

# VENUES**today**

The news behind the headlines

Dear April,

October 11, 2006 VOL. V, Number XXXII ISSN 1547-4143

Welcome to your **Venues Today** weekly e-newsletter, full of the latest live entertainment industry news. We look forward to hearing your comments. And we invite you to check out our new web site. Next week, look for coverage of IAAM's ICCA in Denver from Staff Writer Dave Brooks and of IEBA in Nashville from Editor Linda Deckard. We get around. We'll see you there. For further information or to subscribe to *Venues Today* visit [www.venuestoday.com](http://www.venuestoday.com).

## QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"If you get the right acts, there is no question that people are willing to pay...They'll pay for what they want to see."— *Kent Hojum of the Western Washington Fair, Puyallup, on their talent lineup this year.*

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## IN THIS ISSUE...

- Downtown Los Angeles Explodes With Music
  - Expanded Acreage Helps Puyallup Up Attendance
  - Gridiron Network Expands with Apregan, AEG
  - Hot Tickets: Latin and Long-Timers Top List
  - Outback with Jam Expands Musical and Geographical Horizons
  - Honda Center Puts Pedal to the Metal for Name Change
  - St. Pete Times Forum Budgets Big For 10-Year Anniversary
  - Beck Tour Offers Made-To-Order Merchandise
  - Short Takes
  - Help Wanted
-



## CHEERS TO A GREAT YEAR

**2006 will be over before you know it.**

The *Venues Today* December issue will be our annual wrap up issue and will contain our popular year end **Hot Tickets** and **Top Stops** reports, as well as our second annual **Hall of Headlines Awards**.

\*The deadline to submit concert and event grosses for inclusion in the year end **Hot Tickets** and **Top Stops** charts is **October 23, 2006**. The events considered must have taken place between October 16, 2005 and October 15, 2006. To request a list of events already reported for your venue or company, to send reports for inclusion, or for questions about this process, e-mail: [HotTickets@venuestoday.com](mailto:HotTickets@venuestoday.com). Reports may also be faxed to: (714) 378-0040.

\*Know someone who bettered the industry in 2006? Be sure to submit your nominations for the second annual **Hall of Headlines Awards**. Nominees will be sought for the following four categories: News, Marketing, Concessions and Bookings. Include the name of the person or company being nominated, the affiliation or location, and a brief description of the achievement that took place in 2006. The deadline to submit nominations is **October 15, 2006**. E-mail nominations to: [Linda@venuestoday.com](mailto:Linda@venuestoday.com) or fax to: (714) 378-0040.

\*And don't forget about advertising in this issue. The year end charts, awards, and wrap up coverage makes this one of our most popular issues. Contact your VT rep to reserve space today.

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As always, thank you for your prompt attention and for your continued support!

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**VENUE NEWS**



***The Caltrans building in Los Angeles was converted into an art gallery; Band Redd Kross performs. (VT Photos)***

## **DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES EXPLODES WITH MUSIC**

LOS ANGELES — It was as if they couldn't wait any longer to rock and roll.

The company poised with transforming downtown Los Angeles into a vibrant entertainment district threw a huge musical festival on the steps of city hall on Oct. 7, just a year shy of the opening of the first theater as part of the ambitious LA Live development.

The LA Weekly Detour drew 15,000 people at \$35.50-a-pop to a day-long concert headlined by Beck and the Queens of the Stone Age. AEG-owned Goldenvoice Entertainment organized the festival, which took place on the steps of the City Hall and was bordered by the Caltrans Plaza and the *Los Angeles Times* building. A giant clock on the side of the Times building kept concertgoers on schedule as they wandered between the four stages and shows that stretched from 2-11 p.m.

Having that many people descend on a dense metropolitan area can mean some logistical challenges, but Goldenvoice's Paul Tollett said the biggest challenge wasn't securing the area — crews simply blocked off most streets with a fence barrier manned by a large event staff. The largest hurdle, Tollett said, was getting in and out of the space.

"We had to wait until the end of rush-hour on Friday evening to move into the festival area," Tollett said. "We basically had a 12-hour window to get set up for the event. All we could do was pull in temporary staging and set up some simple booth stations."

And they had to get out of there quickly, too. Tollett said his staff had completely deconstructed the festival village by noon the following day. Besides the staging, the festival also included some public art pieces by Phil Blane, artist for the Coachella festival, which is also produced by Goldenvoice.

"Working in the downtown area definitely has its obstacles, especially working with the businesses that might get enclosed within the festival area," he said. "There was a Mexican food place and pizza shop that were located within the perimeter and there

was a little bit of concern that they wouldn't be able to generate outside business. But they did so well within the festival, and besides posting high numbers, the staff said they really like the atmosphere of the event."

Tollett and crew even created a VIP area on the lawn of a cathedral — former headquarters to the Los Angeles Archdiocese — creating a space with tables, couches, additional portable restrooms and a cash bar selling \$7 Ciroc Vodka martinis, a top-shelf spirit made from French grapes. The festival also included a dance and electronic music lounge area, where Deejays spun records while fans danced or relaxed on black leather couches.

