,565; *Event:* Andrea Bocelli; *Venue:* **Save Mart Center, Fresno, Calif.**; *Attendance:* 12,240; *Ticket Range:* \$187-\$57; *Promoter:* Classic Enterprise, Fresno Grand Opera, PEO Tours; *Dates:* Dec. 11; *No. of Shows:* 1
- 2) *Gross Sales:* \$638,943; *Event:* Neil Diamond; *Venue:* **DCU Center, Worcester, Mass.**; *Attendance:* 11,224; *Ticket Range:* \$75-\$42.50; *Promoter:* AEG Live, Apregan Group, Concerts West, Sal Bonafede; *Dates:* Dec. 5; *No. of Shows:* 1
- 3) *Gross Sales:* \$537,004; *Event:* Gwen Stefani; *Venue:* **Rabobank Arena, Bakersfield, Calif.**; *Attendance:* 9,200; *Ticket Range:* \$65-\$35; *Promoter:* AEG, Goldenvoice; *Dates:* Nov. 29; *No. of Shows:* 1
- 4) *Gross Sales:* \$488,100; *Event:* Neil Diamond; *Venue:* **Wachovia Arena at Casey Plaza, Wilkes-Barre, Pa.**; *Attendance:* 8,506; *Ticket Range:* \$75-\$42.50; *Promoter:*

AEG Live, Apregan Group, Concerts West, Sal Bonafede; *Dates:* Dec. 7; *No. of Shows:* 1

5) *Gross Sales:* \$486,488; *Event:* Depeche Mode; *Venue:* **Patriot Center, Fairfax, Va.**; *Attendance:* 7,932; *Ticket Range:* \$75-\$49.50; *Promoter:* Cellar Door Companies (CCE); *Dates:* Dec. 9; *No. of Shows:* 1

### **5,001-10,000 Seats**

1) *Gross Sales:* \$751,635; *Event:* Bon Jovi; *Venue:* **Mohegan Sun Arena, Uncasville, Conn.**; *Attendance:* 7,889; *Ticket Range:* \$150-\$95; *Promoter:* Jim Koplik Presents (CCE); *Dates:* Nov. 26; *No. of Shows:* 1

2) *Gross Sales:* \$337,325; *Event:* Kelly Clarkson; *Venue:* **Dodge Arena, Hidalgo, Texas**; *Attendance:* 5,446; *Ticket Range:* \$150-\$70.40; *Promoter:* McDonalds Charity; *Dates:* Dec. 7; *No. of Shows:* 1

3) *Gross Sales:* \$292,962; *Event:* Kanye West; *Venue:* **Gibson Amphitheatre at Universal CityWalk, Universal City, Calif.**; *Attendance:* 5,967; *Ticket Range:* \$65-\$39.50; *Promoter:* AEG Live, Atlanta Worldwide Touring, House of Blues; *Dates:* Dec. 3; *No. of Shows:* 1

4) *Gross Sales:* \$258,414; *Event:* Kelly Clarkson; *Venue:* **Aladdin Theatre, Las Vegas**; *Attendance:* 6,711; *Ticket Range:* \$48.50-\$28.50; *Promoter:* Evening Star Productions (CCE); *Dates:* Dec. 10; *No. of Shows:* 1

5) *Gross Sales:* \$252,822; *Event:* Paul Weller; *Venue:* **Nottingham (England) Arena**; *Attendance:* 5,200; *Ticket Range:* \$49.54-\$24.76; *Promoter:* 3A Entertainment, Jack Utsick Presents; *Dates:* Dec. 4; *No. of Shows:* 1

### **5,000 or Fewer Seats**

1) *Gross Sales:* \$890,864; *Event:* Mamma Mia; *Venue:* **San Jose (Calif.) Center for the Performing Arts**; *Attendance:* 15,737; *Ticket Range:* \$72-\$45; *Promoter:* American Musical Theatre of San Jose; *Dates:* Nov. 29–Dec. 4 *No. of Shows:* 8

2) *Gross Sales:* \$677,976; *Event:* Lord of the Dance; *Venue:* **Bristol (England) Hippodrome**; *Attendance:* 13,579; *Ticket Range:* \$57.52-\$26.55; *Promoter:* 3A Entertainment, Jack Utsick Presents; *Dates:* Nov. 22–27; *No. of Shows:* 7

