

Rick Saas

Subject: FW: Sept. 7, 2005 Newsletter - Hurricane Katrina Special Report

VENUES**today**

"The news behind the headlines"

Dear April,

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Welcome to your **Venues Today's Hurricane Katrina Special Report**. Look for more coverage next week and in the October 2005 printed issue. For a full calendar listing and to view archives or to subscribe to *Venues Today* visit our Web site at www.venuestoday.com.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"It was like watching the death of friend, a loved one." — Doug Thornton, regional vice president for SMG, on the damage done to the Louisiana Superdome, New Orleans, by Hurricane Katrina

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VENUE NEWS

Louisiana Superdome, surrounded by floodwaters



FIRSTHAND REPORT: MANAGING THE SUPERDOME UNDER UNPRECEDENTED DURESS

Having witnessed the water and human damage inflicted on the Louisiana Superdome, the now infamous shelter for 24,000 of the disenfranchised from Hurricane Katrina and the New Orleans flood, Doug Thornton, regional vice president for SMG, can't conceive that the iconic venue will ever come back.

"The Superdome is severely damaged, lots of water damage," he told *Venues Today* Sept. 3, two days after he and the rest of the SMG staff had evacuated the city under orders from the National Guard. "You saw the damage to the roof. It's even more significant that it appears from the outside."

Thornton, who oversaw all the SMG-managed venues in the region for SMG, including the separate New Orleans Arena, said the arena sustained considerably less damage. "But if we don't get back in there quickly, it's going to be very bad," he said. "Some money has to be spent, but just my own speculation, without any engineering survey, I would say by the first of the year we could have the arena open for business, [at least] by the spring of '06."

Another SMG-managed venue, the Cultural Center had 2 feet of water in some spaces, and two employees who volunteered to stay on site through the disaster, he said. As of Saturday, he had not heard from the engineer and maintenance worker.

The Pontchartrain Center was not quite as bad, he said. It had some roof damage but is

serviceable. It's already at work as a staging center for Entergy, the local power company.

But the Superdome is a sad story. The steel girders are still there, but that's about all. "Where the roof is peeled, where the rubberized EPDM surface has come off, that has allowed the water to seep through, Thornton said. Below the foam is the sheet metal decking, but that's not waterproof. "The heavy rains just saturated the interior spaces of the building. Below the rubberized EPDM is a 2-inch coating of polyurethane foam, like a fiberboard. Below that is a three-eighths-of-an-inch sheet metal fluted deck. When the fiberboard becomes exposed, it gets saturated and the water makes it way to the cracks. That's what caused most of the damage. If the roof had not failed, we might have been able to make it."

He believes all the utilities in the building could be compromised and probably would have to be replaced, along with the sheetrock, ceiling tiles, and carpet. "It's significant. It's into the tens of millions [of dollars]. I'm not sure it can be saved."

Beyond that is the spaces occupied by the evacuees for nearly a week. The water damage is compounded by housing such a huge population in the worst of circumstances, including no restroom facilities and standing water on almost every level, with no way to dehumidify the building.

While the floodwaters that followed the hurricane did not reach the Superdome's ground-level concourse, they did get up to 15 inches deep in the boiler room. "We came within 5 or 6 inches of losing the entire generator. We were running on generator power from Monday [Aug. 29] at 6:20 a.m. through today [Sept. 3]. We came close to losing the generator. If the roof had held, you would have to disinfect and decontaminate it. I don't know. I don't know what's going to happen."

SUPERHUMAN SUPERDOME STAFF

Thornton had one dominant message: The SMG staff did a heroic job for as long as they could under incredibly adverse circumstances in the days following Hurricane Katrina when levee breaks allowed 80 percent the city to be flooded.

He had 30 members of the SMG staff and families and 30 members of the Centerplate staff (building concessionaire) and families, a total of 275 people. The event staff of 60 got no sleep and little food, working under constantly changing circumstances. Of the SMG contingent, 12-13 were security, six engineers, six full-time and eight part-time janitorial (who were on the clock), one technician, Chris Cunningham, and four from the management team, including Glen Menard, general manager; Farrow Bouton, event services director; and Bernardus Vanderklis, manager of security.

There was some optimism going in. The past two hurricanes, they evacuated a million people and nothing happened, Thornton said. In both instances, the Superdome was a shelter of last resort, after the curfew was imposed and people could no longer leave town. This time, however, it was opened as a shelter prior to the hurricane. "The mayor had gotten word the night before that this storm would be unprecedented. He made a personal plea to bring the medical cases here," Thornton said.

"If you look at it today, it's still one of the few places that's still habitable even though it's completely trashed," Thornton said. It was one of the few places people could be evacuated from or imported to. Helicopters could deliver patients and remove patients from the parking decks. "It started out with a population of 10,000 at the dome and 600 of those were medical patients with special needs. We moved the medical population to the arena and that grew to almost 1,000."

At the dome, as well, the population kept swelling. "People were wading through the streets to get to the only island that had power and a way out, or at least they thought. It was a headquarters operation for the National Guard. They used it as their Joint Operational Command," Thornton explained. That is a unified command under the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), OEP (Office of Emergency of Preparedness) at the state and city level, Louisiana State Police, National Guard, and one or two other jurisdictions. FEMA runs the disaster relief/recovery component; but the OEP state and city has a large role in the unified command. The OEP in the city is usually commanded by the mayor. However, on Tuesday, FEMA, which is a division of Homeland Security now, took over the entire relief effort. The National Guard was there to provide security and provide supplies.

Operationally, the Superdome staff worked with the National Guard and vice versa. "The National Guard came in on Saturday to begin to protect the building before we opened it. Initially, they look to us as the building operators to tell them how to get the crowd in, for space planning, where to set up certain operational components of the effort, where to set up offices and the security response teams, where to house prisoners if they need to take them, where to store and palletize the food, and how to distribute the food," Thornton listed. The dome had the tools, forklifts, and equipment. "We have to operate that or give them the opportunity to operate that. For the first two or three days, we were doing that for them. We operated the forklifts, we were providing the barricades for the staging lines to feed, cleaning restrooms, janitorial, trash removal. Centerplate was feeding 450 hot meals a day to the National Guard, until it got catastrophic."

The winds hit Sunday afternoon and into Monday night, "they were relying on us," Thornton recalled. Power went out at 6:20 a.m. Monday and the dome went on emergency power. "We have the keys to all the spaces. We have the knowledge of how to move people around the building. As your population grows, that becomes important. We also had great experience in dealing with large crowds, with Super Bowls and Sugar Bowls. We've been through some pretty incredible challenges down here. We have worked a lot with National Guardsmen, in some cases the same people. These were the same National Guard members who helped us in Super Bowl and Final Four."

THE TYPICAL DAY

Throughout the crisis, there were four people at the forefront of the planning, Thornton said. The commander of the JOC, another general and two colonels were on site at all times. They were interfacing with OEP and FEMA.

"We would sit down each morning [at 6 a.m.] with the National Guard and the colonels and sometimes all four of those guys, and we would jointly make decisions," he said. "We would decide how we were going to feed the people, where we would stage the pallets of food. It changed every day. We had to move the feeding on the second day because of the water damage in the building. Then on the third day, we changed it again because we had rising waters, so we had to move to the second level." Most were operating on little to no sleep. Thornton himself got about five hours of shut-eye spread over four days.

Each day, there was a new priority. "On the day the roof started peeling off, we had to make a decision to move the people seated on the plaza level. There was debris coming out of the ceiling. We were going to get someone killed in those seats. The colonel and I made a decision to get the Security Response Teams to sweep the people back into the concourses. They had to migrate back into the ramp system and concourse spaces, in the dark and dingy areas if you will, because we were afraid they'd get killed from

falling debris. "

On Tuesday, the hot issue was the power. Floodwaters were encroaching on the central plant. "I went to the boiler room knowing how critical that generator was. It was our life system. It kept us going with what little bit of electricity we had and our water pumps for water. We still had water up 'til Wednesday morning. We had some lights, emergency power, dimly lit, but people could see. It's pitch dark in that dome without any light. People would go into a stark panic."