Tollett said the goal of the festival was as much about music as it was about revitalizing downtown Los Angeles. His company, AEG, owners of the nearby Staples Center, are constructing the \$1-billion LA Live project which will cover six blocks and include two theaters, restaurants, shops, condominiums and a hotel to support the nearby convention center and the arena.

"We worked really close with the Mayor's office to get this festival going," he said. "And with our title sponsor, *LA Weekly*. They had actually approached us about hosting a festival, similar to an event they run for the *Village Voice* each year on Coney Island."

Coincidentally, the festival coincided with a flurry of activity in the area, including a free street festival on nearby Grant Street hosted by NPR-affiliate KCRW, an indie music festival in Eagle Rock and another in the Mid-Wilshire area. That same day, the University of Southern California football team was playing a game against the Washington Huskies at the Coliseum, UCLA had a home game against Arizona at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena and the Dodgers had their final playoffs game at Dodger Stadium.

All those events at the same time slowed traffic on the surrounding freeways, but a lack of major accidents kept cars moving. Surprisingly, there was an abundance of parking at the festival and most Detour concert-goers were able to park within a few blocks of the concert entry point — there was only one — for about \$4 to \$8.

Tollett said the festival's website encouraged visitors to take public transportation, including the MetroRail system, into the event.

"I think we were most surprised by how nice the crowd was," he said. "That has a lot to do with the talent we book." — Dave Brooks

*Interviewed for this article: Paul Tollett, (323) 930-7104*



*SillyVille train depot at the Puyallup (Wash.) Fair*

## **EXPANDED ACREAGE HELPS PUYALLUP UP ATTENDANCE**

By working with the city of Puyallup, Wash., officials at the Western Washington Fair installed a connecting road on the grounds that opened up 33 more acres of land that can be developed. This year's effort to deal with that new acreage was adding five acres to the carnival's kiddieland and renaming it "SillyVille."

"We expanded it and gave it a whole different feel," said Kent Hojem, fair general manager. "We built a train depot with a turn-of-the-century feel to it."

That improvement might have helped account for a slight attendance increase, up 1.2 percent over last year's 1,117,707 to 1,131,276 for the Sept. 8-24 fair. Fair officials worked with Ron Burback's Funtastic Shows on the midway changes, and rides were up just under four percent, Hojem said, a higher rate than attendance.

Hojem expects that more changes will take place on the land. "The road allowed us to capture land that we can develop over time," he said. "We already owned it and it was all parking. Now part of it is still parking, and it's zoned so we can develop it."

One potential plan is to add a new entrance to the fair and to continue pushing the midway west so additional development can be done more toward the center of the grounds. The fair has an existing master plan, but Hojem did not know if it would be followed exactly nor did he have an estimate how much future expansion might cost. But plans already are in the works to expand a building that was new last year, the \$16 million, 123,000-square-foot ShowPlex, a multi-use space designed for trade shows as well as commercial exhibits during the fair.

"Our master plan shows an expansion of ShowPlex to the west, but I don't anticipate that happening real soon," Hojem said. Before that is done, the fair needs a utility building that would be used for warehousing, he said.

In the grandstand, a system that allowed patrons to pay \$15 to sit in one of 4,000 infield seats or attend for free in one of 10,500 grandstand seats for select concerts worked well, Hojem said. The fair utilized the system for about three acts and "they were packed," Hojem said. Those concerts included the Beach Boys, MercyMe, and a radio-sponsored show of country music up-and-comers, including Josh Turner and Little Big Town.

Tickets for other concerts ranged from \$29.50 to \$59.50. Those acts included Carrie Underwood, Kenny Rogers and the Oak Ridge Boys, Montgomery Gentry, Switchfoot, Train, and Hilary Duff. Patrons have not shown any price resistance when it comes to the concerts, according to Hojem.

"If you get the right acts, there is no question that people are willing to pay," he said. "They'll pay for what they want to see."

The fair, which has a budget of \$18.5 million, spends about \$1.4 million just on the musical acts, not including production costs, Hojem said.

A new agency freshened up advertising on the fair's budget of just over \$1 million, Hojem said. The fair also redesigned the Web site and used the new slogan, "It's a doozy."

There was no change in the gate admission, which cost \$10 for adults and \$7 for students and senior citizens, Hojem said.

The fair did try a new advance package by bundling four adult tickets for \$24.99. Hojem did not want to give out figures, but he was pleased with the response as well as the opportunity to team up with Costco, which worked with the fair on the promotion.

"We were really looking for the opportunity to drive the gate and partner more with Costco," Hojem said. "We'll look at it to see if we need to tweak it." — Mary Wade Burnside

*Interviewed for this story: Kent Hojem, (253) 845-1771*



***Kenny Chesney packs the Gridiron Stadium Network's Qwest Field, Seattle***

***Jeff Apregan***



**GRIDIRON NETWORK EXPANDS WITH APREGAN, AEG**

Jeff Apregan's Apregan Group has been hired as fulltime advocate for the Gridiron Stadium Network, a consortium of National Football League stadiums seeking to expand bookings. Apregan will serve as executive director.

