

Rob Ocampo

Subject: FW: May 24, 2006 Newsletter



VENUES**today**

"The news behind the headlines"

Dear April,

May 24, 2006 VOL. V, Number XVII ISSN 1547-4143

Welcome to your **Venues Today** weekly e-newsletter, full of the latest live entertainment industry news. For a full calendar listing, to view archives or to subscribe to *Venues Today*, visit our Web site at www.venuestoday.com.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"It's tough for people in the fair industry, for me, to actually take a part of my operation, even though I knew in my mind it wasn't as successful as it needed to be, and get help from someone else." — *Chris Wiseman, manager of the Colorado State Fair, Pueblo, on the decision to hire SMG for marketing and booking services*

IN THIS ISSUE...

- **Survey Creates Bloomington PAC Inaugural Programs**
 - **Colorado State Fair Reaches Out for Help, Chooses SMG**
 - **Faces & Places: McGee Joins Ticketmaster; Boleski Moves to Huntington for SMG**
 - **Hot Tickets: Depeche Mode Rocks Mexico City**
 - **Venerable Jamboree in the Hills Spreading Its Stage**
 - **ESTA Launches Aid Program for Injured Techs**
 - **Live Nation Wiring 120 Venues as High-Tech Studios**
 - **Dinner Is Locally Grown for the Kentucky Derby**
 - **Short Takes**
 - **Help Wanted**
-



COMING IN JULY! OUR POPULAR MIDYEAR ISSUE!

Our much anticipated midyear issue is back **in July**, with more information than ever on what you want to know: gross revenues, trends, ideas and news throughout the industry. Included in this issue are our popular midyear **Hot Tickets and Top Stops Charts**. July is also our third INTIX QUARTERLY. Use this edition to promote your venue ranking and to broadcast your message to the industry leaders. **ADVERTISE today.**

Reserve your space by June 16th, by contacting:

Eastern Region: Sue Nichols, (615) 662-0252, Sue@venuestoday.com
Central Region: Pauline Davis, (615) 356-0398, Pauline@venuestoday.com
Western Region: April Stroud, (714) 378-0056, April@venuestoday.com

VENUE NEWS



Kathy Griffin, performing Nov. 9; Bloomington (Ill.) Center for the Performing Arts; Aaron Neville, performing Dec. 2

SURVEY CREATES BLOOMINGTON PAC INAUGURAL PROGRAM

When its inaugural season starts at the end of July, the newly renovated Bloomington Center for the Performing Arts (BCPA), located in the Central Illinois town of Bloomington, will present 48 performances in 39 weeks.

According to Bruce Marquis, manager of the BCPA, the marketing budget for the year, including print, broadcast, publications and other peripheral channels, is \$120,000. The Center's programming budget is \$420,000 and its total operational budget is \$2.6 million.

The series will include 21 main stage performances and six family series events, in addition to an extensive schooltime series geared for students in kindergarten through 12th grade.

Before the program was set, an in-depth community research survey was conducted in conjunction with State Farm Insurance, the area's largest employer, and Illinois State University's marketing department. Approximately 1,500 e-surveys were sent out to area residents to determine what types of shows people were attending, what types of performances they would like to attend and how they buy show tickets. Marquis said the season's program was created after the results were in.

As a result of the survey, the BCPA chose ticketing software that offers its patrons low convenience fees. "Our customers pay a \$1.50 convenience fee per ticket [with Internet purchases]. For this reason, in our initial two weeks of sales, our online ticket orders are upwards of 50 percent," Marquis said, adding that more than 170,000 visitors are expected this season.

The survey also helped determine the BCPA's main demographic focus. "First, we are targeting young adults. We have performers like comedian Kathy Griffin, along with weekly Cajun music," Marquis said. "We also are seeking to reach parents and their children. Shows like the Golden Dragon Acrobats of China, the Ralph's World children's band and the break dance musical Break are geared for young children and families."

A new Sunday matinee series for parents and children will offer free interactive activities preceding the performance. "We will talk to local arts groups, social service organizations, YMCAs and businesses like Barnes & Noble to arrange arts and crafts, hands-on games and other activities children can do while waiting for the show to start," said Carly Shank, the BCPA's community engagement director.

The schooltime series, developed in conjunction with local school systems, is designed to help teachers and students meet Illinois Learning Standards goals in such areas as English language arts, science, social science, fine arts, foreign languages and social/emotional learning. "The Spotlight Student Series offers 13 different events and a total of 21 performances," Shank said. Shows include Red Grammar and Great Greek Myths: Theseus and Icarus. Tickets are available only within the schools at a cost of \$5 each. Every 16th ticket is free. To promote this program, the BCPA sent brochures out to schools within a 50-mile radius of Bloomington.

International performances will feature free pre-show discussions, which will be held 45 minutes prior to show-time in the patron lounge. These 20- to 25-minute long programs will draw on community resources, using local artists and, whenever possible, incorporating the show's performers. "For example, if we're featuring a world music event, we will have the performers or local artists discuss the music and answer questions. It is something we can provide to add an educational aspect to our events," Shank explained. The discussions are listed in the season brochure, and patrons will be reminded about these programs at the time tickets are purchased.

More than 50 percent of the new building will be used by non-profit organizations, including the Illinois Symphony Orchestra and the McLean County Dance Troop.

BCPA's \$15 million renovation is currently on budget and on schedule. Marquis said the cost difference between renovating the building and rebuilding it from the ground up was \$10 million. "We saved money and a historic landmark. One of the great things accomplished during this renovation was restoring the historical detail from the 1920s and 1930s. This includes the delicate gilding and plaster work," he said.

Among the Center's biggest changes are new seating, the addition of air conditioning and a newly added loading dock. "The loading dock area was a big plus for us," said David Young, facilities manager and event coordinator. About 98 percent of the wiring was changed, in addition to 96 percent of the plumbing. State-of-the-art technology also was added, as well as a new elevator in front of the building to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Hammond Beeby Rupert and Ainge (HBRA) of Chicago served as architects on the project. The prime contractor is P.J. Hoerr of Peoria, Ill., and Jaffe Holden Acoustics and Schuler & Shook are the acoustic and theatrical consultants.