They flew in 500 sandbags from an offsite location. The dome was surrounded by water. "To get to the heliport, we had to drive down the ramp with an LMTV, one of the big high water vehicles. The back is filled with troops. They go up, meet the helicopter, unload the sand, take it back downstairs and around the street and 20 men offloaded the sand bags around the generator."

Meanwhile, the 750-gallon fuel tank was running out of diesel, with an estimated two hours left, and it was submerged in 3 feet of water underground. Thornton had high praise for the National Guard mechanics who see a problem and solve it. "We're fighting two problems at once. We're standing in knee-deep water. The water rising, so we're sandbagging around the generator and putting pumps in there to pump water out of this little dam we built. At the same time, we're trying to get the fuel to the generator. They took these surplus gasoline hoses, connected them in a series and came up with 50 feet of hose. They ran one end into the generator and cut a hole in the wall and ran it through the wall and to a 2,500-gallon diesel tanker truck, one of theirs. They ran the hose right into the fuel truck and bypassed the in-ground fuel tank and ran the generator off that fuel truck. How about that. That was day two after the storm, day three in the building."

Then security became an issue. "We started running out of MRE [Meals Ready to Eat]. We were having a difficult time getting supplies in. The crowd began to get restless." On Wednesday at 2 a.m., an MP was shot. "One of the people in the building wrestled a sidearm away from an MP and shot him in the leg. When that happened, the whole dynamic of the scene changed. Security tightened up. They built a perimeter around our engineering room and the south gate, our supply line, with razor wire and a barricade. It was almost like being in a Third World country. The conditions were inhumane. There's human waste. No restrooms available. After Wednesday morning, we lost water pressure, so we had no running water after mid-morning Wednesday."

GETTING OUT

On Tuesday afternoon, the mayor visited and Thornton showed him the damage and why it was so important to get people out. "He asked me to be prepared to stay a week and give him a list of important supplies and work with the National Guard to make a joint request. I made that request and we didn't see those supplies yet. He said be prepared to stay a week. I said, 'Mr. Mayor, this building will not last a week and this situation will not last a week. We have to get these people out of here.'"

Thornton slept in his office for five days. It also served as National Guard headquarters. "The rank [brass] also slept there." Most of the SMG staff and their families stayed in the Northwest Meeting Rooms, one of the big ballrooms. "It was not secured by military police, but it was safe up until Tuesday afternoon. Then things began to happen. There was stealing and rapes. The strong were predators on the weak, stealing money, provisions, blankets, chairs, sofas, moving people out of the way. It became very dangerous for our people to be in there. I made a decision to move all SMG and Centerplate folks out of that space. We moved SMG employees down to our offices. Centerplate folks moved to the Gridiron Grill Restaurant."

A helicopter was made available, though it arrived 10 hours later than scheduled, at 10:30 p.m. Wednesday. "Things were deteriorating rapidly. The National Guard advised me they were going to retreat from the building by Thursday morning and let the folks have it. It was so sad. The good people were getting pushed and shoved. There's no telling how many bodies they are going to find when they go back through there. People were dying on us right and left.

"The National Guard felt it would be more problematic to go in with a show of force, pushing people back. It would create more of a crowd problem. Our population went from 10,000 to 24,000 over a three-day period. The National Guard had basically given up the building. They told me they could 'no longer occupy the spaces, not even your offices. We are going to let them have it.' They were afraid if they sent their people in, they would either have to start shooting and killing, or the people would steal their weapons and then you have an even more dangerous situation."

Thornton and the generals devised a plan to get about 30 people out by helicopter overnight on Wednesday "in what I call a covert operation. We had to take them down the stairwell and outside the building beneath one of the parking decks so the evacuees wouldn't see our people leaving. We didn't want to cause a mass riot. We moved them over to the Hyatt Regency between 1 and 3 a.m., where they spent what was left of the night. The whole plan was the buses would be coming the next day to start the evacuation and I wanted my workers to be where they could get on the buses first in an orderly fashion and get them out of there. The buses didn't show up at 6 a.m. the next morning. They got diverted. About 9:30 they showed up and we got [our people] to the River Center here in Baton Rouge." Thornton was the last to leave, flown out by helicopter Thursday about noon.

'WE DID NOT ABANDON THAT BUILDING'

"When the water started rising on Tuesday morning, we knew what we were in for," Thornton said. "No food, no toilets, no water...people get desperate. When you have a mass crowd, you have a cross section of society. There was tremendous tension in there.

"I want to emphasize one thing. *We did not abandon the building.* My workers worked until the minute we left. It wasn't until the National Guard retreated that we gave it up. They advised us it was not safe for their people to go in," he said. "We did not abandon that building. We held it together. We held that generator. We bailed the water with the pumps. We pulled the trash and removed it as best we could until the last minute we could possibly do it. I can't say enough about our people, 90 percent of whom were homeless themselves. And they knew it. But they never quit, they hung in to the end."

In 1998, after Hurricane George, SMG provided the OEP with a 20-page report on what to do in case of a storm, what areas of the Dome should be connected to emergency power, how to pre-stage food, water, supplies and things like forklifts.

"When you have a disaster this large, you can have certain mechanisms and plans in place, but it's a living, breathing, evolutionary animal of its own. You have to be able to adapt and the single most critical thing I saw was there was no single voice of command. The National Guard was making decisions, good decisions, based on their judgment at that building. I'm talking region-wide, not Dome-specific.

"As a building manager, if you are going to be prepared for these disasters, if you are going to be a shelter, you had better be prepared for it. We made written requests to the OEP begging them to do structural studies on the roof, modifications to the

emergency power structure, to pre-stage supplies, cots, food, water, forklift equipment. The situation we had described to them in 1998, all the things we said could happen with a major storm in that building came true, including the destruction of the roof. We told them that roof was not wind-rated for winds higher than 140 miles per hour and it came apart with higher winds.

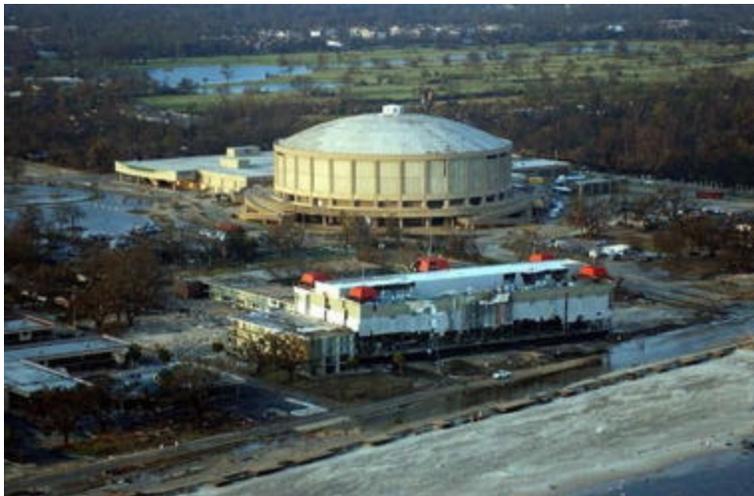
"I learned if you are going to use your building as a shelter, you have to take the steps to make it viable. What we had here was not only a catastrophic hurricane, but a catastrophic flood. The hurricane compounded by the flood causes events you wouldn't necessarily be prepared for. I'm not sure you can be totally prepared.

"Having said all that, we managed with what we had. We got by. We still used the Dome to save thousands of life. That's what I told my staff the last night we were there. They hadn't slept in two days, many hadn't eaten in two days because they had been moved around so much," he said. "Before they left, I told them I would get them out, I know many of you lost everything, you have become the homeless helping the homeless, but you can take comfort, you helped save thousands of lives."