In addition, within the past two months, GSN expanded into soccer, which is football European style. The Home Depot Center, Carson, Calif., home of the Los Angeles Galaxy, and Toyota Park, Bridgeview, Ill., home of the Chicago Fire, both owned and operated by Anschutz Entertainment Group (AEG), are the newest members of the GSN, setting a new standard for what had been an

NFL-only club, said Steve Eckerson, director of sales and marketing, Qwest Field, Seattle, chairman of the GSN.

That opens the door to international expansion, he said. There has also been some interest from college stadiums, "but we're not there yet," he said. Member stadiums pay \$25,000 each annually. That money is used to develop a slush fund as seed money for future productions and to market the stadiums and solicit business.

That is Apregan's charge. He joins an evolving network, which turned one year old April 1. Apregan said his role is that of advocate. He will not promote events, but will solicit business from promoters, agents and managers.

He also hopes to take GSN to another level, that of producing its own events. When contacted, Apregan, who has a four-person office in Westlake Village, Calif., outside Los Angeles, was in Elba Island, Italy, producing a corporate event, which featured, among others, Diana Ross.

Apregan said his company produces one-offs and has several on-going relationships. His major claim to fame has been his association with Neil Diamond's touring career. Apregan expects at least 50 percent of business now at Apregan Group will be as advocate for the GSN.

"My role is generating business opportunities for the venues. Concerts are part of that, but even beyond that, we're looking for incremental events," Apregan said. "They have the latitude to promote, co-promote or rent. It's a wide-open opportunity."

Each market is different and each project will realistically be accomplished on a market-by-market basis, but the objective is to use collective clout to get the ball rolling.

"This past year, several Gridiron venues have done shows that have done well,"

Apregan said. "Beyond that we are exploring new things, even creating some events that over time could become annuities, something that can play a stadium each and every year." He also pointed out Apregan Group is not limiting its efforts to the stadium bowl and stadium concerts. Stadiums have miles of parking and venues within a venue, he pointed out. "We want as much utilization out of the venue as possible. It would be wonderful to have 50,000-seat concerts numerous times every year, but the business isn't like that today. Picking up an incremental event of any kind could be meaningful over the course of the year. We hope to be able to create some things as well as buy some things."

Apregan hesitantly conjectured there might be a large scale religious event in the offing, some "very, very large consumer events." Eckerson mentioned interest in a "country version of the Warped tour," with multiple acts and stages and accompanying booths and games, something GSN is talking to AEG about. "The goal as a group is to create more events and generate more events. We need to look at maybe creating our own events. We feel that may be the key to our future," Eckerson said.

Eckerson said Apregan is not replacing Louis Messina who is also still involved as an advocate for GSN. In fact, Messina brought Kenny Chesney to several GSN venues, with more dates upcoming. The Rolling Stones and the Dave Matthews Band are also upcoming GSN bookings at select stadiums. "We still have an arrangement with Louis. He doesn't have to be the promoter. If he directs something to us, he participates," Eckerson said.

Apregan will take on all duties formerly held by Pamela Fallon, primarily communication and public relations. Apregan Group will maintain the GSN website, [www.gridironstadiumnetwork.net](http://www.gridironstadiumnetwork.net). Apregan will be compensated on a monthly basis for services under the one-year agreement, Eckerson said.

"One of the goals is to get some new energy into stadium concerts. We've been successful in opening the eyes of artists and agents regarding stadium concerts. It was pretty quiet there for a long time." Eckerson said. He attributed the lull to the fact that multiple artist concepts of a scope necessary to fill stadiums are hard to put together and the proliferation of amphitheaters, which offer built-in infrastructure and an outdoor play, that stole the stadium thunder. "But now with the new NFL stadiums and all the amenities we have — concessions, revenue, parking, central locations — I think we have something to offer."

The GSN has had some drop outs this first year, namely NFL stadiums in Kansas City, Mo.; Green Bay, Wis.; and Washington, D.C. Current members, besides the soccer stadiums, are: Ralph Wilson Stadium, (home of the Buffalo, N.Y., Bills); Paul Brown Stadium (Cincinnati Bengals); INVESCO Field at Mile High (Denver Broncos); Ford Field (Detroit Lions); Reliant Stadium (Houston Texans); Dolphins Stadium (Miami Dolphins); Lincoln Financial Field (Philadelphia Eagles); Heinz Field (Pittsburgh Steelers); and Qwest Field (Seattle Seahawks). — Linda Deckard

*Interviewed for this story: Jeff Apregan, (805) 492-0960; Steve Eckerson, (206) 381-7575*

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## BOOKINGS



### HOT tickets

### LATIN AND LONG-TIMERS TOP LIST

**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 Sept. 12, 2006. To submit reports, e-mail [HotTickets@venuestoday.com](mailto:HotTickets@venuestoday.com) or fax to (714) 378-0040.