3) *Gross Sales:* \$485,024; *Event:* Lord of the Dance; *Venue:* **New Theatre Oxford (England)**; *Attendance:* 10,106; *Ticket Range:* \$57.52-\$26.55; *Promoter:* 3A Entertainment, Jack Utsick Presents; *Dates:* Nov. 30–Dec. 4 *No. of Shows:* 7

4) *Gross Sales:* \$305,850; *Event:* Phil Lesh & Friends; *Venue:* **House of Blues, Atlantic City, N.J.**; *Attendance:* 6,945; *Ticket Range:* \$55-\$40; *Promoter:* House of Blues Entertainment; *Dates:* Dec. 8–10; *No. of Shows:* 3

5) *Gross Sales:* \$293,815; *Event:* Phil Lesh & Friends; *Venue:* **The Chicago Theatre**; *Attendance:* 6,584; *Ticket Range:* \$47.50-\$37.50; *Promoter:* Jam Productions; *Dates:* Nov. 25–26; *No. of Shows:* 2

*Compiled by April Stroud, HotTickets@venuestoday.com*

### **New Orleans Jazz Orchestra**



### **NEW JERSEY PAC RESCUES NEW ORLEANS JAZZ TOUR**

When hurricanes Katrina and Rita hit New Orleans, they devastated more than the city's buildings and people, they also laid waste to many of the region's performing arts center and institutions. Among them was the up-and-coming New Orleans Jazz Orchestra (NOJO) which was forced to cut short its first-ever national tour because the funding it secured from the city disappeared.

But thanks to a creative arrangement, as well as an infusion of cash from Prudential Financial Inc. and the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC), the non-profit ensemble led by jazz trumpeter and New Orleans cultural ambassador Irvin Mayfield will continue their 12-date tour in the spring.

In addition, they will create a residency program at NJPAC that will feature performances by the Jazz Orchestra and other New Orleans artists, as well as educational workshops, community residencies and the commissioning of new jazz works that will debut in New Orleans in 2006 and 2007.

"We had completed the first leg of the tour in the fall on the heels of Katrina and this spring tour would not have been able to go off had Prudential not stepped up," said Luca Diaz, director of development for the Orchestra. The tour, "New Orleans Then and Now," (which is what it was called before the hurricane struck) presents jazz classics and pieces by composers like Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong who are associated with New Orleans.

Before Katrina, the Orchestra was slated to receive some economic development money from the city, which is unusual for New Orleans arts organizations, but once the hurricane hit, the money was re-directed to hurricane relief. But now, thanks to the \$300,000 grant from Prudential, the tour will kick off in mid-March and stretch into mid-April, with more dates potentially on the horizon. "Prudential really saved the whole thing," said Diaz.

The deal came about when the President and CEO of NJPAC, Lawrence P. Goldman, learned of the Orchestra's plight from his friend, NOJO Board Chairman John Fernandez. The pair

had been friendly for more than 20 years, and Fernandez had produced the opening night gala for NJPAC. "Here you had the first major tour by this fledgling arts organization at a time when the city of New Orleans was just beginning to understand the arts as an economic driver and then the tour was off because they had no money," said Jeffrey Norman, vice president of Public Affairs for NJPAC. "John came to us and Larry Goldman thought about who gets it and the first people that came to mind were Prudential."

The financial services company is the title sponsor of the main hall at NJPAC and was one of the first investors in the NJPAC concept of building a community arts center in Newark. A meeting was arranged at the NJPAC cafeteria two weeks after the hurricanes with the head of communications for Prudential and the idea of the company sponsoring the tour was pitched.

"They agreed and because we're never satisfied with one idea, we took it a step further and tried to figure out how to create a New Orleans North at NJPAC," Norman said. "We asked, 'What would happen if we had some educational workshops and developed community residencies and commissioned new pieces? What if we asked Irvin to bring other New Orleans artists up here?' We brought it to Prudential and they said turn the what-ifs into let's-go's." With \$300,000 out of the company's marketing budget as the presenting sponsor for the tour and another \$200,000 from the Prudential Foundation for the workshops, the dream of a New Orleans North was quickly realized.

In general, Prudential has a strong commitment to the arts and culture, according to Alicia Rodgers Alston, the company's director of Communications. But in addition to internal efforts to raise money for the victims of the hurricanes, the company was looking for an opportunity to get involved in a bigger way. "We wanted to do something for the culture of New Orleans, which is such an integral part of the city, as well as a major part of the economic engine of New Orleans," Alston said. "We recognized that helping to preserve the culture of New Orleans will be a key part of any rebuilding efforts down there."