The Center's official opening, which includes a ribbon cutting, is scheduled for Sept. 16. "We gave ourselves the luxury of a completion date that was 70 to 90 days prior to the scheduled grand opening so we could easily accommodate delays, hire our crew and train the staff," Marquis said.

Ticket prices for the BCPA performances range from \$20 to \$75.50. Their Web site is www.artsblooming.org. — Lisa White

Interviewed for this story: Bruce Marquis, (309) 434-2787; Carly Shank, (309) 434-2766; David Young, (309) 434-2761.

Colorado State Fair Event Center , Pueblo



**COLORADO STATE FAIR
REACHES OUT FOR HELP,
CHOOSES SMG**

There is no doubt the 7,856-seat

Colorado State Fair Event Center is not living up to its potential, which drove Chris Wiseman, state fair manager, to seek outside help. As a result, the fair is now negotiating a two-year contract, beginning July 1, that will see SMG marketing and booking the fairgrounds, particularly the Event Center, taking a percentage of any new revenues generated.

Sims Hinds, senior vice president of sales and business development for SMG, said the company is particularly excited about this deal because it will tie in nicely with their Denver buildings, particularly the 5,000-seat Lecture Hall at the Colorado Convention Center, which has hosted 50 events and concerts in a little over a year. Hinds can see a lot of those events playing Pueblo as well. The fly in that ointment would be competition from the World Arena in Colorado Springs 40 miles away.

That competition is another circumstance that inspired Wiseman to seek outside help with national clout. He said three companies responded to the fair's request for proposals: SMG, Global Spectrum and Compass Facility Management. SMG was selected May 17.

"Basically, SMG will take on marketing and consulting at the Event Center. Since it was built in 1996, we haven't put a lot of time and effort into outside marketing of the facility," Wiseman said. "The fair doesn't have the same contacts that SMG has. We hope to see an increase in family programming, country music concerts, rock and roll concerts, and boxing matches."

SMG will be paid a percentage of the net revenue created from any new business they bring to the fairgrounds, which also includes new conventions and corporate meetings. Hinds said it also includes sponsorship dollars, including a title sponsor if SMG brings one to the table, and increases in operating net revenues from merchandise or food and beverage. "We will establish a historical benchmark," Hinds said. The fair will exclude anything it has historically booked, like the Harlem Globetrotters and Professional Bullriders, for instance.

"We have a huge hole in the Event Center where that business is concerned. Most of the people who promote at the Event Center are local or state. SMG is bringing us national exposure, opening it to people who do business across the country," Wiseman said. He said the Event Center currently hosts about 15 concerts and events annually, a number he expects could double. The fair also does 11 concerts during fairtime, which is excluded from the deal with SMG.

State and county fairs have begun seeking outside help, though still in relatively small numbers. It is a growing part of SMG's business, Hinds said, singling out equestrian centers in particular in the SMG client base.

Both noted some fairs have sought total management deals, like the Montana State Fair, Great Falls. Others, like the Mid-California State Fair, Paso Robles, have hired SMG in partnership with Jam Productions, to book talent.

Turning the fair over to a management company "was not our goal," Wiseman said. "Also, our fair doesn't have any excess revenue to pay for a full management contract. SMG actually catered their proposal to fit the needs of my fair, which we're very excited about. I don't have revenues to pay a marketing or management firm, but we need the expertise to make the Event Center become more profitable. The way they structured this is they will make their money as they go, which we found very, very intriguing."

Wiseman has had a good spring altogether. The state legislature voted three weeks ago to provide an annual subsidy of \$550,000 to the fair. "Since 1977, the operations

subsidy from general funds has been \$155,000...total," Wiseman said. "We have received some other funds for controlled maintenance and capital construction, usually along the lines of health and safety issues. But this year, they agreed to an annual appropriation of \$550,000 ongoing."

The state also agreed to pay off \$4.2 million in total debt held by the fair over the next three years, Wiseman said. With all that help and SMG's expertise, he said the fair should be able to create a cash reserve over the next five years.

His message since he became manager 18 months ago after eight years as assistant manager, has been consistent. "I felt we needed to tell people if they wanted a state fair, they would have to invest in it. Fairs do an important service for 4H and FFA kids. For southern Colorado, we provide probably a \$30 million economic impact in that community. It's an important part of economic development."

"It's tough for people in the fair industry, for me, to actually take a part of my operation, even though I knew in my mind it wasn't as successful as it needed to be, and get help from someone else," Wiseman admitted. "For me, I felt we needed to do it. The governor's office expected us to do more. SMG was the right fit for everything."

"We're not advocating coming in and taking over from anybody," Hinds added. "But now, all of a sudden, the Colorado State Fair has a lot of resources to rely upon. In addition to trying to drive more event business in, we make available all our other experiences. He [Wiseman] just all of a sudden has a lot more horse power."

The new state money will allow the fair to operate a little more aggressively, Hinds observed. "When you don't have financial pressure, you can think a lot more clearly. It's part of a long-term commitment by the state to improve the facilities at the fairgrounds."

Fairgrounds are definitely a growth market for SMG, Hinds said. The Colorado State Fair runs Aug. 25-Sept. 4. — Linda Deckard

Interviewed for this story: Chris Wiseman, (719) 404-2015; Sims Hinds, (215) 592-6628



Mike McGee, left, with Donna Dowless, XOXO Media and IAAM award winner,

and Ticketmaster's Neal Gunn. Right, A.J. Boleski

FACES & PLACES: MCGEE JOINS TICKETMASTER; BOLESKI MOVES TO HUNTINGTON FOR SMG

Mike McGee has been named senior vice president, Venue Relations, for **Ticketmaster**. He joined the corporation's sales and marketing team May 15.