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

#### 15,001 or More Seats

1) *Gross Sales:* \$2,410,353; *Event:* Marc Anthony; *Venue:* **Coliseo De Puerto Rico, San Juan**; *Attendance:* 26,159; *Ticket Range:* \$125-\$55; *Promoter:* Gianfi Communications; *Dates:* Sept. 29-30; *No. of Shows:* 2

2) *Gross Sales:* \$2,010,481; *Event:* Shakira; *Venue:* **American Airlines Arena, Miami**; *Attendance:* 29,956; *Ticket Range:* \$87-\$19.50; *Promoter:* Live Nation; *Dates:* Sept. 15-16; *No. of Shows:* 2

3) *Gross Sales:* \$1,844,530; *Event:* Mariah Carey; *Venue:* **MGM Grand Garden, Las Vegas**; *Attendance:* 13,730; *Ticket Range:* \$175-\$19.50; *Promoter:* Live Nation;

*Dates: Sept. 30; No. of Shows: 1*

4) *Gross Sales: \$1,759,844; Event: Delirium; Venue: **HP Pavilion at San Jose (Calif.)**; Attendance: 19,404; Ticket Range: \$125-\$69.50; Promoter: Live Nation, Cirque du Soleil; Dates: Sept. 22-24; No. of Shows: 4*

5) *Gross Sales: \$1,734,934; Event: Elton John; Venue: **General Motors Place, Vancouver, British Columbia**; Attendance: 18,173; Ticket Range: \$131.94-\$57.81; Promoter: House of Blues Canada; Dates: Sept. 27; No. of Shows: 1*

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

1) *Gross Sales: \$1,690,999; Event: Aerosmith; Venue: **Nikon at Jones Beach Theater, Wantagh, N.Y.**; Attendance: 21,839; Ticket Range: \$135-\$35; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: Sept. 17 & 19; No. of Shows: 2*

2) *Gross Sales: \$1,681,965; Event: Elton John; Venue: **Atlantic City (N.J.) Boardwalk Hall**; Attendance: 13,856; Ticket Range: \$175-\$65; Promoter: Caesars Atlantic City & Main Events; Dates: Oct. 7; No. of Shows: 1*

3) *Gross Sales: \$1,413,108; Event: Dixie Chicks; Venue: **Brisbane (Australia) Entertainment Centre**; Attendance: 17,068; Ticket Range: \$85.34-\$70.46; Promoter: Chugg Entertainment; Dates: Oct. 6-7; No. of Shows: 2*

4) *Gross Sales: \$1,068,651; Event: Roger Waters; Venue: **Nikon at Jones Beach Theater, Wantagh, N.Y.**; Attendance: 14,046; Ticket Range: \$131.50-\$36.50; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: Sept. 15; No. of Shows: 1*

5) *Gross Sales: \$1,052,164; Event: The Who; Venue: **John Labatt Centre, London, Ontario**; Attendance: 8,811; Ticket Range: \$175.58-\$59.71; Promoter: Live Nation, TNA; Dates: Sept. 30; No. of Shows: 1*

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

1) *Gross Sales: \$1,213,858; Event: John Mayer, Sheryl Crow; Venue: **Red Rocks Amphitheatre, Denver**; Attendance: 19,063; Ticket Range: \$69.50-\$49.50; Promoter: Live Nation, Kroenke Sports Enterprises; Dates: Sept. 18-19; No. of Shows: 2*

2) *Gross Sales: \$1,010,194; Event: Shakira; Venue: **Dodge Arena, Hidalgo, Texas**; Attendance: 12,790; Ticket Range: \$89.50-\$19.50; Promoter: Live Nation, In-house; Dates: Sept. 25-26; No. of Shows: 2*

3) *Gross Sales: \$937,496; Event: Mr. Olympia and Ms. Olympia Finals; Venue: **Orleans Arena, Las Vegas**; Attendance: 6,166; Ticket Range: \$262.50-\$54.50; Promoter: In-house; Dates: Sept. 29-30; No. of Shows: 2*

4) *Gross Sales: \$880,470; Event: Charles Aznavour; Venue: **Radio City Music Hall, New York**; Attendance: 11,664; Ticket Range: \$150-\$40; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: Sept. 18-19; No. of Shows: 2*

5) *Gross Sales:* \$620,769; *Event:* Shakira; *Venue:* **American Bank Center, Corpus Christi, Texas**; *Attendance:* 8,653; *Ticket Range:* \$195-\$18; *Promoter:* Live Nation, In-house; *Dates:* Sept. 20; *No. of Shows:* 1

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

1) *Gross Sales:* \$802,643; *Event:* Movin' Out; *Venue:* **Sacramento (Calif.) Community Theatre**; *Attendance:* 17,788; *Ticket Range:* \$65-\$15; *Promoter:* California Musical Theatre; *Dates:* Sept. 27-Oct. 8; *No. of Shows:* 16

