

Kristin

Subject: FW: Feb. 15, 2006 Newsletter



VENUES**today**

"The news behind the headlines"

Dear Kristin,

February 15, 2006 VOL. V, Number VI ISSN 1547-4143

Welcome to your **Venues Today** weekly e-newsletter, full of the latest live entertainment industry news. VT Managing Editor Natasha Emmons covered the 32nd Annual Stadium Managers Association Seminar in Hollywood, Calif., last week. Look for coverage here and in the March magazine, which also contains our annual Spotlight on Texas. Look for Publisher/Editor-in-Chief Linda Deckard at the IAAM Performing Arts Facility Administrators Seminar in Denver this weekend. For a full calendar listing, to view archives or to subscribe to *Venues Today*, visit our Web site at www.venuestoday.com.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"If you cooked hot dogs, you cooked hot dogs. It was important for us that we did it right." — Jeff Podobnik, MLB Pirates' director of security on authenticity of full-scale disaster drill

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VENUE NEWS



Participants in PNC Park's evacuation drill

PNC PARK SECURITY DESCRIBES FULL-SCALE, \$500,000 EVACUATION DRILL

HOLLYWOOD, Calif. — PNC Park in Pittsburgh pulled off a half-million-dollar, full-scale emergency drill this past May, and the Major League Baseball (MLB) Pirates' Director of Security Jeff Podobnik and Manager of Security Mark Weaver were on hand at the 32nd Annual Stadium Managers Association Seminar here this week to share their experience.

It took a year-and-a-half to plan the drill, which was carried out May 7, 2005, and to secure funding from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Podobnik said.

He said that in the age of terrorist attacks within the United States, he realized his emergency response plan "is only worth the paper it's written on if we don't exercise that plan."

Podobnik's department set up a meeting with Pittsburgh's official Weapons of Mass Destruction Coordinator Ray DiMichael and Paul Chiplock from Marsh USA insurance.

DiMichael began investigating funding sources through the DHS and found out about the agency's program specifically for drills at sports stadiums. The funding had to be obtained through the county, however, not straight from the federal government. "It was important for us that our ownership group bought into this mass evacuation procedure," Podobnik said.

The first workshop was held in January 2004, the first table-top in February, and various preliminary drills were held between May 2004 and April 2005.

The DHS hired CRA (Community Research Associates Inc.) to handle all of the planning. Stadium security was not made privy to the final details of the mock disaster so that they could be tested as well, Podobnik said.

Other participants included the FBI, local police, local emergency rescue and the Pennsylvania Urban Search and Rescue team, which set up a separate drill in the garage area where they could rescue people trapped under concrete in their cars during the bomb evacuation in the stadium.

Each department was assigned different objectives in monthly, then weekly, joint meetings leading up to the drill. "Before you actually do your drill, you may be able to solve some problems ahead of time," Weaver said. "CRA wrote the plan to help fulfill all of those objectives."

The city and county both purchased a bomb-handling robot. Unfortunately, the robot, which is designed to travel down airline aisles, did not fit into the seating areas because of handrails. Weaver said in the case of a real emergency, the rails would be removed to send the robots down into the seating.

The total budget for the drill was \$508,064, \$170,439 of which was personnel and the rest was hard equipment and incentives to bring volunteers into the drill. About \$100,000 in wash-down stations, basically 10-foot thick water curtains over exits to help decontaminate victims, were added to the stadium. There was \$51,000 spent on cameras and card readers and \$6,000 on wands.

"I was a little concerned we wouldn't have the budget in place," Podobnik admitted. "Working with the federal government, the [funds] must go from the DHS to the state to the municipalities. ...If you're patient and have a desire to put one of these evacuations on, the funding is there and you can get fully funded."

The decision was made not to have the drill after a real event because the event could be held up by rain or extra innings and paying emergency workers overtime would be very expensive, Podobnik said. Instead, \$50,000 was spent on advertising the event, hiring a local band to play for the crowd, and purchasing first aid kits and models of the stadium as giveaways to volunteers.

"We were able to reach the local community saying this is a feel-good kind of exercise to take part in," Podobnik said. He stressed that volunteers were helping local emergency responders and law enforcement to do their jobs better.

The goal was to draw 10,000, but rain on the day of the event brought the final attendance down to about 6,500. Regular volunteers were able to sign up for tickets on the stadium Web site, while 400 actors with experience playing injured individuals were signed on through the Red Cross Web site and ticketed to the area where a fake bomb was detonated. Those participants were adorned with "injuries" by makeup artists and given cards with details on their conditions for responders.