Reached at Ticketmaster's 2006 Leadership Conference in Chicago this week, McGee confirmed he will be headquartered in Los Angeles at Ticketmaster's West Hollywood office, though he will also maintain his residence in Houston.

McGee's is a new position for Ticketmaster. His role will be to "interface with the venues and make sure that the client base in the domestic and international marketplace knows that the corporate side values the business and values the relationship. It's another touch-point with the client," McGee said.

He will work to make sure Ticketmaster "gets the feedback from the client relative to services provided and make sure the client has full knowledge of all the services provided, which would optimize ticket sales and other potential business opportunities that may be new to the company.

"It's another line of support for the client besides the field folks," McGee said. The press release stated he will oversee integrated programs and services to drive ticket sales and optimize business opportunities for the company's domestic and international venue clients.

"The demands of the business overall with the existing staff was creating a circumstance where they needed additional personnel to go out and interface with the clients. There are a lot of moving parts in the business. A lot depends on personal contact and time," McGee said.

The announcement was made by Sean Moriarty, president and COO, Ticketmaster. Prior to joining Ticketmaster, McGee was chief administrative officer of Clear Channel Entertainment, a firm he joined in 2004. Prior to that, he was senior vice president of the Sports and Entertainment Group at Aramark.

McGee is best known in this industry for his 17 years as president and general manager of the 17,000-seat Compaq Center (formerly The Summit) in Houston and as chairman of the board and CEO for Leisure Management International (LMI), a contract-management company he founded in 1984 and later sold to SMG.

He has been an active participant in the International Association of Assembly Managers (IAAM) since 1972, most recently serving as a member of the Board of Trustees for the IAAM Foundation, chairing its Development Committee and its major gift campaign.

Celebrating its 30th anniversary in 2006, Ticketmaster serves more than 9,000 clients worldwide across multiple event categories, and sold 119 million tickets valued at \$6 billion in 2005.

A.J. Boleski has been named general manager of the **Big Sandy Superstore Arena**, Huntington, W.Va., for **SMG**, replacing Elliott Murnick who resigned May 16.

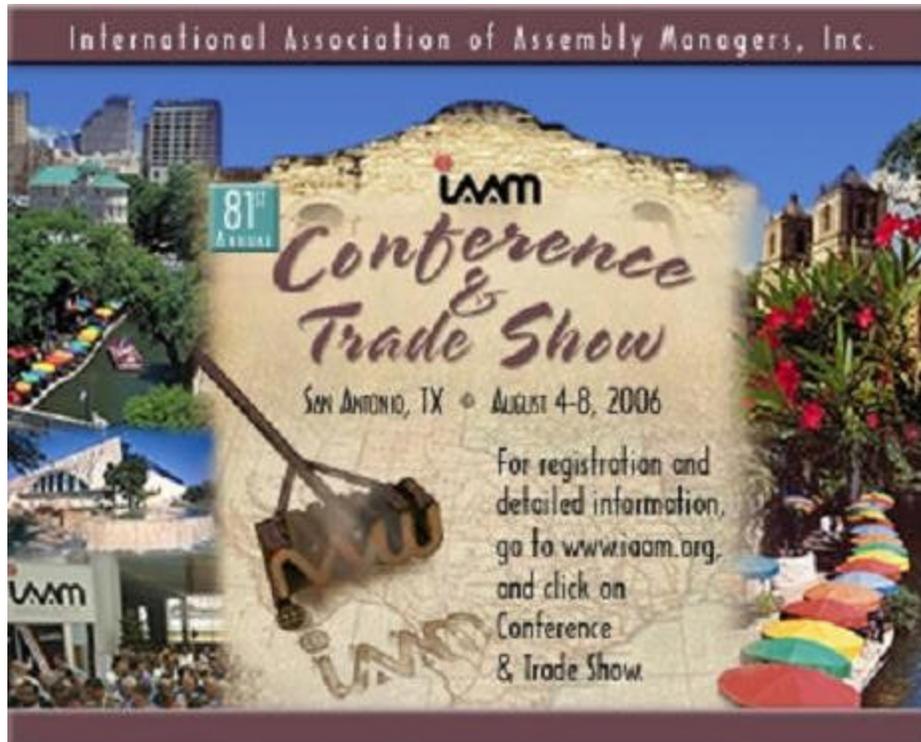
Joe Mazur, manager of the Wolstein Center, Cleveland, Ohio, and regional manager for SMG, is acting as interim manager. He said Boleski, who is currently manager of the

Canton (Ohio) Civic Center for SMG, will take his new position June 5.

“He’s already booked American Idol,” Mazur said of Boleski’s early, pre-arrival victories for the Big Sandy Superstore Arena. American Idol goes on sale tomorrow in Huntington for a Sept. 14 show, he said.

Boleski will be moving from a 5,000-seat arena to a 9,000-seater. Meanwhile, the search is on for a new manager for Canton. — Linda Deckard

Interviewed for this story: Mike McGee, (310) 360-2300; Joe Mazur, (304) 696-3501