Though Prudential will be picking up the tab for the efforts of NOJO and Mayfield to bring New Orleans culture to the East Coast, Norman said the real winners will be visitors to NJPAC. "It requires us to give up some space, yes, but it is in tune with our raison d'être, which is to be a world-class performing arts center and at the same time a community-based cultural center," he said. And, as odd as the fit seems, Newark's jazz scene is deeper than most people know, rivaling St. Louis and Chicago in the past for importance, and today serving as home to the world's most comprehensive jazz archives and the only jazz station in the nation's largest radio market (WBGO-FM/Jazz 88.3).

The initial commitment is for two years, but Norman predicted it would stretch beyond that and hoped that Mayfield would bring up not only New Orleans music, but also food, culture and dance. "We have the opportunity to share our nine years of experience and turn that around and work with organizations in New Jersey and throughout the country to share what we've learned," Norman said. "And to do something for New Orleans." — Gil Kaufman

*Interviewed for this story: Lucas Diaz (504) 582-8100; Alicia Rodgers Alston (973) 802-6000; Jeffrey Norman (973) 642-8989*

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## MARKETING

***Patron at Philips Arena uses his mobile phone to gather info***



## **PHILIPS ARENA TO TEST NEW MOBILE-PHONE-BASED SYSTEM**

Philips Arena in Atlanta will be the first North American arena to test a concept in mobile technology that has already proven successful in Europe and Asia. Thanks to a title sponsor's big stake in the future of Near Field Communication (NFC), the experiment in direct marketing via lightning-speed payments at concession stands by waving a programmed mobile phone near a poster or billboard will put the arena "a little ahead of the curve in the next generation of marketing," said David Lee, vice president of business development for the Atlanta Spirit, a company of the National Basketball Association Hawks, the National Hockey League Thrashers, and the Atlanta Braves at Philips Arena.

Philips produces NFC semiconductor chips.

The rollout is a complicated one, however. Patrons must be customers of Cingular Wireless mobile telephone service and have a Chase Bank Visa credit card account. They also must be season ticket holders for one of the teams to keep the initial study focused. "We want a baseline of how patron behavior changes over the course of the season," Lee said. Detailed information gathering on patron habits is a key perk of the program.

So the marketing effort has been via e-mail and other direct solicitations to season subscribers plus intercepting patrons in the concourse. "There are a few hurdles, but we've got a lot of inducements," Lee said. One of those is a free Nokia 3220 phone, which has the NFC technology built in. Other perks are free content available from the cell phone, such as ring tones featuring the recorded voice of the team coach ordering the person to answer their phone. They can also download wallpaper, statistics, news on the teams and special offers. "It will lower the hurdle for consumers, so they can say 'yes' to our offers extremely easily."

Lee thinks the special offers will be a huge enticement to try the newfangled system. They include tickets, merchandise, and food and beverage, but will be concentrated on "experiences" such as drawings to allow patrons to sit in the penalty box during warm-ups. "We want to give them with unique experiences, try to step it up a notch."

Right now patrons that are signed up can wave their mobile phone near the 70-75 special posters and computer chips in the venue to receive additional information and offers on their phones. When the venue has 250 NFC readers, which Lee expects will be mid-January, they will be able to make concessions and merchandise purchases by simply waving their phones within 10 centimeters of special readers set up at points of sale.

The hope is to cut the time spent at a register transaction by half and increase spending at Philips Arena recently installed new fast Tangent terminals that take credit cards. The additional technology needed to process mobile phone charges is a simple plug-in interface to that system, which

already been installed in all 156 Leisure Services (in-house) concession stands and at 10 Levy Restaurants points of sale for premium fare.

It was important to Philips to use the arena as a showcase for their electronics innovations. "Philips approached us a little under two years ago about this emerging technology," Lee said. "We have arguably one of the best technology giants of the world as a sponsor."

But the idea has to be implemented using a cast of partners looking for similar recognition as innovators. In addition to the previously mentioned partners in the deal, ViVOtech software makes the sixth. "We're learning a lot through this process, and we're really excited about what will happen when we turn on payment," Lee said.

The trend is supported by the respected market analysis firms in the technology area. "By 2010, we expect that over 50 percent of all mobile handsets will incorporate Near Field Communication chips to enable short-range, easy and secure transactions," said Erik Michielsen, director at market analyst firm ABI Research, in a statement. "As a result, consumers will be able to download content by simply holding their phone close to a poster or advertising billboard. Users can purchase merchandise, food, tickets, and have these transactions charged to a credit card using account information stored in the mobile phone. The NFC implementation at Philips Arena demonstrates NFC stakeholders, including chipmakers, card issuers, device makers, mobile carriers, and content providers, are progressively more willing to collaborate on NFC solution development. This type of co-development is essential to NFC market growth and maturation."