Pirates employees had their designated evacuation areas, and subcontractors, like Aramark foodservice, were required to provide their own plans. The day of the event, every employee was at his or her station doing his or her usual duties. "If you cooked hot dogs, you cooked hot dogs," Podobnik said. "It was important for us that we did it right."

The preparation started at 8 a.m. and the exercise began at noon. Federal participants included the U.S. Coast Guard; 3rd Civil Support Team; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco,

Firearms and Explosives; and the U.S. Army and Air Force Reserves. State participants included the Department of Environmental Protection, the Department of Transportation and Rail Transit Safety, and the Emergency Management Agency. There were numerous county and city participants, including law enforcement and emergency personnel. The Salvation Army and five local hospitals also participated.

The staged disaster turned out to be a suicide bombing in one section, followed by a stolen ambulance trying to enter the stadium with more ammunition during the confusion. "Who would, after a suicide bomb, not let an ambulance in thinking they were there to help," Weaver commented on the surprise secondary hit.

The force of the fake bomb actually shook the ballpark, Podobnik said. "I had to recompose myself and remember this was just an exercise."

Stadium security's biggest problem was the fact that the command post had to be moved because the bomb exploded in that area, Podobnik said. When it was relocated, some mobile phones and two-way radios, particularly police radios, failed to work because of cement walls. "Agencies should be able to communicate with other agencies and with command posts."

Also, some employees tried to help victims rather than evacuating, thereby putting themselves in danger of contamination by chemicals. "We had to make sure employees kept their positions and didn't immediately go running to the area of the bomb explosion," Podobnik said.

CRA's report took six months to come in, but the venue was able to correct obvious issues before that, including adding bi-directional amplifiers to communications dead spots in the stadium to allow all radios and phones to work.

The MLB has also introduced a toll-free number for information in the case of an emergency at a baseball stadium.

Communication with media was also a problem during the exercise. "I had our PR person yelling at me and saying I wasn't providing enough information for her to give to the media," Podobnik said.

In response to questions from the stadium manager audience about unflattering media coverage, especially following the release of the detailed CRA report, Podobnik said, "If you didn't have any problems in your exercise, you failed. ...We now have the ability to go back through our city and get some federal funding...because it's in that document now."

At the end of the drill day, the park was turned back over to management at 8 p.m., after a hazmat (hazardous materials) sweep. "That was the longest part — the hazmat coming in," Podobnik said. "If it becomes a crime scene for longer than eight hours and we have a game the next day, we have to figure out what to do."

Podobnik plans to carry out some sort of drill every year. "Maybe not at that magnitude, but smaller with the city of Pittsburgh Civil Support teams." — Natasha Emmons

Interviewed for this story: Jeff Podobnik, (412) 325-4717; Mark Weaver, (412) 325-4683

Milt Ahlerich and Kevin Hallinan



(MLB), Milt Ahlerich and Kevin Hallinan, respectively, told an audience at the 32nd Annual Association Seminar here this week that while they are making security a top priority, they will lead the way in finding real-world solutions to large-scale threats.

"We continue to build and rely on experts, and that's you," Ahlerich said.

"We're here to learn from you guys," added Hallinan.

Ahlerich said his main objective is "to maintain and improve on the NFL's communication on a continuous basis for our games."

The challenge is to keep their best practices publication current and relevant, he said. "I

But there are other challenges. "Making security fan-friendly. How do you do that? What is the real security?" Ahlerich asked. "After [the fans] get into the stadium, we want

Alcohol management has become increasingly important to the NFL, he said. "It's always a time. The implications are serious."

But the main issue is to fight complacency, especially given the fact that the country is a target of a major attack since 2001, Ahlerich said. "The passage of time could be our biggest

Hallinan said that insurance companies are one of MLB's main allies. "We get report card inspections are really important prior to the season."

A new challenge for the league is field intrusion, so MLB conducted a study that determined how likely to happen, so staff could be prepared, he said. And all departments of the stadium, including security workers, are involved in preventing fans from breaking through barriers. "The numbers are significant," he said. "The alcohol management plan is very, very important in baseball

In fact, the league got the Beer Institute to donate \$100,000 towards server training, he

MLB just signed a deal with the University of Texas to use their experimental "disaster communication" for 30 clubs in the league, Hallinan said. Funding is coming through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Communication is a main focus, he said.

But fan enjoyment is still key. "I like to call it our 'pursuit of Disney,'" Hallinan said. "We want to provide the same positive experience. We want to return business."

Hallinan then showed a video titled "24/7" that was a collaborative effort between MLB, Major League Soccer and the International Association of Assembly Managers (IAAM).