"It's like watching the death of a friend, a loved one," he concluded. "Then you turn your focus to your own personal life. Many of my staff, including me, have lost everything. I walked out of there with two bags; that's all I have. All we had was our clothes. We couldn't take anything." — Linda Deckard

Interviewed for this story: Doug Thornton, survivor, currently based in Baton Rouge, La.

Mississippi Coast Coliseum & Convention Center, with Presidents Casino blown into parking lot



MOST GULF COAST VENUES SURVIVE KATRINA'S FURY, BUT SEE HEAVY DAMAGE

Outside of New Orleans, the hardest hit major venue may have been the Mississippi Coast Coliseum & Convention Center in Biloxi, which endured 5 feet of rushing water through the venues when Hurricane Katrina slammed into the coast Aug. 29.

"We're still digging out from under the debris and the aftermath," said Matt McDonnell, assistant executive director of the complex. "The situation is where we're going to have to replace all the electrical systems that originate on the first floor level; we're going to have to come in and replace all our dressing rooms, restrooms, offices, convention center space. There's a lot of work to be done."

At press time, local search and rescue teams, hazardous waste containment agencies, and power companies are digging through the rubble. But Coliseum management plans to be set up in trailers in the parking lot within the next few days. "We will be back, bigger and stronger because of it," McDonnell said. "Right now that's what we live by — we have to. We have to breathe that, sleep that, eat that."

Payroll went out to employees this week and will go out next week, but that will need to be assessed during the recovery, McDonnell said. They are working with their insurance company and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) on funding the repairs.

The ECHL Mississippi Sea Wolves minor league hockey team will most likely relocate to Mobile, Ala., for the 2005-2006 season, but will be back in 2007, McDonnell said. And the Coliseum's newly announced Arena Football League tenant team will probably be held off for a season, he said. All upcoming shows are cancelled, including Hank Williams Jr., Neil Diamond and Stars of the Moscow Circus.

A \$68 million expansion of the convention center is also on indefinite hold, but other renovation plans have been unexpectedly fast-tracked by the disaster.

All but two of the complex's staff had been accounted for as of press time, but McDonnell assumes they are safe. McDonnell lost his home in the storm, and he and his wife are bunking at a retirement home in Ocean Springs, where he is a city administrator, while they look for a rental unit. Their children are staying with relatives in Alabama.

McDonnell said he wants to thank those in the venue management industry who have offered assistance during this disaster, and he hopes they will be able to help raise funds to reopen his venue's doors.

On Sept. 5, Marco Perez, general manager of Kiefer UNO Lakefront Arena, New Orleans, was headed to Metairie to survey things on the homefront. He and his family had evacuated New Orleans prior to Hurricane Katrina and are staying with family in Houston. Like half a million other people, he took the opportunity offered Tuesday to check out his home at least, leaving Houston in the wee hours to make it to Metairie, visit and attempt to disinfect his home there, and get out again by the 6 p.m. curfew.

Calling on his way back, stuck in 5-mile-per-hour traffic in Baton Rouge, Perez was optimistic. He was told it would be weeks before the light poles were back up, yet they already were up in Metairie, he said. As he headed out, lines of trucks and workers were headed in to New Orleans to rebuild.

He still doesn't know the extent of the damage at the Kiefer UNO Lakefront Arena. The arena is on high ground, but has undoubtedly sustained some water damage. Mold is a major issue for every property, because unlike the normal flood scenario, they are not able to get in and fight it back immediately after the disaster. He could see in his home that mold was growing upward.

Perez spent the first few days after Katrina finding employees. About 40 full-time employees are still on the UNO payroll, receiving electronic deposits. Most are covered by special leave provisions for about a month and some have annual leave stored up. No further decisions regarding payroll will be addressed until they know when they can get back to work. Perez has been helping employees put their personal affairs in order, making sure they realize they can get three- to five-month waivers on mortgage and credit card payments. Even though they are being paid, they do not yet know what monies they will need to recover, he pointed out.

Perez said momentum is building to turn the annual motorcycle rally held at UNO in October into a fundraiser on campus. It might be a stretch, but motorcyclists from all over the country are getting behind the idea. "If we can get to the arena, we can do it," Perez said. The campus remained above water and the road in is dry.

He had to cancel several upcoming concerts, including Kelly Clarkson, who had already been rescheduled due to Hurricane Dennis. Juan Gabriel was also cancelled. World Wrestling Entertainment, a pay-per-view event, was also cancelled. He sent WWE an e-mail, and he hadn't yet talked with the Harlem Globetrotters, but that's also likely a cancellation, he said.

The university announced that the basketball team would play in Tyler, Texas, keeping the UNO spirit alive.

Perez has set up an alternate e-mail address, mperez@unoupdate.net. His UNO cell phone and e-mail are still down. Text messaging is the most reliable form of communication, he said. "That's a whole story on its own.

Like everyone from the flooded, devastated city, Perez was glued to news reports, looking for photos of his arena, his home, his friends, his life, and writing about it. "This particular entry was brought on by the telethon on MSNBC," he wrote days after the devastation. " I was ready to watch the traditional footage of devastation. I was ready to hear some good old-fashioned music from various artists — some of whom have performed in the Lakefront Arena. Instead? Ole Harry Connick and his orchestra began to play a heart-wrenching jazz-funeral type number. Wow. I froze. Then I teared up and sobbed like an idiot. For Jazz! I cried for Jazz Music. Me! Good gosh these emotions are hard to deal with. But for some odd reason putting them to paper, screen that is, just helps.

"UNO and New Orleans will survive this terrible disaster," Perez wrote. "The spirit that makes New Orleans such a great place lives within each of us.

He added that donations can be sent to UNO Recovery Fund For Lakefront Arena, c/o UNO Foundation, 3810 West Lakeshore Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70804. Perez and his family are temporarily housed at 2402 South Mystic Meadows, Houston, TX 77021.

The International Association of Assembly Managers (IAAM) plans to have a clearinghouse for information on members and member venues set up shortly, according to Dexter King, executive director of the venue managers' association. "I talked to people last Saturday that were in desperate need of more experienced event coordinators. When I talked to the next general managers, they said they have some extra [and said], 'I'll send them there. What I need is plumbers,'" King said. "How can we as an organization assist all the members?"

King is asking venues to submit information to IAAM via e-mail. "A lot of lack of ability to get things on the ground or working really well stems from telephones not working, cell phones not working, e-mail not working, not having the ability to communicate with each other. There has to be a failsafe process put in place to overcome that deficiency," he said.

King was disappointed with a disorganized conference call between the private sector and FEMA that broke down into parties interrupting each other. "Just listening to them, you can understand the magnitude of how dysfunctional [communication channels are, and how] this massive array of things that are happening impacts all of us."

Neither IAAM nor *Venues Today* has been able to reach Jimmie Fore, general manager of the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center in New Orleans, where tens of thousands of storm refugees flocked and endured some of the greatest hardship. The venue was not designated as a shelter, but it was on high ground, so residents were attracted to the area. Due to downed communications, rescue workers did not know people were there

until television news covered the chaotic scene.

As of yesterday, King planned to seek Federal help in locating Fore and his top managers. — Natasha Emmons & Linda Deckard

Interviewed for this story: Matt McDonnell, (228) 297-3929; Dexter King, (972) 906-7441; Marco Perez, mperez@unupdate.net

Evacuees setting up camp at Ford Park's exhibit hall



VENUES OF ALL TYPES ARE PRESSED INTO SERVICE AS EVACUEE HAVENS

Staff at venues serving as shelters to tens of thousands of displaced storm victims are working as hard as those in the stricken areas. Wil Caudell, general manager of the Reunion Arena in Dallas, was looking forward to his first good night's

sleep in a week yesterday. "It was the 31st of August the last time I looked up," he said.