Lee hopes to be using the technology to its full capabilities, including preordering food, and purchasing tickets and going through turnstiles as soon as possible. "The goal is to improve and get ready for a commercial launch on all levels." — Natasha Emmons  
*Interviewed for this story: David Lee, (404) 878-3711*

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## CONCESSIONS

### ***Chef Orlando Morales, Boston Culinary Group***



#### **BCG BRINGS VARIETY TO THE MASSES**

The upscaling of food offerings in entertainment venues has been a trend in the industry for some time, but some concessionaires are taking it to the masses. When asked about their biggest initiative of the past year, Steve Cahoon, vice president of business development, Boston Culinary Group in Cambridge, Mass., said, "The industry has seen a drive toward providing premium services. Just because a patron isn't buying a club seat, that shouldn't limit them to what they can eat. The things we've done on the club level are easily transferable to the concourse."

"We are bringing food from carpet to concrete," said Orlando Morales, corporate executive chef at Boston Culinary Group, explaining how the food from the upscale kitchen is being carried over, literally, to concession areas.

The result is more upscale selections and a wider variety of dishes for everyone. "For example, we recently opened a Caribbean concession stand at Dolphins Stadium in Miami featuring fried plantains. People loved it," said Morales.

According to Cahoon, converting that hot dog stand to a Caribbean stand has doubled the revenues in that space. Although exact figures are not available, he said the stand attracts between 1,000 and 1,200 patrons per game.

That menu features between four and five appetizers or snack items, including empanadas, black beans and rice, and sweet plantains for between \$3 and \$4.50. Entrees include roasted pulled pork, citrus barbecue beef, and jerk chicken wings, the latter of which is the single largest seller in the stand, for \$7. Desserts include churros and flan for \$2.50. Also, 85 imported Caribbean beers, including Red Stripe, are available for \$6 for 12 ounces.

Other dishes created for this new concept include a variety of chicken wing flavors, barbecue chicken wraps and hand-breaded chicken tenders. "We do a lot of fresh carved sandwiches, including roasted pork loin and London broil. Customers can choose from a variety of breads," said Morales.

Dolphins Stadium even created its own pepper relish. "It's a new signature item for hot dogs that includes picante, jalapeno and roasted peppers," said Morales.

Despite the higher price tag, which typically averages \$8 a plate vs. \$4.50 for traditional stadium fare such as hot dogs, these upscale items are hot sellers. "This is high-end finger food consumers can walk with," Morales explained.

As far as logistics in preparing and delivering these items, Morales said food is prepared in the kitchen closest to the concession stand. "We prepare it in the kitchen and bring it to the stand in a hot box," he said, emphasizing that the extra effort is worthwhile. "When you try to do something extraordinary, it takes a lot of work. Yet, at the end, it is very satisfying." — Lisa White

*Interviewed for this story: Steve Cahoon, (617) 499-2700, Orlando Morales, (617) 499-2700*

### **Harry's signage at the Rose Garden, Portland, Ore.**



### **OVATIONS OFFERS DISCOUNT FARE FOR NEW NLL TEAM GAME**

In addition to luring fans to the Rose Garden with free tickets for the Portland Lumberjax's first exhibition game, the team made sure they spent a little money at the game by offering some enticing food and drink specials. The 10,000-plus fans were treated to free parking as well as \$1 hot dogs and sodas and \$2 domestic beers.

The strategy worked, according to Tony Hendryx, general manager for Oventions at the venue. Over the course of the night, more than 8,000 hot dogs, 4,000 sodas and 2,000 beer specials were snapped up by fans. "It kept people coming back," Hendryx said of the specials on the dogs, and 12 ounce sodas and beers.

The team also worked with Oventions to create some special team-specific munchies,

including the debut of the Lumberjax Nacho, a 16-ounce concoction featuring chips smothered in the local favorite, Harry's Fresh Black Bean Chili. More than 100 of the \$8 snacks were sold during the game.

Because of the great deals on hot dogs, Hendryx said other concessions suffered from lower than usual numbers, including pizza, which had lackluster sales. Hendryx said Ovarations does not releases grosses or per caps for sales.

The nacho sold well enough that Ovarations will carry it through to the team's regular season and the company is working on other branded Jax items, including a sourdough bread bowl that will be filled with Harry's chili.