The video made the point that bombs are still the top choice of terrorists and, more likely, disgruntled fans and employees.

The video urged employees to look for people who may look like tourists, but are videotaping the building from a strange angle. They may be casing the venue. And bombs can be planted weeks before an event, so pre-event security is not enough.

Employees should be encouraged to report anything that gives them an uneasy "feeling," even if they aren't sure anything is wrong.

Everyone who answers the phone at a venue needs a bomb threat assessment checklist of questions to ask the caller, making it easier to ascertain whether the threat is real or not.

One interviewee in the video urged venue managers to ask themselves, "If something goes wrong, what would you have wished you had done?" And use those answers to prepare. — Natasha Emmons

Interviewed for this story: Milt Ahlerich, (212) 450-2269; Kevin Hallinan, (212) 931-7887

The King of Jordan at the University of Mississippi



UNIVERSITY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER OVERWHELMED BY SECURITY

When The University of Mississippi's 88,000-square-foot Gertrude Castellow Ford Center for the Performing Arts welcomed the King of Jordan, Abdullah II bin Al-Hussein, Friday, Feb. 3, the extensive security requirements were thought to have compromised attendance.

According to Norman Easterbrook, director of the venue near Oxford, Miss., there was a lot of campus coordination that was not typical for this event. "That hurt our attendance. We only had about 800 people in the theater and it holds 1,100. When Senator John McCain visited about a month-and-a-half ago, we were over capacity," he said.

Among the security measures that he said interfered with attendance was the requirement that attendees arrive an hour before the program began. "People may not have wanted to sit for an hour not knowing how long they would be in the building," Easterbrook said. The security requirements also detailed that there be no entertainment during the wait.

In addition, attendees were originally told to leave all electronic devices, including

mobile phones, at home. However, that stipulation changed before the day of the program. "We need radios to manage the front of the house, so they gave in on this requirement [for both the staff and audience members]," Easterbrook said.

Physical barriers that were put in place to keep the crowds at bay upon the King's arrival were the main problem because they obstructed and blocked students' paths through campus. "How do you obstruct lobbies for security without compromising the audience's safety?" Easterbrook said. Because the King would be in two other locations other than the Ford Center, there needed to be a lot of coordination by the Secret Service, the Highway Patrol, the Campus Police and the State Police with both barriers and bomb sweeps of the buildings the King would be in.

The King of Jordan was the first speaker for the University's Trent Lott Leadership Lecture Series. An alumni of the University, U.S. Senator Lott asked the King to visit as part of the program, which gives students real life experiences and exposure to international politics.

The King's plane was late due to fog, so the program started 45 minutes later than scheduled. The King spoke for about 20 minutes and answered three questions from a student poll that was done earlier in the week. He then was presented with the Lott Leadership award by the University's Chancellor Robert Khayat.

The University was given two-and-a-half weeks' notice before the King's visit, and the series was publicized through the campus and local newspapers. "We have a student body of 14,000 and a city population of 13,000 that we targeted," Easterbrook said. "We also set up photo shoots with the King and our faculty and Jordanian students right before his presentation. This was the only place in the U.S. that the King spoke at for this trip."

In terms of security costs, Easterbrook said that the University absorbed some of the expenses, but that is typical with this type of program. "The costs were mainly due to the crew and preparation. We don't have a dollar figure and we won't have one because it's what we're here for and what we do. We have to be ready to do that and be able to support events [that require amped up security and involve the Secret Service] because we don't know when they'll come up," he explained.

With future security arrangements, Easterbrook said he will make more of an effort to focus on better security management and streamlining tasks. "For instance, when we need to put up physical barriers in the building, we will put them up and take them down quickly," he said. "We have our way of managing our house and ushers and if that is not taken into consideration in the security planning process, it compromises our audiences and the venue. For this visit, the Secret Service was overwhelming our internal security."

Easterbrook said the University follows the Homeland Security Best Practices, which focuses on preparedness and communications and information management. "We use it as a guideline to prepare us and it did in this case, but not everyone was in step with it from all perspectives," he said. — Lisa White

Interviewed for this story: Norman Easterbrook, (662) 915-2787

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In our **APRIL** issue, we spotlight the sunshine state and find out what keeps customers coming back for more. We'll highlight the top money making venues and look at what new venues are in the works.

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BOOKINGS



HOT tickets

BON JOVI, NICKELBACK FREQUENT HOT TICKETS

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 Jan. 25, 2006. To submit reports, e-mail HotTickets@venuestoday.com or fax to (714) 378-0040.