This is the first time in his 30-year career in venue management that he has served as a host to disaster victims. He found out Monday evening, Aug. 29, that he would be accepting well over 7,000 New Orleans evacuees starting the next day. "The city called and said, 'We're in dire straits. We have to start taking people out of Louisiana. Is there any way you can help us?' And I said...sure. And we just kicked into high gear."

The venue had not been pre-designated as a shelter, and the call came as a surprise to Caudell.

Caudell got on the phone immediately with the venue's contractors and police to alert everyone of the development. The Red Cross, Salvation Army and Texas National Guard arrived on scene. Communication was key.

"Thousands of people were coming in this direction on busses, in cars and anything they could find, with essentially no plan in place. So we had to scramble within a few hours to get things going," Caudell said. "Fortunately for us, one of the things we did was we asked for a Red Cross radio the first night, so not only could they call us immediately, but we could monitor what they planned to do next with the operations."

Serendipitously, a terrorism disaster practice drill had been carried out by the county at the arena recently, so many of the local first responders were familiar with the facility's layout, Caudell said.

The biggest obstacle, and a familiar story in the response to Hurricane Katrina, was nobody knew who was in charge, Caudell said. "We had a lot of chiefs real quick," he said. "I probably offended pretty much everybody I came in contact with the first couple of days. But what was important was taking care of these people coming in. I figured we've got to do what we've got to do in any way that accommodates the people

in a safe manner."

Caudell took the tack that the Red Cross was his client, so he took directions from them, but the venue staff knows how to handle issues related to safety in the venue. "A lot of guys in our business, we've handled rough crowds and big crowds, crowds that want to rush the stage, rush the door and crazy things. It was pretty doggone good training because this time it was for keeps," he said. "Every...crowd management skill you learned over the years you pretty much had to apply it pretty quick. Sometimes I had to raise my voice when those well intentioned did something that was unlawful when it comes to crowds."

The arena has 30,000 square feet of floor space with cots. After those filled, evacuees were diverted into the arena's sister building, the Dallas Convention Center, where the city paid for the cots to be set up in a 200,000-square-foot exhibition hall. About 8,000 of the most desperate New Orleans evacuees, those rescued last from the chaos at the Morial Convention Center, have been housed there.

"I haven't heard a negative word from any of them about how they've been treated," Caudell said. "These people have been through a living hell."

Local aid groups are working quickly to find more long-term housing and contact relatives, so the numbers of overnighnters at the arena are dwindling every day, Caudell said, down to only several hundred by last night.

The response from the community has been overwhelming, to the point that Caudell has had to make an effort to concentrate on his tasks at hand. Locals were asked not to bring donations to the venues, but they did anyway, setting up their own impromptu clearinghouses of supplies for evacuees outside. "At times it was helpful," he said. At one point, the convention center ran out of baby formula, so Caudell went to these stations to collect bottles.

Local medical workers were on hand to sort evacuees coming off busses. "I can't even put into words how great they've been," he said. "There were people with snake bits and alligator bites and unbelievable [injuries]. They hadn't showered...and the water there was toxic with bodies floating by and everything else."

The immediate crisis has waned as evacuees plan what to do next. FEMA arrived on the scene yesterday and has set up posts at both venues to assist.

Caudell only has five full-time staff members. When the 25-year-old arena ramps up for events, staff from the convention center are used. Many of those employees have been staying at the venues overnight or working long shifts, he said.

Food is handled entirely by the Red Cross. Exercise areas have been set up outside, and the Red Cross set up two large-screen televisions to show movies around the clock. Caudell set up a space in the concourse for the local school district to come in and register students and the kids were bussed off to school for the first time yesterday. Parents were allowed to accompany the children, he said.

In an ever-changing event booking scenario, SMG-managed venues serving as shelters totaled five, housing 36,000, as of Saturday afternoon. But that was expected to change, upward, said Glenn Mon, SMG senior vice president of stadiums and arenas, whose job has been to marshal staffing for this new endeavor in the wake of the devastation and evacuation of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast.

SMG was hard hit by the hurricane, managing four venues in New Orleans alone, not to

mention other properties in Mississippi, Louisiana and Alabama, and including the firm's most lucrative account, the Louisiana Superdome. But they have not stopped to look back, deploying staff from various SMG buildings to bolster existing personnel at venues designated shelters for the newly homeless by FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) and OEP (Office of Emergency Preparedness).

"A couple more of our venues have been rushed into service as a shelter, most recently Bossier City [La.]," he said Friday. "Corpus Christi is on hold." What most amazed Mon is the level of volunteerism. "Three of our engineers from the Superdome, literally some of the last personnel we got out of there [New Orleans] Thursday morning [Sept. 1], raised their hand and are on their way to Houston now to help at the Astrodome." One night's sleep and they were on the go again, facing the need to do something head-on.

Mon's job has been to coordinate. "I have six people coming from Jacksonville to Houston. We're flying people from Pensacola and from Topeka to Beaumont to back up our staff there." He's been marshalling troops from "on the ground" since Tuesday morning [Aug. 31], headquartered at SMG's River Center in Baton Rouge, La., and the Lamar-Dixon Expo Center, Gonzales, both designated shelters before the storm hit.

All told, Mon has deployed about 20 management personnel to various designated shelters. "We're able to muster significant manpower, not unlike we mustered a dozen people for Super Bowl to help out in Jacksonville last year," Mon said of SMG.

"Running our buildings as shelters is a 24/7 operation," Mon said. The reality is to do that requires additional personnel.

As of Saturday, SMG was housing 2,000 evacuees at Lamar-Dixon; 5,000 at the River Center; 25,000 in Houston (at AstroArena, Astrodome and Reliant Center); 1,500 at the Ford Center, Beaumont; and 1,000 at CenturyTel Arena, Bossier City, La. The drill usually starts when the facility is contacted by the government authorities — FEMA or Homeland Security — about availability.

For SMG, the process is "analogous to an event. We perform the event functions — coordination, keep the building operating and provide them with services, but now the event is 24 hours, seven days a week, so we have to supplement our on-site personnel with other personnel to provide a realistic staffing rotation for our people. In Houston, we have personnel from Jacksonville, Columbus, Ohio, University of Virginia, Albuquerque, Salt Lake City and Oakland," Mon said. "We are supporting Bossier City with corporate personnel; Beaumont with personnel from Laredo and Pensacola. And we still have another dozen or so we can redeploy if Corpus Christi comes on line."

Technically, this "event" even includes ticket taking, which translates to the Red Cross registering evacuees. SMG handles all the janitorial and trash removal. Building security has a role along with law enforcement, depending on the jurisdiction. In Baton Rouge and Houston, it's the police department; in Beaumont, the Jefferson County sheriff's department. SMG engineers and maintenance personnel keep the systems working. "We were called upon to do all the breakfasts for the population in Baton Rouge — 5,000 breakfasts for distribution," Mon said of SMG's in-house food concessions operation.

It's basic property management — "plotting out your event setup," Mon said. Entertainment? "The Red Cross handles some of that. They get games and coloring books for the kids. Here at Lamar-Dixon they asked for a stage because they have an entertainer who wants to put on a concert. The Catholic archdiocese of Baton Rouge came to us for a place to hold a mass. In Baton Rouge, yesterday, Congressman Baker's office requested space to set up tables to make sure people had cards to set up

social security payments. In Houston, they are setting up a bank."

SMG's supplemental staffers arrive in all modes of transportation. For Houston, three from Baton Rouge went via rental car. Some find their own way in. A Jacksonville contingent hired a van and started driving to Houston Friday. "We're asking that our facilities provide housing for them," Mon said, most often hotel rooms, though some are staying in the shelters on cots.