The deal has been a boon for Harry's, which has put up signage around the Rose Garden as part of its alliance with the Jax. "We've done business with the Garden before, but not on retail concessions," said Jill Nordby, marketing manager for Harry's Fresh Foods. "We provided products for suites, but consumers didn't know it was Harry's. We're trying to get the name out there and this is a new initiative for us."

The local company, founded by Rod Harris in 1982, services supermarkets, restaurants and ski resorts, but the Jax deal is its first with a professional sports team. The Jax approached Harris about creating some branded products, Nordby said, and "with him being the entrepreneurial, charismatic man that he is, he thought it made sense. We're happy that the partnership is working out well and with them being local and us being local it seems like a good match."

Nordby said the next stage in the relationship is to keep coming up with new and different products to offer at the Garden. — Gil Kaufman

*Interviewed for this story: Tony Hendryx, (503) 797-9891; Jill Nordby (503) 445-9161*

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## ADVERTISEMENT: HELP WANTED



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all operations of the Box Office and Parking divisions. Duties include calculating annual expenditures & revenues, personnel placement and evaluation, communicating with other division managers, promoters, Ticketmaster, and the general public. Responsible for all ticket related financial reports. Full-Time, City of Lakeland benefits. Apply by sending resume to: Executive Director, The Lakeland Center 701 W. Lime St. Lakeland. FL 33815 or [www.tlcjob@lakelandgov.net](mailto:www.tlcjob@lakelandgov.net)

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## SHORT TAKES

### CCE RENAMES LIVE ENTERTAINMENT SPIN-OFF

Clear Channel Entertainment has renamed the company's live entertainment arm spin-off, which has had a working title of Spinco, Live Nation. Live Nation is scheduled to spin off on Dec. 21, at which time a full brand overview will be available, according to Clear Channel. It will go public on the New York Stock Exchange under the stock symbol LYV.

Contact: Clear Channel headquarters, (210) 822-2828

### PANDA EXPRESS LICENSES ARAMARK TO USE CONCEPT

Aramark has partnered with Panda Restaurant Group to make Panda Express brand and menu choices available to Aramark customers across the United States. This Master Licensing Agreement is the first of its kind for Panda Restaurants, whose 800 locations are usually subleased or operated as company locations only. Diane Coyne, senior director of Franchise Brands and Strategic Alliances, Aramark Innovative Dining Solutions, stated in a release: "Depending on the configuration, the venue and the availability of off-site storage, Panda Express restaurants can be adapted to easily fit the very different client spaces and locations in which Aramark operates."

Contact: Doug Warner, Aramark Corp., (215) 238-3316

### CROW TO CONTINUE VIP TICKET CHARITY EFFORT

Sheryl Crow raised \$50,000 for UNICEF during a string of dates in October, and plans to use the services of VIP ticket packaging company I Love All Access for another slate of four theater dates in January. The David Campbell String Section will once again support Crow at the Fox Theater, Detroit, Jan. 26; Riverside Theater Milwaukee, Jan. 27; Auditorium Theater, Chicago, Jan. 28; and Ryman Auditorium, Nashville, Jan. 29. VIP packages include premium seating, an opportunity to attend the sound-check, pre-show parties and gifts. Crow will again donate 100 percent of those proceeds to the George Harrison Fund for UNICEF.

Contact: Corey Gresen, Interscope Records, (310) 865-4539

### CHARLOTTE BOBCATS RETAIN TEAM SERVICES TO SELL NAMING RIGHTS

The Charlotte Bobcats signed Team Services LLC, as its exclusive sales agency to market the naming rights to its new downtown arena. Team Services co-founders, Fred Fried and E.J. Narcise, will manage the project. Among a long track record of notable successes, Fried and Narcise have sold ground-breaking rights packages for the Houston Texans (Reliant Park), University of Maryland (Comcast Center) and the Baltimore Ravens (M&T Bank Stadium). The team of Fried and Narcise also secured the Carolina Panthers first naming right partnership, entitling in 1996 the new Charlotte football home of the Panthers as Ericsson Stadium. Charlotte Bobcats Arena is located in the heart of Uptown Charlotte and is home to the Charlotte Bobcats (NBA), the Charlotte Sting (WNBA) and minor league hockey's Charlotte Checkers (ECHL). The arena will host 150 events this year. Team Services, LLC, based in Bethesda, Md., is a division of Learfield Communications.

Contact: Team Services, (301) 634-3175

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