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

15,001 or More Seats

- 1) *Gross Sales:* \$3,122,443; *Event:* Rolling Stones; *Venue:* **Coliseo De Puerto Rico, San Juan**; *Attendance:* 15,088; *Ticket Range:* \$386-\$61; *Promoter:* Rocktropic, Inc.; *Dates:* Feb. 11; *No. of Shows:* 1
- 2) *Gross Sales:* \$2,228,419; *Event:* Coldplay; *Venue:* **General Motors Place, Vancouver, British Columbia**; *Attendance:* 29,400; *Ticket Range:* \$137.97-\$49.50; *Promoter:* Live Nation; *Dates:* Jan. 26-27; *No. of Shows:* 2
- 3) *Gross Sales:* \$1,204,018; *Event:* Aerosmith; *Venue:* **Glendale (Ariz.) Arena**; *Attendance:* 14,082; *Ticket Range:* \$125-\$35; *Promoter:* Live Nation; *Dates:* Feb. 1; *No. of Shows:* 1
- 4) *Gross Sales:* \$1,158,696; *Event:* Bon Jovi; *Venue:* **MCI Center, Washington D.C.**; *Attendance:* 14,911; *Ticket Range:* \$98-\$49.50; *Promoter:* AEG Live, Concerts West; *Dates:* Feb. 2; *No. of Shows:* 1
- 5) *Gross Sales:* \$1,045,562; *Event:* George Strait; *Venue:* **Wachovia Complex, Philadelphia**; *Attendance:* 18,318; *Ticket Range:* \$59.50-\$49.50; *Promoter:* Varnell Enterprises; *Dates:* Jan. 27; *No. of Shows:* 1

10,001 - 15,000 Seats

- 1) *Gross Sales:* \$689,595; *Event:* Bon Jovi; *Venue:* **Bi-Lo Center, Greenville, S.C.**; *Attendance:* 11,575; *Ticket Range:* \$75-\$49.50; *Promoter:* AEG Live, Concerts West; *Dates:* Feb. 8; *No. of Shows:* 1

2) *Gross Sales:* \$344,282; *Event:* Nickelback; *Venue:* **Kansas Coliseum, Wichita**; *Attendance:* 9,465; *Ticket Range:* \$39.50; *Promoter:* Fastlane Concerts, The Messina Group/AEG *Dates:* Feb. 9; *No. of Shows:* 1

3) *Gross Sales:* \$309,900; *Event:* Nickelback; *Venue:* **Allen County War Memorial Coliseum, Fort Wayne, Ind.**; *Attendance:* 8,726; *Ticket Range:* \$44.75-\$36.75; *Promoter:* AEG Live, The Messina Group; *Dates:* Feb. 6; *No. of Shows:* 1

4) *Gross Sales:* \$291,747; *Event:* Nickelback; *Venue:* **Alliant Energy Center, Madison, Wis.**; *Attendance:* 7,884; *Ticket Range:* \$39.50; *Promoter:* Fastlane Concerts, The Messina Group/AEG; *Dates:* Feb. 3; *No. of Shows:* 1

5) *Gross Sales:* \$188,813; *Event:* Gretchen Wilson; *Venue:* **Roanoke (Va.) Civic Center**; *Attendance:* 6,014; *Ticket Range:* \$43.50-\$20; *Promoter:* The Messina Group/AEG; *Dates:* Feb. 1; *No. of Shows:* 1

5,001-10,000 Seats

1) *Gross Sales:* \$812,395; *Event:* Bon Jovi; *Venue:* **Mohegan Sun Arena, Uncasville, Conn.**; *Attendance:* 8,284; *Ticket Range:* \$150-\$95; *Promoter:* Live Nation; *Dates:* Feb. 1; *No. of Shows:* 1

2) *Gross Sales:* \$440,882; *Event:* Ricky Martin; *Venue:* **Theater at Madison Square Garden, New York**; *Attendance:* 5,955; *Ticket Range:* \$116-\$46; *Promoter:* Live Nation, Radio City Entertainment; *Dates:* Feb. 6; *No. of Shows:* 1

3) *Gross Sales:* \$440,230; *Event:* Ana Gabriel; *Venue:* **Theater at Madison Square Garden, New York**; *Attendance:* 5,437; *Ticket Range:* \$125-\$65; *Promoter:* Cardenas Marketing Network; *Dates:* Feb. 10; *No. of Shows:* 1

4) *Gross Sales:* \$315,463; *Event:* Larry The Cable Guy; *Venue:* **Resch Center, Green Bay, Wis.**; *Attendance:* 7,556; *Ticket Range:* \$41.75; *Promoter:* Outback Concerts; *Dates:* Jan. 26; *No. of Shows:* 1