Some shelters serve varied purposes. For example, the rescued livestock and pets are at Lamar-Dixon. Most of the evacuated horses have now been reclaimed, but there are still plenty of rescued horses and pets. (See related story below.) Entergy is also using the Lamar-Dixon property, as is All State Insurance, which is using it as a living space for adjustors staged for getting into the effected areas.

"Look in one of our stalls, you'll see five pet carriers with dogs. This is also the repository for strays that are rescued," Mon said, adding there are pets at all of the shelters. "In Baton Rouge, we've taken the lobby of our ticket office as the designated animal room," Mon said.

At Ford Park in Beaumont, Texas, the show went on, even with evacuees still on site. Organizers held the third annual Labor Day Music Festival with Mark Chesnutt, Tracy Byrd and others at the Ford Pavilion while 1,500 hurricane victims were housed at the exhibit hall portion of the complex.

Evacuees were invited to attend the show free of charge. "It definitely boosted our numbers," said Allan Vella, the general manager of Ford Park. About 9,000 people attended the show.

The musicians clearly supported the move and encouraged attendees to donate to the Red Cross.

Ford Park has five separate venues. Also that day, the Ford Midway hosted the Go Texan BBQ contest, which fed the evacuees. "Normally we just donate the food. Just this time the people were on site," Vella said. The Live Barn Burner Sale went on at the Ford Arena and the Labor Day Classic Baseball Tournament was held at Ford Field.

It was the first time in Ford Park's history all five venues were used simultaneously.

Vella admitted it was very challenging to host such a large festival while housing an additional 1,500 people 24 hours a day at a hall not designed for that purpose. "It adds a whole different dimension," he said.

Evacuees began arriving at the facility Aug. 27. Vella said some have only stayed a short time after finding a permanent home with friends or family. After they leave, the American Red Cross brings in additional people, keeping the exhibit hall at full capacity.

Vella was unsure how long evacuees will be staying at the facility. "Originally we were told they would be staying until the 15th of the month. We're assuming it's going to be longer than that," he said.

The hurricane victims are using team locker room shower rooms and Naval reservists have been assigned to oversee the food distribution in conjunction with the American Red Cross, SMG Food and Beverage, and other volunteer organizations. — Natasha Emmons, Linda Deckard & Gregory Bacon

Interviewed for this story: Wil Caudell, (214) 800-3085; Glenn Mon, (215) 592-6609; Allan Vella, (409) 951-5400

Dogs waiting to be rescued in New Orleans



SPECIALIZED VENUES TAKE IN FOUR-LEGGED EVACUEES

A number of venues in Louisiana have been designated as shelters for the growing number of animals displaced by last week's Hurricane Katrina. The Department of Agriculture and Forestry is coordinating with the Louisiana Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (LA/SPCA), the Louisiana Veterinary Association (LVMA),

and the Louisiana Animal Control Association (LACA) to manage animal evacuations and recovery plans for New Orleans pets, according to Laura Maloney, director of the LA/SPCA.

Among the venues involved in the rescue effort are the Blackham Coliseum in Lafayette, La.; the Monroe (La.) Civic Center for small animals and the Ike Hamilton Center for large animals; and the LSU AgCenter/Parker Coliseum in Baton Rouge. Although animals will be accepted at any time, their owners must be housed in a Red Cross shelter and are responsible for caring for their animals, including feeding and cleaning. The Baton Rouge Area Veterinary Medical Association is tending to medical needs at the LSU AgCenter.

The LA/SPCA has been transporting animals from pick-up points in New Orleans to the Lamar-Dixon Expo Center, a five-year-old equestrian venue managed by SMG and located in Gonzales, La. When the shelter is full, animals will be moved to temporary shelters in other areas of Louisiana and Texas, Maloney said.

Flo Magee, director of public relations and events manager at the Lamar-Dixon Expo Center, said her venue agreed to house displaced animals because it was one of the closest sites to New Orleans. "We said from the beginning that we have room to stage here. Animals are housed in six horse barns that contain 120 stalls," she said. Stalls are normally rented out for \$20 a day. Magee said she expects the venue will be reimbursed for these costs by government subsidies at some point, but that this is not an immediate concern.

More than 2,000 volunteers from across the country are being housed in the center's arenas and three banquet rooms. All September events have been cancelled. "We had scheduled 15 mid-size events, but nothing major. And all of our October dates are on hold at the moment," said Magee.

Crates and food for the 125 dogs, 60 cats and more than 200 horses and mules that have been housed since Aug. 30 have been donated. "The logistics are being handled by the ASPCA, which is heading up the entire animal recovery effort," said Magee. Information on all of the animals is posted on www.petfinder.com, so hurricane victims can locate their pets.

Robin Hatten, executive director of the Ike Hamilton Center livestock facility, said the

venue is housing about 20 horses and 20 cats and dogs from hurricane-affected regions. "The 120 families are on the property caring for their animals, which started arriving on August 27, before the hurricane," said Hatten. The community has donated feed and vet services.

The 6.5-acre center has 510 stalls, a 190-by-300-foot climate-controlled arena, a 120-by-200-foot covered arena, two warm-up areas, and 30 cattle pens. Animal owners are staying in the center's RV park, which is located in the back of the facility.

Only one event at the center was cancelled this past weekend. "It involved cattle that were scheduled to come out of Mississippi, so there were problems with that. Plus, there are no hotel rooms available right now," she said. Another event is scheduled for Sept. 23-25. "It is a larger show, so we have to wait and see."

Because "The Ike" is owned by the city of Monroe, the overtime cost for staff needed to care for the animals will be absorbed by the city. "We don't know yet what the total cost will be," said Hatten.

David Marcantel, operations manager at the Calcasieu Parish Department of Animal Services & Adoption Center in Lake Charles and president of the Louisiana Animal Control Association, said animals have been reunited with their owners at both the Burton Coliseum and the Lake Charles Civic Center, which are serving as shelters. "At one point, we were housing 50 animals at the Coliseum, but we are down to 25, as people are finding temporary homes and taking their animals with them. Our Civic Center is currently housing 2,000 hurricane victims, with one of our campers housing 25 animals," he said. The dogs, cats, hamsters, guinea pigs, small birds and snakes arrived on Aug. 31.

Staff from the Calcasieu Parish Animal Services is working overtime to man the facilities 24 hours a day. "It is costing a tremendous amount in overtime pay. I can't even provide an estimate so far, but we expect to be reimbursed by the government," said Marcantel.

Consequently, events have been cancelled at both facilities. "A goat show was cancelled last weekend at the Coliseum as well as a concert and wrestling event at the Civic Center. We have a big animal adoption event planned for next weekend, so we are hoping to clear out most of the remaining animals [that are without owners]," said Marcantel. He had no estimate or time frame on when the venues would be back on schedule.

Alice Sarmiento, director of community outreach for the Houston SPCA said her crews are providing crates for animals arriving at the Astrodome. "The majority came in September 1 and 2. Approximately 500 animals, including dogs, cats, birds, ferrets, iguanas, a rabbit and a chicken, went through the Astrodome, the Reliant Arena and the George R. Brown Convention Center. These venues are being used solely as staging areas. They will not house the animals," she said. — Lisa White

Interviewed for this story: Leslie Andrus, (337) 439-8879, Robin Hatten, (318) 325-9160, Flo Magee, (225) 621-1703, Alice Sarmiento, (713) 869-7722; David Marcantel, (337) 439-8879



Michael Rapino, left, and Rob Henson

FACES & PLACES: SEISMIC SHIFTS INDUSTRY-WIDE

In the ticketing world, **Paciolan** announced a new CEO and president, **David Butler**, and **Ticketmaster** announced the departure of its CEO **John Pleasants**.