BOOKINGS



HOTtickets

DEPECHE MODE ROCKS MEXICO CITY

HOT TICKETS is a weekly summary of the top acts and ticket sales as reported to **Venues Today** e-newsletter. Following are the top 20 concerts and events, the top 5 in each seating capacity category, which took place since May 2, 2006. To submit reports, e-mail 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:* \$4,524,414; *Event:* Depeche Mode; *Venue:* **Foro Sol Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez, Mexico City**; *Attendance:* 105,040; *Ticket Range:* \$77.46-\$19.46; *Promoter:* Ocesa Presents; *Dates:* May 4–5; *No. of Shows:* 2
- 2) *Gross Sales:* \$2,130,647; *Event:* Festival Vive Latino 2006; *Venue:* **Foro Sol Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez, Mexico City**; *Attendance:* 96,131; *Ticket Range:* \$48.65-\$21.23; *Promoter:* Ocesa Presents; *Dates:* May 13–14; *No. of Shows:* 2
- 3) *Gross Sales:* \$1,507,975; *Event:* Pearl Jam; *Venue:* **United Center, Chicago**; *Attendance:* 30,775; *Ticket Range:* \$49; *Promoter:* Jam Productions; *Dates:* May 16–17; *No. of Shows:* 2
- 4) *Gross Sales:* \$1,475,345; *Event:* THQ/AMA Supercross Finals 2006; *Venue:* **Sam Boyd Stadium, Las Vegas**; *Attendance:* 29,378; *Ticket Range:* \$66-\$45; *Promoter:* Live Nation; *Dates:* May 6; *No. of Shows:* 1
- 5) *Gross Sales:* \$834,478; *Event:* Faith Hill and Tim McGraw; *Venue:* **Rupp Arena, Lexington, Ky.**; *Attendance:* 10,153; *Ticket Range:* \$85.50-\$45.50; *Promoter:* Outback Concerts; *Dates:* May 14; *No. of Shows:* 1

10,001 - 15,000 Seats

- 1) *Gross Sales:* \$292,500; *Event:* Dora The Explorer; *Venue:* **John Labatt Centre, London, Ontario**; *Attendance:* 11,747; *Ticket Range:* \$32.98-\$14.91; *Promoter:* TME Entertainment; *Dates:* May 3–4; *No. of Shows:* 4
- 2) *Gross Sales:* \$279,744; *Event:* Gaither Homecoming; *Venue:* **Van Andel Arena, Grand Rapids, Mich.**; *Attendance:* 11,541; *Ticket Range:* \$34.75-\$19.75; *Promoter:* AEG Live; *Dates:* May 12; *No. of Shows:* 1
- 3) *Gross Sales:* \$236,304; *Event:* Fall Out Boy; *Venue:* **Cricket Arena, Charlotte, N.C.**; *Attendance:* 5,752; *Ticket Range:* \$27; *Promoter:* House of Blues Concerts; *Dates:* May 2; *No. of Shows:* 1
- 4) *Gross Sales:* \$218,320; *Event:* Gaither Homecoming; *Venue:* **John Labatt Centre, London, Ontario**; *Attendance:* 7,889; *Ticket Range:* \$34.17-\$18.88; *Promoter:* AEG Live; *Dates:* May 6; *No. of Shows:* 1
- 5) *Gross Sales:* \$186,336; *Event:* WWE Smackdown Wrestlemania Revenge; *Venue:* **Save Mart Center, Fresno, Calif.**; *Attendance:* 7,938; *Ticket Range:* \$41.75-\$21.75; *Promoter:* WWE; *Dates:* May 7; *No. of Shows:* 1

5,001 - 10,000 Seats

- 1) *Gross Sales:* \$389,335; *Event:* Nickelback; *Venue:* **Newcastle (Australia) Entertainment Centre**; *Attendance:* 6,135; *Ticket Range:* \$69.78; *Promoter:* Dainty Consolidated Entertainment; *Dates:* May 2; *No. of Shows:* 1
- 2) *Gross Sales:* \$259,515; *Event:* Fall Out Boy; *Venue:* **UIC Pavilion, Chicago**; *Attendance:* 8,708; *Ticket Range:* \$30-\$15; *Promoter:* Maj Concerts; *Dates:* May 15; *No. of Shows:* 1
- 3) *Gross Sales:* \$250,015; *Event:* Barney; *Venue:* **Nokia at Grand Prairie (Texas)**; *Attendance:* 10,031; *Ticket Range:* \$29-\$17; *Promoter:* AEG Live; *Dates:* May 6–7; *No. of Shows:* 2

4) *Gross Sales:* \$203,622; *Event:* The Wiggles Live!; *Venue:* **Budweiser Events Center, Loveland, Colo.**; *Attendance:* 8,153; *Ticket Range:* \$30-\$15; *Promoter:* The Wiggles Live! USA; *Dates:* May 7; *No. of Shows:* 2

5) *Gross Sales:* \$191,375; *Event:* Prairie Home Companion; *Venue:* **Budweiser Events Center, Loveland, Colo.**; *Attendance:* 5,515; *Ticket Range:* \$45-\$25; *Promoter:* KUNC; *Dates:* May 6; *No. of Shows:* 1

5,000 or Fewer Seats

1) *Gross Sales:* \$980,874; *Event:* Mamma Mia!; *Venue:* **Tampa Bay (Fla.) Performing Arts Center**; *Attendance:* 14,503; *Ticket Range:* \$76-\$22; *Promoter:* Live Nation, In-House; *Dates:* May 9–14 *No. of Shows:* 8

2) *Gross Sales:* \$755,901; *Event:* Cirque Dreams; *Venue:* **Fox Theatre, Atlanta**; *Attendance:* 19,373; *Ticket Range:* \$55-\$19; *Promoter:* Broadway in Atlanta; *Dates:* May 2–7; *No. of Shows:* 8

3) *Gross Sales:* \$450,500; *Event:* Widespread Panic; *Venue:* **Fox Theatre, Atlanta**; *Attendance:* 9,078; *Ticket Range:* \$50; *Promoter:* Live Nation; *Dates:* May 8–9; *No. of Shows:* 2

4) *Gross Sales:* \$373,649; *Event:* The Music of Andrew Lloyd Webber; *Venue:* **Civic Center of Greater Des Moines (Iowa)**; *Attendance:* 9,983; *Ticket Range:* \$50-\$12.50; *Promoter:* In-House; *Dates:* May 9–14; *No. of Shows:* 8

5) *Gross Sales:* \$219,940; *Event:* James Taylor; *Venue:* **Shea's Performing Arts Center, Buffalo, N.Y.**; *Attendance:* 3,034; *Ticket Range:* \$82.50-\$42.50; *Promoter:* Live Nation; *Dates:* May 2; *No. of Shows:* 1

Compiled by Kristin Sarbeck, HotTickets@venuestoday.com

VENERABLE JAMBOREE IN THE HILLS SPREADING ITS STAGE

Jamboree in the Hills (JITH), the 29-year old festival in St. Clairsville, Ohio, is getting a new stage, which brings with it the option of more bookings. The new stage front design is the same as the old one, a barn, but greatly enhanced.