2) *Gross Sales:* \$743,406; *Event:* What's Done In The Dark; *Venue:* **Fox Theatre, Atlanta**; *Attendance:* 17,887; *Ticket Range:* \$69.50-\$36.50; *Promoter:* Peachez, Inc.; *Dates:* Sept. 21-24; *No. of Shows:* 5

3) *Gross Sales:* \$587,744; *Event:* The Light in the Piazza; *Venue:* **Carr Performing Arts Centre, Orlando, Fla.**; *Attendance:* 11,696; *Ticket Range:* \$100-\$35; *Promoter:* Broadway Across America; *Dates:* Sept. 19-24; *No. of Shows:* 8

4) *Gross Sales:* \$482,763; *Event:* Paul Simon; *Venue:* **Orpheum, Vancouver, British Columbia**; *Attendance:* 5,402; *Ticket Range:* \$101.93-\$57.81; *Promoter:* House of Blues Canada; *Dates:* Sept. 26-27; *No. of Shows:* 2

5) *Gross Sales:* \$328,770; *Event:* Guns N' Roses; *Venue:* **Warfield Theatre, San Francisco**; *Attendance:* 4,874; *Ticket Range:* \$75; *Promoter:* Live Nation; *Dates:* Sept. 20-21; *No. of Shows:* 2

*Compiled by Rob Ocampo, HotTickets@venuestoday.com*

#### **OUTBACK WITH JAM EXPANDS MUSICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL HORIZONS**

The merger of Outback Concerts in Nashville and Jam Productions, Ltd. of Chicago will give each company the opportunity to take acts into new areas as well as work with a variety of new clients.

Michael Smardak, president and CEO of Outback, says that combining efforts with Jam will help broaden the business his company does by utilizing the resources that Jam can provide. "We were looking for a strategic partner who could help us expand our model," Smardak said. "We do things different. Historically we are not in the old frame of entrenching in one particular town and fighting over that city — we go virtually everywhere with different acts that take us to those cities. We hope to be able to utilize the fact that we have gone to those cities, seen where voids need to be filled and continue to do other business off of what we learned when we took that first act there."

Smardak said he has known Arny Granat and Jerry Mickelson at Jam for years. "Arny and I especially have been friends and we have co-produced shows over the years so there have been ongoing discussions about ways we could work together," Smardak said. He said Jam acquired stock in Outback but declined to name the amount of money that changed hands.

Smardak added that the merger will give the Outback staff growth opportunities over

decades to come, not only in territory covered but in the kinds of acts promoted. While Outback is mostly known for comedy, country, Christian and some folk and bluegrass, Smardak hopes to expand into other areas of music promotion including rock.

"We are looking to tap into all the resources that are available through Jam and their wealth of experience and do as much positive business as we can," he said. "Vice versa, we hope that this expansion will give some of the venues and vendors and people we work with a growth in the acts they will be able to work with through us and Jam."

Granat said it is his hope that Jam will be able to expand into markets where Outback currently promotes shows as well as explore new fields and endeavors. "We are looking to start to take some of the mid-range and newer acts and work with them in various markets to enhance their touring abilities," Granat said. Working with Outback will "allow us to be able to take bands from coast to coast if we so choose. We are based in Chicago and work that area, but Michael goes to every market in more cities and he does ground level promotion in comedy and country. So if we blend the two together we will be able to offer artists the opportunity to get more exposure and get more markets for us."

Granat said that while there have been many consolidations of promotion companies in recent years and not as many independent local promoters, "We've kept our image and we continue what we've always done, which is to supply services when we promote shows. We've kept that personal touch, and we believe that Michael and Outback have a similar philosophy. We will continue to work with local promoters because we believe that's still an important factor in promoting shows."

Outback started out promoting comedian Jeff Foxworthy. Smardak said that everyone has been affected over the last few years by the economy as well as other trends such as mergers throughout the industry. "Our acts have been unbelievable to withstand the economic climate. Like Larry the Cable Guy, the number one selling comedian in the world. Larry, Jeff and Bill Engvall – they do everything right about what we want to do in promoting. They work their shows, they care, they keep ticket prices in line, they give their fans everything every night, they do the meet and greets, they love their fans."

Smardak expects to promote 35 dates with Larry the Cable Guy in the fall. Another comedian he is excited about is Lisa Lampanelli, who is doing a special for Comedy Central in Seattle next week. He anticipates lining up an entire theater tour for her next year.

"Country music is just through the roof ... we've had a wonderful year," Smardak continued. "We did dates with Tim and Faith, Brad Paisley, Trace Adkins, Alan Jackson. We are fortunate to be working with a number of dates this fall with Dierks Bentley with Brad Garrett and Police Productions. Dierks is the next major headliner. He's headlining arenas now and doing very well on tour. We are looking forward to Alison Krauss and Union Station going back out next year."