Major changes are afoot at Clear Channel Entertainment's burgeoning spin-off, SpinCo Inc., where 14 high ranking people were laid off, including **Miles Wilkin, Mike McGee, Al DeZon, Jeff Lewis** and **Sydney Greenblatt**, following Michael Rapino's appointment as CEO Aug. 18.

According to CCE spokeswoman Michele Clark, managing director at Brainerd Communicators Inc., New York City, "Michael isn't going to be speaking to media about his new role until the spin-off happens, which is going to be toward the end of the year. We're not sure [of the timing] yet, but they have done their Federal filing, and they anticipate a closing toward the end of the year."

Rapino was most recently president and CEO of Global Music for Clear Channel Music Group. Prior to that, he led CCE's International music unit. Rapino was a co-founder of Core Audience Entertainment, which was acquired by CCE in 1999.

Greenblatt immediately moved on to the Astrodome, Houston, the next day to begin handling emergency communications for SMG while Hurricane Katrina evacuees are housed at the site. "It's the most amazing outpouring of organizations and goodwill, and the staff is doing a fabulous job and the volunteers are doing an incredible job," Greenblatt said. "That they have managed to pull this together so quickly is really a testament to great leadership and tremendous dedication on the part of the staff at the facility."

Greenblatt said she has not had time to consider her next move, however her personal consultancy, Sydney Greenblatt Event Marketing, is taking on clients.

And in the venue management world, **Bob Brown** has been named executive director and general manager of the **Ontario (Calif.) Convention and Visitors Bureau** and the **Ontario Convention Center** for **SMG**.

Also out West, **Rob Henson** accepted the position of deputy director at the **Tacoma**

(Wash.) Dome, leaving a director opening at the BancorpSouth Center, Tupelo, Miss.

Also on the CEO front, **Paul W. MacPhail** accepted the CEO position at **Centerplate**.

Another supplier, **Venue 1** has reorganized, announcing the departure of **Ken Lappone** and **Barry Frielicher**. Lappone, who was vice president of sales and founded Tangent with Steve Weiss, which they later sold to Venue 1, has been with the firm for 16 years. Frielicher, who joined Venue 1 three years ago and is also an industry veteran, was director of sales.

After nearly a decade with IAC, parent company to Ticketmaster, Pleasants decided to pursue an "entrepreneurial opportunity outside of the company," according to an internal memo.

Terry Barnes will assume the responsibilities of CEO while continuing his current duties as chairman of Ticketmaster. Barnes joined Ticketmaster more than 20 years ago.

Butler brings 26 years of operational experience to Paciolan. **Jane Kleinberger** remains as Paciolan's Chairman of the Board. Butler, 49, had served as president and chief executive officer of TCI Solutions where he led the company to profitability prior to its eventual sale. Butler was also President of Sage Software's mid-market division.

Henson has been in the business since 1986, when he and Judy Harris started a small music publishing company in Nashville. Henson turned to artist management in 1991, working with Hal Ketchum. After many years of touring the country, Henson was tapped as a tour manager of A&R for Vector Management, before leaving to become senior manager of The Left Bank Organization in Nashville.

In July 2001, Henson decided to take a break from the high-pressure artist management world, accepting the position of assistant director at the BancorpSouth Center, Tupelo, Miss., then becoming executive director in November.

Brown comes to Ontario from Reliant Park, Houston, where he was SMG's director of sales and assistant general manager. Prior to that, Brown served as vice president of sales and marketing for the Reno (Nev.) Sparks Convention and Visitors Authority and for Convention Management Group Inc. in Fairfax, Va. He was also the vice president of expositions and conventions for INFOCOMM International Shows, a division of International Communications Industries Association Inc.

MacPhail was elected chairman and CEO of Centerplate Sept. 7. Prior to joining Centerplate, he was president and chief operating officer of Uno Restaurant Holdings Corp., which he joined in 1990. MacPhail has over 22 years of experience in the restaurant industry, including eight years in various operational roles at the Ground Round Inc.

The Board also elected **Janet L. Steinmayer** as a director, president and chief operating officer. She has been general counsel and an executive officer of Centerplate or its predecessors since 1993 and prior to that, was senior vice president and general counsel at TransWorld Airlines Inc.

Contacts for this story: Rob Henson, (662) 841-6444; Sydney Greenblatt, (713) 774-3145; Michele Clark, (212) 986-6667; Ken Lappone (636) 926-3476; Tera Zelinger, Ontario Convention and Visitors Bureau, (909) 625-2225 x23; Gael Doar, Centerplate director of communications, (203) 975-5941

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BOOKINGS



HOTtickets

DIVERSE ROSTER TOPS CHARTS THIS WEEK

HOT TICKETS is a weekly summary of the top acts and ticket sales as reported to **Venues Today**. Following are the top 20 concerts and events, the top 5 in each seating capacity category, which took place since Aug. 10, 2005. To submit reports, e-mail April@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:* \$3,096,475; *Event:* Dave Matthews Band; *Venue:* **Gorge**

Amphitheatre, George, Wash.; Attendance: 59,768; Ticket Range: \$60.40-\$48.10; Promoter: House of Blues Concerts; Dates: Aug. 19-21; No. of Shows: 3

2) Gross Sales: \$2,754,404; Event: Eminem; Venue: **Comerica Park, Detroit;** Attendance: 39,187; Ticket Range: \$69.50; Promoter: The Cellar Door Companies (CCE); Dates: Aug. 12; No. of Shows: 1

3) Gross Sales: \$1,810,093; Event: Neil Diamond; Venue: **Target Center, Minneapolis;** Attendance: 29,414; Ticket Range: \$75-\$42.50; Promoter: AEG Live, Concerts West, Sal Bonafede, Apregan Group, Inc.; Dates: Aug. 30-Sept. 1; No. of Shows: 2

4) Gross Sales: \$1,704,385; Event: Ozzfest; Venue: **Hyundai Pavilion at Glen Helen, San Bernardino, Calif.;** Attendance: 46,078; Ticket Range: \$136-\$16.50; Promoter: Avalon Attractions (CCE); Dates: Aug. 20; No. of Shows: 1

5) Gross Sales: \$1,518,283; Event: Coldplay; Venue: **Verizon Wireless Amphitheatre, Irvine, Calif.;** Attendance: 30,443; Ticket Range: \$67-\$31; Promoter: Avalon Attractions (CCE); Dates: Aug. 20-21; No. of Shows: 2

10,001 - 15,000 Seats

1) Gross Sales: \$689,970; Event: Marc Anthony; Venue: **Don Haskins Center, El Paso, Texas;** Attendance: 9,141; Ticket Range: \$95-\$55; Promoter: Pace Concerts (CCE); Dates: Aug. 21; No. of Shows: 1

2) Gross Sales: \$628,118; Event: Radio Show; Venue: **Tommy Hilfiger at Jones Beach Theater, Wantagh, N.Y.;** Attendance: 13,475; Ticket Range: \$75-\$15; Promoter: Ron Delsener Presents (CCE); Dates: Aug. 20; No. of Shows: 1

3) Gross Sales: \$627,128; Event: Motley Crue; Venue: **Tommy Hilfiger at Jones Beach Theater, Wantagh, N.Y.;** Attendance: 13,281; Ticket Range: \$75-\$20; Promoter: Ron Delsener Presents (CCE); Dates: Aug. 16; No. of Shows: 1

4) Gross Sales: \$481,658; Event: The Allman Brothers Band; Venue: **Tommy Hilfiger at Jones Beach Theater, Wantagh, N.Y.;** Attendance: 10,247; Ticket Range: \$65-\$15; Promoter: Ron Delsener Presents (CCE); Dates: Aug. 24; No. of Shows: 1

5) Gross Sales: \$462,128; Event: 50 Cent; Venue: **Tommy Hilfiger at Jones Beach Theater, Wantagh, N.Y.;** Attendance: 9,306; Ticket Range: \$60.50-\$29.50; Promoter: Ron Delsener Presents (CCE); Dates: Aug. 19; No. of Shows: 1