"The front doors will open up the stage for a larger viewing area for folks attending the concert," said Kelly Tucker-Jones, general manager of Jamboree for Live Nation. Tucker-Jones said the wider stage will offer a better view for those seated in the extreme left or right sides of the natural amphitheater. The new stage is approximately 2,000 square feet larger than the old one. Kelly declined to reveal the cost of building the new stage.

Live Nation, the production company that owns and operates Jamboree in the Hills and Capitol Music Hall in Wheeling, W. Va., decided a new stage was needed after last year's JITH, said Tucker-Jones. Bennett Building of Alabama is doing the construction work at the site.

The old stage was wooden; the new one will be a steel structure. Steel rafters and rigging will replace the wooden beams that supported the older stage's roof. The retractable stage door can be used as an awning during rain and/or storms.

Scott Hall Jones, operations manager for Live Nation/Jamboree in the Hills, pointed out that the center stage opening is now 16 feet higher and the width of the stage has been

increased by almost 40 feet.

"It gives a larger line of sight for the audience and it allows us to hang increased lights and sound inside the stage. This allows for greater audience appeal in terms of lasers and the different kinds of lights that acts now use to light the stage," Hall Jones said. "It also gives touring acts the opportunity to bring in their own sound, lights and set."

Prior to having the new stage, JITH always rented all of the equipment that could be used on the stage. Hall Jones says Jamboree in the Hills has time constraints in getting bands on and off stage that keep them from allowing each artist to bring in all their lights and sound.

"Everybody has gotten so big with the number of lights and sound and backdrops," Hall Jones said. "We want to be able to better please the audience by allowing them to experience what these shows are doing. The new stage will make the show better for the crowd by allowing the artist to bring in more of their set's components."

Live Nation submitted their request to build a larger stage to what was then parent-company Clear Channel immediately after last year's Jamboree in the Hills. They started making initial contacts with builders the end of last year. By early January, they were meeting with Bennett and plans were well underway.

"We chose Bennett Builders because we were looking for people who would respect the tradition of the building," Hall Jones said. "They seemed to be the best qualified for what we were looking for in changing the wooden barn to a steel one."

The footers were being poured mid-May. The fabrication of the building has already taken place. Jones said he is not worried about the facility being completed by Jamboree in the Hills in July.

Live Nation has indicated that it might book additional shows at the site. However, Tucker-Jones said there are no other shows booked at this time. She said they prefer to concentrate on getting the site ready for Jamboree in the Hills, which will be held July 13–16.

There has been no discussion on which artists will be booked for shows in addition to Jamboree in the Hills, but Hall Jones said, "We are very excited about the additional entertainment that the stage will draw now that we have the new stage and rigging."

"We want to utilize the space and the property to a fuller extent," Hall Jones said. "We're not ruling anything out." — Vernell Hackett
Interviewed for this story: Scott Hall Jones, (740)-590-6594; Kelly Tucker-Jones, (304) 234-0050

GOOD WORKS



The ESTA board of directors; the Behind The Scenes logo

ESTA LAUNCHES AID PROGRAM FOR INJURED TECHS

“Behind the Scenes,” a program from the ESTA Foundation to provide industry members with financial help when they are seriously ill or injured, has awarded its first grant.

“We have a very limited amount of money, but it’s our goal to collect enough of an endowment where we will not touch the principal but give grants from the profits of the endowment itself,” said Rick Rudolph, chairman of Behind the Scenes for the Entertainment Services and Technology Association (ESTA).

“Our program’s goal is to help people far into the future,” said Lori Rubinstein, executive director of ESTA, a New York -based foundation that has in the past been primarily involved in educational efforts.

“There are many people working in our industry without any kind of safety net. A major illness or injury can often cause people to go through their health insurance benefits very quickly, and we want to be able to help those people who need help,” she added of the program, which is the first of its type specifically designed for people in the entertainment industry who are not performers.

ESTA’s first grant went to Christian Choi, an 18 -year industry veteran lighting director and moving light programmer. After a back injury, he has been out of work for almost two years, depleting his resources, including his retirement savings.

“He knew that with physical therapy, he could get back to work, but he couldn’t find a way to pay for it. His career had gone from success and security to wondering how he would pay the next month’s rent,” said Rubinstein.

The three-member Application for Assistance Review Committee that reviewed his application realized his situation required immediate attention, she said. They requested the Foundation’s Board meet in an emergency session to issue the grant.

Choi’s career has included work in theater, concert tours, corporate industrial films and television. He is undergoing physical therapy geared to returning him to work.

ESTA will be soliciting contributions in the future for its Behind the Scenes program, Rudolph said. “It’s so important for us as an industry to care for our colleagues when

they are in need. The more people give right now, the more people we will be able to assist this year and into the future," said Rudolph.

Neither Rudolph or Rubinstein had specific numbers for fundraising goals, but said the effort would simply be to raise as much money as possible.

Rudolph said the program has a long-term goal of providing many individuals with assistance. "Large contributions are not necessarily what we're looking for. We'd much rather have someone give \$6 a month for the rest of their lives than give us \$100 today," Rudolph said.

The Altman family created the group's first challenge grant of \$125,000. Rudolph said the family will match every dollar raised for Behind the Scenes in its first year. Profits for any UL-Listed Ghostlights manufactured by Altman Rentals are also being donated to Behind The Scenes, Rudolph said.

To qualify for assistance, individuals must live in the United States or Canada and have been at any time employed for a minimum of five years full-time in the entertainment technology industry.

"We chose five years because we wanted to spread this out to as many people as possible," said Rudolph, who is executive vice president of the Miami-based Stage Equipment and Lighting.