5) *Gross Sales:* \$257,461; *Event:* Nickelback; *Venue:* **Duluth (Minn.) Entertainment Convention Center**; *Attendance:* 6,731; *Ticket Range:* \$39.50; *Promoter:* Fastlane Concerts, The Messina Group/AEG; *Dates:* Jan. 30; *No. of Shows:* 1

5,000 or Fewer Seats

1) *Gross Sales:* \$1,266,606; *Event:* Little Shop of Horrors; *Venue:* **Sacramento (Calif.) Community Theatre**; *Attendance:* 26,379 *Ticket Range:* \$65-\$15; *Promoter:* California Musical Theatre; *Dates:* Jan. 25-Feb. 5 *No. of Shows:* 16

2) *Gross Sales:* \$354,833; *Event:* Larry the Cable Guy; *Venue:* **Murat Theatre, Indianapolis**; *Attendance:* 8,499; *Ticket Range:* \$59.75-\$41.75; *Promoter:* Outback Concerts; *Dates:* Jan. 28-29 *No. of Shows:* 4

3) *Gross Sales:* \$290,805; *Event:* Sheryl Crow; *Venue:* **Auditorium Theatre, Chicago**; *Attendance:* 3,697; *Ticket Range:* \$100-\$35; *Promoter:* Jam Productions; *Dates:* Jan. 28; *No. of Shows:* 1

4) *Gross Sales:* \$279,777; *Event:* Larry the Cable Guy; *Venue:* **Star Plaza Theatre, Merrillville, Ind.**; *Attendance:* 6,518; *Ticket Range:* \$59.75-\$41.75; *Promoter:* Outback Concerts; *Dates:* Jan. 27; *No. of Shows:* 2

5) *Gross Sales:* \$268,085; *Event:* Ricky Martin; *Venue:* **Chicago Theatre**; *Attendance:* 3,376; *Ticket Range:* \$90-\$55; *Promoter:* Jam Productions; *Dates:* Feb. 2; *No. of Shows:* 1

Compiled by Kristin Sarbeck, HotTickets@venuestoday.com

Bombay Dreams



LLOYD WEBBER'S "BOMBAY DREAMS" HITS THE ROAD

The international tour of the Andrew Lloyd Webber-produced musical "Bombay Dreams" will kick off on Feb. 21 with a week-and-a-half-long run at the Orange County Performing Arts Center in Costa Mesa, Calif. The touring show will not feature the same over-the-top effects as the London and New York productions, but it will be tailored to U.S. audiences and serve as an introduction of

sorts to the colorful, energetic world of India's massive Bollywood movie world.

The show, which premiered at London's Apollo Victoria Theatre on June 19, 2002, and later hit Broadway, where it played for 31 previews and 284 regular performances before closing on Jan. 1, 2005, will be directed by Baayork Lee, whose Broadway performance credits include the original cast of "A Chorus Line."

Atlanta's Theater of the Stars is co-producing the venture with a group of other regional theaters and spokesman Nick Manos said the arrangement has worked well in the past. "It's different than a commercial producer who says, 'I have this show and do you want it?'" Manos explained. "Most of them are for-profits who find out how many weeks they have, put together a budget and look for places to book it into. The bulk of our tour is set before we finalize the show. Our primary driving institution is the Independent Presenters Network and we generally produce one to two shows a year. If there is a show we're interested in that isn't being put out on a tour produced by Broadway producers, we put together a tour based on the theaters that want to do it."

Manos said the arrangement is efficient because it allows the Network to avoid spending time and energy trying to create, book and sell a tour and instead focus on the product to make it as attractive as possible at a reasonable price. For that reason, the ticket price for the show will generally range from \$45-\$75 for orchestra seats depending on the night and city, to \$15-\$25 for the cheapest seats. That puts the show in the 4-5 ranking in terms of price on the typical 6-show Broadway subscription scale. "It's not an anchor show like 'Spam-a-Lot,'" said Manos, "but it's not 'Blast,' either."

The budget for the production is \$2.5 million-\$3 million, with all the co-producing partners keeping the back end, according to Manos. "They pay the costs of mounting the show in their venue, the royalties for the rights to the product, participate in pre-production and then keep all the box office," he explained. "That way there's also more freedom to do what they want to do that way in terms of promotion."

Because of their experience mounting shows for regional theaters, Manos said the

producers are able to produce the show for a reasonable price and explore the "nooks and crannies" where they can get set pieces and costumes for less than Broadway shows pay for them. "Regional theaters do good productions and spent \$250,000 on sets, versus \$1 million," he said. "It's not that it's shoddy, but we just won't be flying all over the world looking for a particular kind of fabric. If I have a working bench that is 5 feet long and the designer wants a bench that's 5 feet 2 inches, I tell him we have a 5-foot bench."