The latter probably did 80-100 dates on their last tour, "they are an unbelievable act." Smardak reiterates that, "Business has been great. I think you'll see from our evolving situation with Jam, that what we can do together will be unlimited." — Vernell Hackett

*Interviewed for this story: Michael Smardak, (615) 242-3323; Arny Granat, (312) 266-*

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## MARKETING



***Rendering of the Honda Center, Anaheim, Calif.; Tim Ryan, president and CEO of Honda Center; Henry Samuelli, owner of Honda Center & Anaheim Ducks; Susan Samuelli; Danica Patrick; John Mendel, vice president of Honda***

### **HONDA CENTER PUTS PEDAL TO THE METAL FOR NAME CHANGE**

ANAHEIM, Calif. — The newly named Honda Center changed its name in a flurry of confetti and burned rubber on Oct. 3 as part of a grand ceremony in Anaheim.

The high profile event marked the transformation for the home of National Hockey League's Anaheim Ducks, formerly known as the Arrowhead Pond. Honda Center President and CEO Tim Ryan said his staff busily rushed up to the moments before the unveiling of the name to make the necessary 183 changes for the new sponsorship deal.

"Everything from the inside advertisements to the business cards had to be changed," said Tim Ryan, who explained that his staff created a name-change task force to

identify necessary changes and assigned name-changes duties to various departments.

The biggest changes were made to the exterior signage of the building, including a 157-foot wide and 24-foot tall sign visible to north-bound planes flying over the roof of the arena. The building is also expected to get four major Honda Center signs on the exterior of the building, replacing the low-key brass medallions signifying the former Arrowhead Pond logo that had decorated the center since it first opened its doors in 1993.

One of the exterior signs, measured to be 74.5-feet wide and 20-feet tall, was officially unveiled during the Grand Opening ceremony with a loud bang and a giant blast of confetti and the dropping of a giant drape hiding the name. The stunt was preceded by an even more dazzling display by racecar driver Danica Patrick, who sped her way into the parking lot of the Honda Center in a brightly decorated Indy Race League car, spinning in a wild array of circles and donuts as a crowd of hundreds watched her through a cloud of smoke from the burning of her rubber tires.

Honda Center General Manager Mike O'Donnell said the center was planning three other large exterior signs for the center — a project that would take another six weeks to complete by mid-November.

For Honda, the naming deal was the first facility sponsorship for the Japanese car company, which operates its North American headquarters in Torrance, Calif — located just 30 miles away in nearby Los Angeles County.

"For us, this deal was as much about a local partnership as it was a sponsorship deal," said Honda Senior Vice President John Mendel. "A lot of our employees work in Orange County and Los Angeles County, so for us, this was just a natural extension into the Southern California community."

Financial terms of the deal were not disclosed. The deal was the first name change for the facility and will last an initial term of 15 years with the opportunity for a 10-year extension (VT e-newsletter, July 19, 2006). Mendel said that NHL hockey didn't exactly match the company's branded active lifestyle campaigns, but gave Honda an opportunity to be associated with professional sports in Southern California. Honda is the title sponsor of several smaller sporting events and festivals in the state, the largest being the Honda U.S. Open of Surfing, held each year in Huntington Beach and drawing over 250,000 spectators.

The name change comes as the Honda Center caps an 18-month, \$12.9 million renovation project at the facility. The arena's Anaheim Club Restaurant has been transformed into the Old No. 7 Club, sponsored by spirits manufacturer Jack Daniels. Construction crews removed the glass barrier separating the dining area from the ice floor and added additional seats in the viewing area where patrons could eat and drink with a view of the game. O'Donnell said the Center constructed a rear bar in the facility and retiled and re-carpeted the club and added new furniture in hopes of changing the atmosphere.

"The goal was to transform the dining area from a traditional family restaurant to a hip, new club," he said.

Other changes include a new 360-degree LED ring along the upper bowl of the arena to be used for show support, additional sponsorship and scoring, 35-new Mitsubishi flat

screen televisions placed around the arena and a remodeled team store.

The Honda Center has also adopted a new \$1 million point-of-sale system for its concession stations. The facility's independent management group, Anaheim Arena Management, paid for the purchase in a deal with concessionaire Aramark.

Finally the facility has upgraded its player training facilities, locker rooms and executive offices. Since both the NHL team and the facility are owned by Broadcom chairman Henry Samueli, O'Donnell said the office upgrades were a natural move to merge management of both entities under a single umbrella. — Dave Brooks

*Interviewed for this article: Tim Ryan, (714) 704-2400; Mike O'Donnell, (714) 704-2400; John Mendel, (310) 783-3996.*



### ***A limited edition model of the St. Pete Times Forum***

### **ST. PETE TIMES FORUM BUDGETS BIG FOR 10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY**

Nostalgia is the theme and Tampa Bay Lightning fans are the focus, as Florida's St. Pete Times Forum, Tampa, celebrates its 10-year anniversary this month.