Individuals eligible for the program are those who have worked behind the scenes in performance venues or for dealers, manufacturers, production companies, or consulting and design firms. The requirement is that those applying for a grant have to be directly involved in the entertainment technology industry.

Individuals do not need to be currently working in the industry as long as their time out of the industry is less than the total time worked in the industry. Immediate family members such as spouses, domestic partners and dependent children may also qualify for assistance.

Funds can be used for medical care and living expenses such as rent, mortgages, utilities, food, transportation and child care.

ESTA's educational efforts include its Seminars & Training Committee, which offers programs for the entertainment technology and design industries. The committee is currently developing an annual series of workshops and hands-on training sessions. Presenters are being sought, according to Rubinstein.

The committee also promotes the improvement of technical proficiency and safety within the industry by compiling lists of materials and seminars that may be useful to entertainment technicians. A schedule of events, educational resources, an application form for financial assistance, and a form for donations are available at the foundation's Web sites that include www.estafoundation.org/bts/grants.htm, and www.estafoundation.org/bts/contribution.htm. — David Wilkening
Interviewed for this story: Rick Rudolph, (305) 891-2010; Lori Rubinstein, (212) 244-1421

MARKETING

LIVE NATION WIRING 120 VENUES AS HIGH-TECH STUDIOS



Live Nation is in the midst of a multi-million dollar effort to transform 120 of its 150 venues into digital live studios capable of

recording and transmitting live concerts for TV, cell phones and radio.

"Basically, we're wiring venues to be able to capture what is happening on stage, and then working with artists and labels and publishers to figure out the most cost-efficient way to monetize this," said Bruce Eskowitz, president of global venues and sponsorship for Live Nation.

The huge project rolled out at 36 venues in the United States last year and is in the process of being carried out at 84 more in the United States, Canada and Europe this year. Eskowitz said that includes almost all of the company's clubs, theaters and amphitheatres, among them marquee venues such as Irving Plaza in New York, the Fillmore theaters in San Francisco and Denver, Germaine Amphitheater in Columbus, Ohio, and Nissan Pavilion in Washington, D.C.

The venues are each being fitted with next-generation studios that can capture and repurpose live concerts for use in a variety of media, including terrestrial and satellite radio, 3G delivery for mobile phones, high definition TV, video-on-demand, podcasts and other means of digital distribution. Eskowitz would not talk about the cost, except to say it was in the "millions." The hardware installed ranges from HD cameras to multi-track digital audio recording systems, encoders for live streaming to mobile phones and Internet network connectivity.

In Europe, the wiring is not only going on at venues such as Wembley Arena in England, but also at major festival sites such as the Download, Reading and Leeds festivals.

The pilot project for the concept began in 2005, when Live Nation started broadcasting more than 350 concerts from 36 amphitheatres as part of a content deal to supply original material to Verizon Wireless customers' phones. In the process, Live Nation became the leading supplier of live concerts for 3G mobile phones. (Live Nation already has a division that makes immediate recordings available to fans at its venues, Instant Live. In 2005, the division recorded more than 250 shows from 50 artists. The company also recently announced a deal with National Cinemedia to deliver content to movie theaters.)

"Live Nation is involved with more than 29,000 live events reaching more than 60 million fans a year," Live Nation CEO Michael Rapino said in a statement. "Our venues are natural platforms for transformation into live studios, particularly given recent advancements in recording technology, which have dramatically reduced costs. Lower production costs, coupled with the proliferation of distribution channels hungry for live content have created a unique opportunity for Live Nation to help artists connect with their fans in a brand new way."

Eskowitz said the goal of wiring the venues is to send the message to artists, labels and publishers that Live Nation has the most cost-effective way of capturing what takes place on stages around the world. "If by having the infrastructure we have a cheaper way than having to bring in all the equipment to shoot for a night, we think it's a win-win," said Eskowitz. While the deal with Verizon — which is ongoing — proved that content can be captured and sent to cell phones effectively, Eskowitz said some details about the wider roll-out of the program still need to be worked out.

"Clearing rights is the biggest issue," he said. "The artists, labels and publishers have to approve it and we have to work through the rights issues. But we'll be working through the details with artists and labels. The Verizon deal proved it worked, so our first idea was to build it and make sure you can do it and then work on rights and show how the models work."

Wiring each venue is a little different and requires a wide range of man-hours to get things off the ground, according to Live Nation's Executive Vice President of Product Development Michael Abrams, who is heading up the project. "The Live Nation Studios systems will be able to shoot multi-camera high-definition video, record multi-track audio, as well as capture the live show [audio from the sound board, video from the line cut going to the venue screens] which can be used to create productions including podcasts, broadband live and on-demand video, live ring tones, and even programming for future formats such as IPTV and DVB-H — worldwide," Abrams said.

He added that the work is being done by a combination of in-house and subcontracted workers. With negotiations ongoing for several venues, Abrams said he was not at liberty to say which subcontractors are being employed. Abrams said he also could not yet discuss where the material will be stored once it is captured or who will own the rights to the masters.

Eskowitz and Abrams said the goal is to have the venues wired by midsummer and begin rolling content out after that. "There's a huge market here for capturing content and distributing it and we think it will only get bigger," Eskowitz said. "We think by taking our 120-plus venues and wiring them, it gives great assets for artists and labels to take advantage of. It's another great reason to play a Live Nation venue." — Gil Kaufman

Interviewed for this story: Bruce Eskowitz, (310) 867-7021; Michael Abrams, (310) 867-7076

CONCESSIONS

DINNER IS LOCALLY GROWN FOR THE KENTUCKY DERBY

Serving 10,000 people a day for two days to a sit-down dinner is one thing that sets Kentucky Derby food operations apart from any other. And that's just for starters.

"We have 35 [chef] tables set up in 19 different areas," said Sam Carlsen, sous chef for Levy Restaurants, which runs the operations at Churchill Downs, Louisville, Ky.