Though the London production was quite lavish and featured "every bell and whistle" you can have in a show as far as the set pieces, according to Manos, you won't be seeing the massive full-stage turntable and sunken, hydraulically raked revolving fountain in this production. Similarly, there will be no 10,000-pound flying set pieces as in the New York production. The four- to five-truck show will instead use the concept of a movie set to both cut down on the amount of huge stage sets and help explain the concept of Bollywood to American audiences.

The show tells the story of Akaash, a young slum dweller who dreams of Bollywood movie stardom. After meeting his idol, screen queen Rani, Akaash's dreams come true amid a colorful array of lavish production numbers to up-tempo music.

"In the London show, it was on the West End where many people know what Bollywood is because of the large South Asian population," said Manos. "And just like you wouldn't have to explain to people in the U.S. about baseball if you were doing 'Damn Yankees,' you didn't have to explain to them about India's movie industry. So, like the New York show, we made changes to account for the fact that we would have to explain Bollywood to the audience a bit."

Because so many of the people coming to the touring "Dreams" production are subscription holders who did not necessarily buy a ticket for that show knowing what it would be about, Manos said theatergoers will be exposed to Bollywood from the moment they enter the theater as a means of acclimation. "The lobby will be decorated and there will be film clips playing and posters of Indian films in the lobby," he said. "And the set of the show will be a film studio, so the idea is that you are automatically connected to a story about the film industry and via video monitors on the stage. Then you don't have to spend 15 minutes in the first act explaining it. If we're successful, people will have been exposed to Bollywood film and music before the curtain even goes up."

In addition to helping to explain the show, the movie set concept allows for a set that is "apparent" to the audience, in which you expect to see stagehands moving around and walking behind the spare sets, Manos said, also helping eliminate the need for huge set pieces. "Since it's a movie set, and most scenery on a movie set is intimate because the camera creates intimacy, it helps us avoid the enormous set pieces that take more trucks to move." The production should take approximately 10-12 hours to load in and five to load out.

It is being booked by New York's The Booking Group and Karen Hatchett of Atlanta's The Glenn Agency is handling publicity. She plans to hit out at a larger than usual demo of fan in her efforts.

"We will go after the traditional Broadway audience, which is women 35-54, but the show will also go broader and probably get younger, like people in their 20s and 30s, because it is an exciting show with lots of dancing and music and high energy," said Hatchett. "I think that will help broaden the demo, which will also include a wider ethnic mix." In conjunction with the show's producers, Hatchett is supplying radio, television and print ads to the tour cities.

While the group is not planning a billboard campaign, Hatchett said some cities such as St. Louis are using the supplied artwork to create their own billboard campaigns.

Hatchett said she's gotten lots of interest from the Indian and Asian press in the cities where the show is touring, even before she was prepared to set up interviews. "They want to do stories on the show and cast interviews with the Indian actors," she said. "I think there's so much interest because this is something new they haven't seen, a show about Bollywood with beautiful costumes and exotic scenes. People who enjoy that kind of cultural exchange will come out for it."

While Hatchett is not coordinating a central e-mail campaign, she said most of the tour presenters and their venues will include information on the show in their e-blasts. As an example she pointed to Cleveland's "Playhouse Square Center Broadway Buzz E-Newsletter," which will feature interviews with members of the cast and producers in its next online issue, due out in late February.

"Bombay Dreams" tour schedule:

Feb. 21-March 5, Orange County Performing Arts Center, Costa Mesa, Calif.

March 10-12, Broadway Theatre League, Huntsville, Ala.

March 14-19, Palace Theatre, Columbus, Ohio

March 21-April 2, Playhouse Square Center, Cleveland

April 4-16, Fox Theatre, St. Louis

April 18-23, Ruth Eckerd Hall, Clearwater, Fla.

May 9-21, Sacramento (Calif.) Community Center Theater

May 23-June 4, Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, Houston, Texas

June 6-18, Dallas Summer Musicals

July 11-23, Buell Theatre, Denver

July 25-30, Blumenthal Performing Arts Center, Charlotte, N.C.