According to Ron Campbell, president of the Tampa Bay Lightning of the National Hockey League and the St. Pete Times Forum, approximately \$750,000 has been allocated for this event. "Throughout the year, we will have different key events [to mark this occasion]. We wanted to find something fun to do to give back to our loyal fan base," he said.

The St. Pete Times Forum is marketing this special occasion in a number of ways. Fans will be part of the celebration when a limited edition model of the building is handed out to the first 5,000 attendees at the Oct. 19 Lightning game. Also, at 10 select Lightning games, the *St. Petersburg Times* newspaper will distribute posters commemorating 10 memorable moments in the venue's history to all fans. In addition, more than 30,000 anniversary cards will be mailed to fans throughout the month of October that include a \$10 gift card that can be used toward concessions or merchandise at any Lightning game.

"Every night, we will feature a video vignette on our Jumbotron that reflects back on game highlights over the last decade," Campbell said. "In this business, there are so many things to remember and smile about."

Lightning season ticket holders also will receive a ticket book featuring images of memorable concerts and sporting events. Additionally, a '10 Year Anniversary' logo has been created to commemorate the event, and will be used throughout the month of October. Press releases also will be distributed monthly that outline historical facts about the venue.

"In February, we are planning a fantasy camp event for fans and former Lightning

players," Campbell said. The details of this premier event are not yet finalized.

Home of the 2004 Stanley Cup Champion Tampa Bay Lightning and five-time Arena Football Champions the Tampa Bay Storm, the St. Pete Times Forum first opened its doors on Oct. 12, 1996, with a performance by The Royal Hanneford Circus.

After Palace Sports & Entertainment bought leasehold rights to the building in June of 1999, it underwent a \$25 million overhaul.

The Forum now encompasses 660,000 square feet with three decks and seven separate levels. Its innovative design provides for 19,758 seats for NHL games, 20,500 seats for basketball games and up to 21,500 seats for concerts and center stage events. There are 80 luxury suites, with 28 on the lower level and 52 on the upper level. The venue also features four meeting rooms and 20 ticket windows.

Medallions Food Services is the concessionaire. The venue hosts 150 events annually. This month, Guns N' Roses will appear at the Forum on Oct. 25 and the College Hockey Classic will be held Oct. 27 and 28. — Lisa White

*Interviewed for this story: Ron Campbell, (813) 301-6776.*

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## CONCESSIONS





### ***Beck fans show off their creations***

## **BECK TOUR OFFERS MADE-TO-ORDER MERCHANDISE**

Aside from ever-increasing prices, the merchandise staple of rock concerts — the concert T-shirt — has gone relatively unchanged over the past three-plus decades. So, leave it to genre-hopping, experimental rocker Beck to throw a rainbow colored spanner into the works.

As an extension of the trailblazing design of his latest album, “The Information” — which comes with a blank CD cover and a sheet of custom-designed stickers inside that allow fans to create a unique cover design — Beck has collaborated with his merchandiser, North Carolina-based Tannis Root, to bring novelty to his concert merchandise as well.

On each one of Beck's current string of U.S. dates, Tannis Root is setting up a custom t-shirt shop each night that will allow fans to create their own one-of-a-kind concert souvenirs, all for the price of a traditional rock t-shirt.

“Beck wanted to replicate the CD packaging on t-shirts and find a way to bring those 50-60 elements to his shirts. We immediately realized that the challenge in doing a large number of designs would be making them in smaller quantities with a higher production cost to create all these full-color designs,” said Bill Mooney, one of the owners of 20-year-old Tannis Root, which supplies everything from t-shirts, hats, posters and stickers for the web stores and in-concert merchandise booths for bands including Sonic Youth and the White Stripes. “We've done shirts with irons-on before, but this Beck experiment is the first time we've applied them on garments at a show.”

In order to lower costs and keep quality at a premium, Tannis Root tapped one of its partners, Vancouver's Bang-On, which operates a chain of iron-on boutiques around the world. “At first, it seemed completely impractical,” Mooney said. “But once everyone started working on it, Bang-On became excited about it and the ideas they came back with were great.”

With more emphasis on fun and less on the practicality of the idea, Mooney said Bang-On designed a large sheet of iron-on transfers that could be cut into four sheets with four images on each. Fans pick a set of transfers (\$15) and a t-shirt (\$10), then take their raw materials to a table set up nearby, where they cut out the transfers and apply them to the shirt in whatever pattern they like. The finished product is handed to a staffer manning a heat press, who whips out a finished product in about 12 seconds.

The new format required the purchase of a \$2,000 heat press that will travel on the road for the Beck shows, and it required that Bang-On man each booth with four staffers, an order taker, two floaters and the heat press operator.

"The challenge is that where in a traditional show, you have 70% of your business at the end of the show, with a huge line of people and two venue-hired staffers trying to sell shirts as fast as possible, this idea turns that on its head," Mooney said. "Hopefully, through the course of the night, people will be coming in and ordering t-shirts. It's a mix of high concept and grade school craft project."