"It is a buffet, but it flows smoothly from the Kentucky Bibb lettuce salad with sliced strawberries to the slow roasted prime rib to the dessert," said Gil Logan, executive chef. "It takes a chef to do a chef's table."

Attendance for the two days of horse racing, Oaks and Derby, May 5 and 6 at Churchill Downs this year was 120,000 and 157,900, respectively.

Another unique feature about food operations at Churchill Downs is that much of the food prepared there is from Kentucky. Chef Logan said in the last 42 months he and Carlsen have been at Churchill Downs, they have visited at least 250 Kentucky farms. "Last year for the Derby we grew our own lamb and beef," Logan said. "We are making our cheeses all over Kentucky."

The two have worked with Kentucky farmers, showing the farmers what they need.

Levy Restaurants, in turn, purchases the meats, produce and cheeses locally. "Sam and I are honorary Commissioners of Agriculture for the Commonwealth of Kentucky," Logan said. "We are very proud of what we have done. Other states are looking at it. We feel we are really helping out. It costs a little more, but we know what we are buying and it is much better food."

One of the most popular desserts this year, and a new one, was called Woodford County Pudding. Logan and Carlsen met a lady in Bardstown, Ky., who, along with her spiral notebook, shared a few of her recipes with the Derby chefs. One was the pudding recipe. They called it the Woodford County Pudding because the recipe called for blackberries and that is the county where the Churchill Down blackberries are grown.

The menus for the chef tables vary slightly throughout the grounds for the Oaks races, the day before the derby, and Derby day depending on location. Some menu items included whipped sweet sorghum butter from Springfield, Ky., cheeses from Austin County, Ky., barbecue breast of turkey, marinated tomato and basil salad, butter beans, bourbon glazed chicken breast, a raw bar, various seafood, and bone-in ribeye.

Then, there is the Kentucky dessert sampler with long-stemmed chocolate dipped and enrobed Driscoll strawberries, Kentucky bourbon balls, Bavarian filled cream puffs, and chocolate dipped original Derby pies.

This is the first year for the Yum! Brands foods of Louisville to be a sponsor of the Derby. Yum! Brands had Pizza Hut and Kentucky Fried Chicken trailers in the infield. The Pizza Hut trailer was able to make 5,000 pizzas an hour over the two days. "It was a beautiful stainless steel trailer," Logan said.

Infield outlets also included a giant Johnsonville Bratwurst trailer. It served between 60,000 and 70,000 brats each day over the two-day period.

Derek Dowling, director of concessions for Levy, said there were a total of 540 points of sale set up for the two days of racing. "We scale back a bit on our menu items during the two days," Dowling said. "We scale back on the time-consuming items. It allows us to have the freshest of items and lessens the length of the lines."

But there are still the specialties such as the beef brisket sandwich and turkey clubs, along with the usual fan favorites, "basically what they want, things such as hot dogs and hamburgers," Dowling said.

The use of subcontractors helps to mix up the varieties with foods such as specialty barbecues, lobster wraps and Mexican fare.

And, then there are the Mint Juleps.

"It's all about the glass," Dowling said. "This year we offered an Oaks glass as well. That turned out to be a very good sell." The Oaks drink was called the Oaks Lilly made from Finlandia vodka, sweet and sour, and a splash of Triple Sec. Mint Juleps and Oaks Lilly sold for \$9 each.

BY THE NUMBERS

Consumed by the 277,900 attending this year's Derby:

- 63,000 jumbo shrimp
- 25,000 Derby pies
- 120,000 mint juleps

- 3,400 glasses of Dom Perignon
 - 142,000 hot dogs
 - 18,000 barbecue sandwiches
 - 300,000 strawberries
 - 30,000 hand painted cookies
 - 25,000 pounds of potatoes
- Pam Sherborne

Interviewed for this story: Gil Logan, Sam Carlsen, and Derek Dowling (502) 636-4400

ONLY A FEW DAYS LEFT TO SUBMIT YOUR MIDYEAR SCORES!

2006 MIDYEAR DEADLINE COMING SOON!

Venues Today 2006 MIDYEAR Hot Tickets and Top Stops reports will be published in our July issue. Events and concerts held from Nov. 16, 2005–May 15, 2006 will be included in the data. To assure your place in Venue History, E-MAIL YOUR FULL EVENT LISTING TO HotTickets@venuestoday.com BY MAY 26.

VENUESToday

The deadline to submit your box office scores is almost here! The last date that we will accept reports is **May 26th**. Don't throw away your chance to place in our midyear Hot Tickets and Top Stops charts. The dates covered in the charts are **November 16, 2005 through May 15, 2006**. Sent stats immediately to:

HotTickets@venuestoday.com or fax to: 714-378-0040.

Contact Kristin Sarbeck, 714-378-5400, Kristin@venuestoday.com for more information.

SHORT TAKES

NEW ORLEANS ARENA TO HOST 2008 NBA ALL-STAR GAME

The New Orleans Arena has been selected as the site of 57th NBA All-Star Game in 2008. The game will be played on Sunday, Feb. 17. The entire week-long All-Star celebration will be staged in New Orleans. The game will be televised on TNT in the United States and will reach a worldwide television audience in more than 200 countries. "The NBA's announcement regarding All-Star represents the first major sporting event awarded to our community since Hurricane Katrina. It shows the NBA has confidence in our city's ability to be ready for their showcase event and will make a statement to others who are considering scheduling conventions and sports in New Orleans in the future," said Doug Thornton, regional vice president, SMG, New Orleans Arena, in a press release. The NBA All-Star 2008 will include the T-Mobile Rookie Challenge on Friday night, and the Shooting Stars, Skills Challenge, Three-Point Shootout, and Slam Dunk Contest on Saturday. The NBA Cares activities will include the NBA All-Star Legacy Project and events where current and former NBA and WNBA players will build homes with Habitat for Humanity, run basketball and fitness clinics with Jr. NBA/Jr. WNBA teams, and visit local schools and children's hospitals. The 15th NBA All-Star Jam Session, one of the most popular events of the week, will be held at The Ernest N. Morial Convention Center featuring more than 450,000 square feet of basketball entertainment. i>Contact: Bill Curl, (504) 587-3921

VEE FIELDING NEW FAMILY SHOW: MY LITTLE PONY

VEE Corporation has begun booking its newest family show, My Little Pony, for a fall 2007 tour. More details will be revealed at the Event and Arena Marketing Conference in Miami June 7–10, but Jane O'Hara, VEE public relations, said it's based on the Hasbro toy and will feature eight main ponies (all costumed characters). It will travel in two trucks. It will play arenas and theaters, much like Sesame Street Live.