Aug. 1-6, Pittsburgh CLO

Aug. 8-13, Fox Theatre, Atlanta

Aug. 15-20, Hummingbird Centre for the Performing Arts, Toronto

Sept. 12-Oct. 1, 5th Avenue Theatre, Seattle

— Gil Kaufman

Interviewed for this story: Nick Manos, (678) 641-1327; Karen Hatchett, (770) 433-1137

MARKETING

Blue Man Group



GROUP SALES DEPARTMENTS COME OF AGE

BOSTON — Potential group sales targets are seemingly unlimited and the professionals who specialize in this type of business are finally gaining the respect necessary from management to take aim.

Success stories abound, like the Blue Man Group, where Mary Frembgen's group sales department brings in as much as 30 percent of sales during some fiscal quarters at the Astor Place Theater,

New York. Last year, group sales averaged 17 percent of sales overall, Frembgen reported. The norm for a well-established group sales initiative should be 10 percent of sales.

That's a far cry from five years ago when Frembgen first arrived at Blue Man and "the whole place was against groups. They'd say, 'If you don't sell, great. We can sell at full price.'" Frembgen is well loved now. Referring to the terrorist attacks on the United States Sept. 11, 2001, she said, "After 9/11, everything changed. We need the repeat people; we need them like subscriptions."

Group leaders and members should get the same respect subscribers. They do pay a discounted price, but not hugely discounted. The main price point for Blue Man is \$75. The regular group discount is \$68. School groups pay \$56. Groups will always bicker about price; that goes with the territory, she said. That's why group sales is more than ticketing; it's marketing and ticketing.

Knowing how to search for groups is a talent and was a major topic during a Group Sales breakout session at the INTIX convention here Jan. 10–13. Frembgen and Brian George, who has just resigned his group sales post at Asolo Theatre Company, Sarasota, Fla., led the session. Both noted the importance of group sales to performing arts centers, in particular, and George encouraged all in attendance to "keep your cell phones on, take that call," saying that's the lifeline of a group sales professional. That potential sale may not call back.

The two felt group sales has easily come of age and should be considered as important as new subscribers. In fact, they recommended long-term subscribers get first dibs on dates, of course, but then the house should be split between groups and news subscribers. Often groups are more loyal and bring in more sales than new subscriptions.

Sources for group sales are limited only by imagination. Bachelorette parties work for some events, George noted as an example of an often-overlooked "group." The same is true of any private group like birthday parties, anniversary parties or bar mitzvahs.

"Think of everything that pertains to the artist you are selling," George said, including ethnic groups and, one of his favorites, book clubs. "If you are doing a production from a book, think of the book clubs."

The Red Hat Society is a favorite for performing arts. It's an organization of women over 50 who get together to do things. There is a Red Hat Society Web site. Go there and find out what chapters are in driving distance of the venue, then find the "queen," Frembgen said. Similar groups are the Red Hurricanes and Purple Butterflies.

Tour operators are an obvious source, however they often want to know a year in advance what's booked. But Frembgen and George have been able to develop relationships and work with them on the lead times. Coach tours used to be 40 people, then 47, and now 60 people. It's a good sale and tour operators should be cultivated.

Frembgen usually invites the tour operator, and sometimes the bus driver, to attend the event as a venue guest. "Our group sales has grown because of tour operators. We have one-on-one meetings with tour operators," she said.

Meeting Planners International is another group to join and exhibit to. They have a trade show.

A chamber of commerce Web site will usually have a listing of "organized groups,"

George said. The convention and visitors bureau site is also a mother lode of groups.

Frembgen suggested asking subscribers and donors to bring groups. "If you can get it approved, write them a letter," she said. Employees are another source of ideas. They belong to groups. And one group can lead to another. A member of a book club may also belong to the Red Hats.

Another hot source is the Student Youth Travel Association (SYTA). They hold two conferences annually that are worth attending. The National Tour Association and the American Bus Association should also be on the radar.

It's very important to take good care of the group leader, Frembgen said. "A group leader needs a friend in the theater. They are organizing something." And most groups want VIP treatment, she said.

Some of the attendees at the group sales seminar here admitted to downsizing or even eliminating their group sales department, particularly after Sept. 11 when so many tour operators were struggling. Now, they are ramping up again and Frembgen and George had a few tips.

Paying a group salesman a commission is a good idea, Frembgen said, but she recommended salary plus commission. "There are so many elements to it," she said. "Give them a salary they can live on. The commissions are fun money."

"We all have seasons; we all have shows that tank," George added.

The right candidate for group sales will understand that "the ideal phone call is a conversation," Frembgen continued. "You are building a trust factor. Learn about their kids." The average sale takes five phone calls.