Because the craft tables require more space, limiting merch areas to just one at each venue, Mooney expects less volume, but a more interesting experience for the customer. As an added bonus, fans can also just buy the transfers, with an instruction sheet on how to do the application at home. The shirts will come in one unisex style for men and four colors (green, white, charcoal grey and cardinal red) offered in four sizes. Women can pick from a fitted t-shirt (black and pink) or a v-neck in pistachio green and light blue in three sizes.

"It's possible we'll make a decent amount of money on this or maybe lose a little, but once we started working on it and once Bang-On made their sample iron-ons, we all started feeling like little kids making these collages and we got excited about it," said Mooney. "It's in the spirit of experimentation, so we're looking forward to it."

The experiment got a dry run on Oct. 7 when Beck played the multi-artist *L.A. Weekly Detour* festival in downtown Los Angeles. And, according to Bang-On creative director Danny Fazio, surprisingly, things went exactly as planned. "It went really really well," said a relieved-sounding Fazio a few days after the show.

"The only glitch was we couldn't make the shirts fast enough! People dug it so much that we had to cut it off before Beck even got on stage." Mooney declined to give sales figures, but he said Bang-On reported sales that were about 15% less than they would normally have for that kind of show, which was not bad considering some of the more complex shirts took up to 10 minutes to press.

Fazio said fans clearly got the t-shirt concept as an extension of the album cover, though he said the on-site printing was so labor intensive he doubts it would work for anyone else. "It works for Beck because it furthers the agenda of the album, it's more of an art project," he said. A fifth staffer may be added for the upcoming kick-off of the tour in Nashville, for which Tannis has bought a second heat press for \$1,000. — Gil Kaufman

*Interviewed for this story: Bill Mooney, (919) 834-9891; Danny Fazio, (604) 684-3304*

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## TIME'S ALMOST UP!!

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## SHORT TAKES

### RED CROSS EXPLORES TICKETING FOR MEGA-SHELTERS

The American Red Cross and Ticketmaster are looking at ways to partner on mega-shelter intake using bar-coding systems for security and ingress and egress. "We want to maximize the technology already built into so many large venues that already have Ticketmaster technology. We're going to pilot it on a couple of exercises this fall, one in Florida and one in California, to see how it works," said Trevor Rikken, manager, Mass Care, for the Red Cross. The first exercise is tentatively scheduled for San Francisco next month. "We also want to move toward seeing if we can do it out of the box," he added. "The goal is to have something we can have out of the box for any disaster and any shelter. We're on a strictly paper system right now." While shelters overseas have

used id cards for refugee camps, the need in the U.S. hit top priority after Katrina and the advent of using major venues as shelters. "It's very difficult now in a shelter with health needs and medications and the sheer number of people. It makes it easier for us to not have to ask people the same questions over and over again, if you get them into a system. It's all very much conjecture right now."

*Contact: Trevor Rikken, (202) 303-5760*

#### **DANBURY OFFICIALS LOOK TO BUILD COMPLEX**

Connecticut investors are in the preliminary stages of planning a \$20 million-plus sports and convention center on Danbury's west side. Early planning has the complex set to open within three years. The center's arena would have 5,500 fixed theater-style seats for basketball or ice hockey games, with another 500 seats set up on the arena floor for boxing events, and another 1,600 for concerts and other events for a total of 7,100 seats.

*Contact: Jean Natale, (203) 797-4514*

#### **MSG ENTERTAINMENT PEGS SCHMIDT FOR VP SPOT**

Madison Square Garden Entertainment has named Tim Schmidt to vice president of business development. Schmidt comes from a background in the film and theater industry. In his new role, he will be responsible for strategically expanding the company's live entertainment portfolio.

*Contact: Mikyl Cordova, (212) 631-4337*

#### **AEG NAMES HERLICH TO LA LIVE POST**

Liza Herzlich has been appointed to senior vice president and managing director of LA Live, a 30-acre development project near the Staples Center in downtown Los Angeles. Herzlich will be responsible for the overall operation of the project along with sponsorship agreements, booking and security.

*Contact: Michael Roth, (213) 742-7155*

#### **LEXUS GETS NAMING RIGHTS FOR \$12 MIL CLUB AT ROSE GARDEN**

Lexus has purchased the naming rights for a new \$12 million club at the Rose Garden in Portland, Ore. The club includes free parking and all-you-can-eat-and-drink buffets, along with brand new LCD TVs and furniture. The carmaker will also be featured on the new LED ring signage in the area, along with sponsorship branding throughout the club.

*Contact: Eric Blankenship, (503) 963-3891*

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## **HELP WANTED**

Due to the popularity of our free help wanted listings, we've reconstructed how they display. The new process will allow companies to ultimately display lengthier descriptions. The heading will remain the same - a bolded title of the company and the listing. However, only the first line of description will be listed in the e-newsletter. Viewers can click the link to our website where they can view a much more thorough description of the open position.

PLEASE CLICK BELOW FOR THE COMPLETE NEW GUIDELINES. For more information or to submit listings, e-mail April Stroud, Advertising/Production Manager at:

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