Contact: Jane O'Hara, (612) 852-2394

NEW ORLEANS II: THE LOUISIANA SUPERDOME PROGRESS REPORT

The Louisiana Superdome is on track to be football-ready this September, while certain aspects of the project will continue through August 2007, according to a press release this week. The construction phase continues to ratchet up with more than 400 employees currently at work. The number is expected to top off at approximately 850 workers on any given day by midsummer.

Inside, the elaborate scaffolding, reaching from the top row of seats to the perimeter of the ceiling, is being dismantled and removed. The task of replacing damaged sheetrock in the 20-by-20-ft. air conditioning/ventilating duct that encircles the main arena is progressing. Damaged ceiling tiles have been replaced and the large beige panels on the end zone walls have been cleaned and painted. Huge plastic sheets remain over all 70,000 seats. Hot air was blown under the sheets in the remediation process, and the plastic remains in place to protect the seats from construction dust. They are being uncovered a small section at a time to inspect the seats for damage, with negligible results to date.

The 500,000 square feet of 3-by-16 feet fluted steel panels on the 9.7-acre roof are first being sprayed with an epoxy primer. Then the recessed portion of the flutes is filled with polyurethane foam—the same substance that provides the outer layer after the panels have been attached. Finally, an acrylic primer is added before the panels are lifted to the roof. Eight hoists are used to lower the damaged roofing and to lift the panels, foam and urethane topcoating 27 stories to the top. The walk ramps and main concourses will sport a new Poly Speck epoxy flooring system. All 38 permanent concession stands are being rebuilt with new finishes, lighting, and stainless steel countertops. The four main kitchens are being fully refurbished, and the Dome Café will be reopened this fall.

Contact: Bill Curl, (504) 587-3921

METAL FLAGPOLES BANNED AT TALLADEGA AFTER TRAGIC ACCIDENT

Race fans traditionally fly flags at their campsites as they gather for major car racing events, but those flags can no longer be attached to metal flagpoles at Talladega (Ala.) Superspeedway. Rick Humphrey, vice president and general manager at Talladega, said the ban was announced and enforced beginning April 25, the day after two people were electrocuted when erecting such a pole. It touched some live wires, he said. It's not the first time such an accident has occurred at a racetrack, though it was a first at Talladega, Humphrey said.

As a result of the accident there, metal flagpoles have been permanently banned at all 12 International Speedway Corp. tracks, he added. Fans can still bring flags, but the poles need to be fiberglass, plastic, or wood. Kristi King, director of public relations at Talladega, said the public was informed of the new policy through a variety of methods. "We put loudspeaker announcements out in to some of the campgrounds," she said. "We passed out fliers, and put up signs throughout the facility. Going forward we are going to put that policy into our fan guides that are distributed to all of our fans with their ticket's insert."

The incident at Talladega occurred when fans were setting up camp in a free overnight park at the racetrack. The venue has 1,000 acres and opens camping in phases Monday through Thursday during raceweek, the last campgrounds being paid space. The campers affected in April had set up on one of the free sites. Humphrey said the campers called 911, but that track's emergency response team was on the scene immediately.

"We constantly look at camping areas on our security patrols," Humphrey said. "And when we see folks setting up or erecting flagpoles in this vicinity, we warn folks and make sure they are aware of their surroundings. As a result of this particular incident, we made it a policy at Talladega to do away with metal flagpoles and asked our security and the law enforcement folks here on the property to help enforce that." Humphrey added that it "wasn't a problem to enforce here. The accident was fresh on everyone's mind when they came to be with us that race week." King reinforced the importance Talladega places on the safety of their fans. "We have roaming security that roams around, we have campground personnel at all times. We're always looking and making sure that our fans don't put themselves in harm's way." — Linda Deckard and Greg Lehman

Interviewed for this story: Rick Humphrey and Kristi King, (256) 362-2261

HELP WANTED

Venues Today now offers **free help wanted listings** in the e-newsletter. For more information or to submit listings, e-mail April Stroud, Advertising/Production Manager at: April@venuestoday.com

[Click here to view free help wanted listing guidelines](#)

Venues Today - Reporter/Editor

Immediate opening. Sports and live entertainment trade magazine in Orange County, Calif., is seeking a qualified business journalist to write stories and assign and edit freelance copy. Some travel. A small firm with international readership. Two to three years editorial experience required. F/T, health benefits, EOE. E-mail resume to

Linda@venuestoday.com or fax to: (714) 378-0040.

To submit news or information to **Venues Today** contact:

Linda Deckard, Publisher, Editor-in-chief
(714) 378-5400
linda@venuestoday.com

For advertising information, contact:

Sue Nichols, Eastern Region
(615) 662-0252
sue@venuestoday.com

Pauline Davis, Central Region
(615) 356-0398
pauline@venuestoday.com

April Stroud, Western Region
(714) 378-5400 ext. 23
april@venuestoday.com

You are receiving this weekly e-newsletter as part of your annual subscription to **Venues Today**.

Remember that you can also access the **Venues Today** archives as part of this subscription at www.venuestoday.com. [Unsubscribe](#)



This message was sent by Venues Today using VerticalResponse's [iBuilder](#)®



Venues Today
P.O. Box 2540
Huntington Beach, CA 92647
USA

[Read](#) the VerticalResponse marketing policy.