5,001 - 10,000 Seats

1) Gross Sales: \$1,100,886; Event: James Taylor; Venue: **Chastain Park Amphitheatre, Atlanta;** Attendance: 13,400; Ticket Range: \$90-\$38.50; Promoter: Peter Conlon Presents (CCE); Dates: Aug. 15-16; No. of Shows: 2

2) Gross Sales: \$606,325; Event: Marc Anthony; Venue: **Laredo (Texas) Entertainment Center;** Attendance: 8,734; Ticket Range: \$123.50-\$43.50; Promoter: Pace Concerts (CCE); Dates: Aug. 19; No. of Shows: 1

3) Gross Sales: \$503,800; Event: Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers; Venue: **Red Rocks Amphitheatre, Denver;** Attendance: 9,444; Ticket Range: \$55; Promoter: Chuck Morris Presents (CCE); Dates: Aug. 18; No. of Shows: 1

4) *Gross Sales:* \$449,022; *Event:* Earth Wind & Fire; *Venue:* **Red Rocks Amphitheatre, Denver**; *Attendance:* 8,652; *Ticket Range:* \$65.50-\$45.50; *Promoter:* Chuck Morris Presents (CCE), Kroenke Sports Entertainment; *Dates:* Aug. 25; *No. of Shows:* 1

5) *Gross Sales:* \$382,714; *Event:* Erykah Badu; *Venue:* **Greek Theatre, Los Angeles**; *Attendance:* 4,610; *Ticket Range:* \$126-\$51; *Promoter:* Avalon Attractions (CCE); *Dates:* Aug. 10; *No. of Shows:* 1

5,000 or Fewer Seats

1) *Gross Sales:* \$426,244; *Event:* White Stripes; *Venue:* **Auditorium Theatre, Chicago**; *Attendance:* 10,078; *Ticket Range:* \$43-\$33; *Promoter:* Jam Productions; *Dates:* Aug. 29-31 *No. of Shows:* 3

2) *Gross Sales:* \$240,114; *Event:* Journey; *Venue:* **Bank of America Pavilion, Boston**; *Attendance:* 5,127; *Ticket Range:* \$55-\$38.50; *Promoter:* Tea Party Concerts (CCE); *Dates:* Aug. 20; *No. of Shows:* 1

3) *Gross Sales:* \$238,353; *Event:* Carole King; *Venue:* **The Colosseum at Caesars Palace, Las Vegas**; *Attendance:* 2,494; *Ticket Range:* \$100-\$65; *Promoter:* AEG Live, Concerts West, In-house; *Dates:* Aug. 10; *No. of Shows:* 1

4) *Gross Sales:* \$230,653; *Event:* Meat Loaf; *Venue:* **Bank of America Pavilion, Boston**; *Attendance:* 4,590; *Ticket Range:* \$60-\$38.50; *Promoter:* Tea Party Concerts (CCE); *Dates:* Aug. 17; *No. of Shows:* 1

5) *Gross Sales:* \$216,869; *Event:* Keith Urban; *Venue:* **Chevrolet Theatre, Wallingford, Conn.**; *Attendance:* 4,612; *Ticket Range:* \$55-\$35; *Promoter:* Jim Koplik Presents (CCE); *Dates:* Aug. 13; *No. of Shows:* 1

Compiled by April Stroud, april@venuestoday.com

WORLD INDOOR SOCCER LEAGUE TO INHABIT TO MIAMI ARENA



The inaugural season of the World Indoor Soccer League kicks off June 3, 2006, with plans to play 126 games, all doubleheaders, at Miami Arena.

The brainchild of Steven Heller, league founder and president, the WISL will consist of 12-14 teams representing countries in South, Central and North America and the Caribbean, according to Heller and Shawn Thorimburt, Miami Arena operations manager. Teams will be from the U.S., Cuba, Brazil, Argentina, Jamaica, Haiti, Mexico, Colombia, and Venezuela, to name a few.

Thorimburt explained that will mean players are either born in or have passports from those countries, but each will essentially be made up of Miamians, a multi-cultural city with conclaves from various ethnic backgrounds. All teams will be league owned.

"This idea came to me when I was at one of the qualifying matches for the World Cup at the Orange Bowl a couple of months ago," Heller said. "I saw the passion the fans had for soccer when they were rooting for their 'home' team, when national pride and heritage was on the line. Even though I wasn't from Trinidad or Tobago, I got wrapped up in the energy at the Orange Bowl. I said 'We can do this platform with an exciting game like indoor soccer'."

The plan is to utilize local and international talent and the rules of ancestry are certain to be tough to police, Heller admitted. "Players will be divided up based on their representation of their national heritage. It's a little bit of the honor system." He would have liked to have expanded it to European-based ethnic groups, like Italy and Germany, but there is no room this inaugural year for 60-80 teams, he said. The expansion plans, however, are grand and if the league catches on and it's time to tour it, team ownership may be diversified as well. "Technically, for the inaugural system, we are only representing the Western Hemisphere," Heller said.

Both Thorimbert and Heller declined to discuss the arena deal, but both confirmed the start-up costs for the entire league at approximately \$1.5 million. Heller said sponsors are excited about the concept. "Right now two major soccer apparel and equipment companies are competing for a title sponsorship," Heller said. That one primary sponsorship would go for \$150,000. Sponsorship levels run the gamut from \$10,000 to start to \$250,000 for an all-inclusive package.

Players will tentatively be paid \$2,500 for the season, but Heller wants to sweeten that pot with up to \$100,000 or more in prizes or prize money at the end of the season. "We wanted it to be rich and lucrative. It's a hometown players league," he said.

Advertising and marketing, and lots of it, will be a key to success, Thorimbert said. He's seen a couple of Miami Arena minor league teams win on the field but lose at the box office already, including the Miami Manatees hockey team and the Miami Morays indoor football team. "Market, market, market; advertise, advertise, advertise," Thorimbert said. "In both cases, we had first place teams, which in Miami was important, but nobody knew they were here."

Heller said a lot of the WISL advertising will be grassroots. "We will rely a lot on the players and community to get behind it, as well as advertising and billboards. We will work with the players to reach out to demographic segments."

Both also lauded Miami Arena as the perfect venue. It's available and it has rebranded itself as focusing on international events. "I call it the International Coliseum," Heller said. "Miami Arena is a great venue for us. The hockey rink is already in the arena and allows fans to sit right up against the wall, in the middle of the action. We're looking to reserve between 35 and 45 nights. We need an arena available to be used virtually exclusively for this one big tournament. It belongs in Miami, which is a soccer community."

Heller is hoping to fill the arena's 16,000 seats every game. Thorimbert agrees the arena will be wide open, especially in the beginning, though they can curtain it to 6,000. The average attendance in the pro forma is more along the lines of 5,000, he suggested.

Tickets will be \$18 preferred or \$10 in the rest of the arena. Tickets go on sale in January. One ticket will be good for two games. The plan is to have back to back doubleheaders on some weekends and holidays.

The WISL management team includes Morgan Bojorquez, director of league operations;

Michelle Smith and Claudia Pizarro, executive directors of player development; and Mark Fischel, league director of communications. Three coaches have been named so far: Silvano Espindola, coaching the Argentinian team; Luis Carlos Perea, Colombia; and Jesus Manuel Purizaga, Peru.

The season will run through September, with the championship game on Labor Day, Thorimbert said. An official press conference announcing the league is set for today (Sept. 7) and tryouts begin Sept. 17 at Miami Arena. There will be at least three tryouts before the season starts. Each team has 12 players, with five and a goalie per side on the field. — Linda Deckard

Interviewed for this story: Steven Heller, (305) 892-6744; Shawn Thorimbert, (305) 349-4462

Miss America 2002



MISS AMERICA LOSS NOT DEVASTATING TO BOARDWALK HALL

When officials at Boardwalk Hall in Atlantic City, N.J., voted unanimously on Aug. 25 to allow the Miss America pageant to leave its home of more than 60 years, they were not overly concerned with how it would affect them.

The venue first hosted the beauty competition in 1933 and has been the permanent home of the pageant since

1946. So venue management was surprised when pageant officials told city officials that they wanted to move the contest after losing their television deal with ABC.

"From an attendance standpoint, it wasn't a very big event," said Greg Tesone, the venue's assistant general manager. The series drew 3,000-4,000 for the three preliminary nights and approximately 11,000 for the televised final. "The thing about the pageant is that it was only four days of actual show, but they occupied the building for a whole month in the buildup to the televised program, and that blocked out month was typically in September, which is peak season for us."

Boardwalk Hall, which has a capacity for 13,800 for end-stage concerts, typically books 120 events a year. Tesone said he didn't think it would have a problem filling in for the lost revenue, even though the show was a guaranteed annual tourist attraction.

"It was more of a destination marketing tool than an event to drive income to the facility," Tesone said of Miss America. "The convention and visitor's authority subsidized the pageant and that funneled back to pay the facility." Tesone said the \$750,000 subsidy given to the pageant went towards the cost of the facility rental and overhead costs. "We also incurred a lot of expense for the event because it was very labor-intensive from a TV aspect and it had become a security intensive event since Sept. 11, 2001. The flow to our bottom line was very little."

Though leaving Boardwalk is bittersweet, the pageant's president and CEO, Art McMaster, said it was time to move on. "Honestly, we've been holding back a loss every year for I don't know how many years," said McMaster. "The Hall is very nice, but it's also very big. And for our type of TV show, you have to build it up, bring in seats and build runways, bring in lighting and sound. It was a very expensive hall for us to do a

show in."

McMaster said the tradeoff was OK when the pageant was receiving millions of dollars from its broadcast deal with ABC, but when that deal was canceled last year, pageant organizers were facing a financial hole they didn't think they'd be able to get out of. "Atlantic City is our home, but once we lost that ABC deal, we can't afford to carry that deficit anymore," McMaster said. "The city gives us a bunch of money [through the subsidy] but it was not even enough to break even. With ratings declining, we needed to turn this thing around from a financial and creative side."

Tesone said there had been a lot of speculation about the future of the pageant when ABC decided to drop the telecast last year, but with two years left on its rental agreement, the Hall's leaders did not expect Miss America to immediately pull up anchor in its first post-ABC year. The pageant had made an arrangement with country music channel CMT to broadcast the show and had bumped the event to January 2006 from its traditional fall booking.

The Hall did not have a set date for the upcoming pageant, but it did have open dates in January. "I had not moved forward on anything and I was still giving out potential dates for other events until I got confirmation from Miss America," Tesone said. "At this point we don't have anything booked, but we have some holds."

McMaster said there are plenty of options around the country that are camera-ready, plug-and-play, theater-style venues, and he's in the process of looking for the right one. Legal obligations prevented the pageant from negotiating with a new host while bound by its contract with Boardwalk Hall. As of Aug. 30, he said he had already received 16 unsolicited inquiries about hosting this year's pageant, in addition to the venues that organizers were already considering.

Given the CMT deal, speculation has centered on Miss America moving to Nashville, but McMaster said he's had no talks to date with anyone in that city, but that it was not out of the question. His goal is to have the new home nailed down by the end of September, because the January pageant is going to happen, no matter what. "We will be ready for January," he said. "I already have a date, I just can't announce it yet. We're looking for a permanent home, or a temporary one. I've even talked about moving it around from year-to-year. We'll see."

Given the growth of Atlantic City in recent years with the burst of casino development, a House of Blues and a new restaurant district at the Tropicana, Tesone said the loss of the event would not likely affect Atlantic City's tourist trade. "The original design of Miss America was to extend the summer season here, but that's not really an issue anymore," he said. "As much as we hate to see it go because it's been an institution for so long, the city has outgrown the relationship." — Gil Kaufman

Interviewed for this story: Greg Tesone, (609) 348-7000; Art McMaster (609) 345-7571

SHORT TAKES

BANKATLANTIC REPLACES OFFICE DEPOT AT THE CENTER OF IT ALL

BankAtlantic has partnered with Sunrise Sports & Entertainment in a 10-year agreement, with a 10-year option, to rename the Office Depot Center (formerly National Car Rental Center), the home of the Florida Panthers and Sunrise Sports & Entertainment. Under the terms of the agreement, "BankAtlantic Center" is now the exclusive name of the 20,000-seat venue. The agreement takes effect immediately and

the complete naming conversion on the building is now underway. Additionally, the arena's new theater configuration debuting this October will now be known as the Sinatra Theatre presented by BankAtlantic. BankAtlantic will be known as "The Official Bank of the Florida Panthers" and will become the primary bank for Sunrise Sports & Entertainment.

Contact: Hattie Hess, BankAtlantic, (954) 940-6383

GLOBAL SPECTRUM AND RE-OPENING CEREMONIES SET FOR MASSMUTUAL CENTER

The Massachusetts Convention Center Authority (MCCA) signed Global Spectrum to manage the Springfield (Mass.) Civic Center, which is being renovated and expanded and will re-open as the MassMutual Center on Sept. 30. The \$71 million project includes approximately 147,000 square feet of new building for convention, exhibition and meeting space and the renovation of approximately 215,000 square feet of the existing facility. When completed, the facility will include a 40,000 square foot exhibit hall, 9,000 square feet of meeting space, a 15,000 square foot ballroom, 15,000 square feet of pre-function space, and corporate hospitality and support spaces. Opening ceremonies for the new MassMutual Center will include a performance by the Springfield Symphony Orchestra Oct. 1 and a "Falcon's Family Day" Oct. 2.

Contact: Ike Richman, (215) 389-9552

CENTERPLATE REBUFFS BUYOUT OFFER

Centerplate Inc., Spartanburg, S.C., declined an unsolicited buyout offer from Wellspring Capital Management LLC, a group that includes former Centerplate executive Lawrence Hatch. The offer included \$13.50 per unit for the company's outstanding Income Deposit Securities. Shares of Centerplate, which trade on the American Stock Exchange, were up more than 8 percent in midday trading Aug. 31 to \$11.95. In its most recent quarterly report, Centerplate for the period ended June 28 said that sales rose 4.8 percent to \$182.1 million and earnings were ahead 2.1 percent to \$18 million.

Contact: Centerplate, Gael Doar, (203) 975-5941

COLTS SIGN 30-YEAR PACT WITH INDIANAPOLIS

The Indianapolis Colts agreed to a new lease with the city's Capital Improvement Board that will keep the team in Indianapolis for at least 30 years in a new stadium. Demolition near the RCA Dome, the team's current home, has already begun. The new stadium will be a 63,000-seat, \$700 million retractable roof venue to open for the 2008 season. The Colts will play in the RCA Dome, their home since the team relocated from Baltimore in 1984, until the new stadium is completed. Fred Glass, president of the Capital Improvement Board, said the state still needs to get a development agreement done before work on the new stadium begins.

Contact: Indianapolis Colts, (317) 297-2658

MUSICIANS BENEFIT FUND ESTABLISHED

New Orleans' Preservation Hall venue has launched the New Orleans Musicians Hurricane Relief Fund, a certified non-profit charity created to assist the thousands of musicians who have been devastated by Hurricane Katrina. All money raised through this fund will go directly to New Orleans musicians. The Hall will also be selling fundraising T-shirts soon. New Orleans Musicians Hurricane Relief Fund, PO Box 9081, Miramar Beach, FL 32550.

Contact: Preservation Hall, (800) 957-4026

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