"Most of the time, you have to coach [group leaders]," George added. Novices are insecure about being able to lead a group, but once they've succeeded, they'll be back. The key is to follow up through the day of the event and afterward. George also promotes the up-sell, enticing groups to add a pre-show wine and cheese party, for example. "It's good for their experience and good for the caterer." He keeps a stack of his caterers' cards to accommodate all requests.

It's also wise to keep a list of group-friendly restaurants and hotels in the area. "If you are papering a house [with free tickets], get bus boys and waiters. It's great word-of-mouth," Frembgen said. George added rental car companies to the list.

"Groups are not an online sale. They want to be coddled," George said, though some in the audience differed with him. Some group leaders prefer e-mail, it was noted. There aren't as many natural group leaders left in the corporate world and those that can do it don't want to be called. One audience member pays group leaders a commission as "outside sales."

Frembgen referred to one program by the Baltimore Opera where each group had a day to call in and each order was processed as a single ticket. The group usually had an eight-hour window. It started out as a business-place offer and became a group.

"Don't forget you can do fundraisers here," she added. She writes personal notes to her group sales leaders, sometimes to bring up "quirky things their group might be interested in attending."

Frembgen is the one who goes after the groups at Blue Man. "I do my own marketing

plan and budget," she said. She is in the office about 60 percent of the time, spending a good portion of her workday making face-to-face contacts. The two recommended getting together with other group sales managers at area venues and making a few day-trips together to sell groups.

George advised group sales managers to make sure plan details are in every advertisement and on every poster with wording like "discount for groups of 10 or more." Frembgen noted Blue Man has a group sales link on the Web site, on the front page.

While it's a relationship business, group sales also have to be regulated. George advised sticking to established rules and regulations, like receiving the final payment 30 days out. Frembgen added that she is strongly against asking for deposits. "It's a waste of time and scares people away," she said. — Linda Deckard

Interviewed for this story: Mary Frembgen, (212) 260-8993; Brian George, (941) 351-8000



The 20,000-sq.-ft. Kodak Image Center for journalists

SPONSORSHIP MAKES UP 35.5 PERCENT OF WINTER OLYMPICS REVENUE

Five days into the Turin (Torino, Italy) Winter Olympic Games and despite fears over security, tickets are selling well — over 789,000 to date. The Olympic stores are attracting some 16,000 visitors a day and sales of licensed products have already topped \$3.57 million (U.S.).

The Sponsor Village, which opened Feb. 9, is also proving a success. Daily visitor numbers to the village were not available, but Karen Webb, an official from the International Olympic Committee (IOC) marketing communications team, commented that "so far the numbers have been outstanding. Our sponsors are very happy with it."

The village, which is located in Piazza Solferino in and around the Atrium Pavilions, offers a range of free activities for the public. "Not everyone in Turin is able to buy a ticket or get a ticket to the games, so this brings the experience of the games to the people," Webb continued. "For a lot of the sponsors, it gives them the chance to showcase their products and services. It also enhances the spectator experience and helps bring the city to life."

Activities on offer at the village include winter sports with simulators and video games sponsored by Coca-Cola, TV-production at Eurosport, and a daily Olympic Memorabilia auction held by Samsung. A program of events is updated daily on www.atriumtorino.it.

As well as donations of products, services and technological expertise, there have also been some more unusual offerings from sponsors. First time sponsor GE, one of the worldwide partners, for example, has provided an assortment of gifts including a mobile simulator, an ice rink and a huge sculpture Il Dente del Gigante (Giant's Tooth). Lancia, part of the Fiat Group, meanwhile, has created an Ice Bar where everything — from walls and counters to glasses — is made of ice.

Sponsorship is one of the key marketing revenue sources for the Olympic Games and is expected to contribute around \$500 million, or 35.5 percent, of the total \$1.407 billion in revenue, according to organizers TOROC. This is in comparison to \$559.6 million (39.8 percent) from broadcasting rights and \$76.2 million (5.4 percent) from ticketing.

There are three levels of sponsorship: domestic sponsorship by the host country, sponsorship by countries of competing athletes, and worldwide sponsorship through the TOP (The Olympic Partner) program whereby multinational corporations sign a four-year agreement to support the games.

For 2005-2008, there are 11 partners, including Coca-Cola, Atos Origin, Kodak, Lenovo, Manulife, McDonald's and Omega, which will be the official timekeeper of the games.

Worldwide sponsorship accounts for approximately \$173.2 million of the total, according to statistics from the IOC. This is equivalent to 20 percent of the total \$866 million contribution to the 2005-2008 period covering the Turin Winter Games in 2006 and Beijing Summer Games in 2008.

Specific contributions by the main domestic sponsors Fiat Group, San Paolo, Telecom Italia and Tim have not been disclosed, but in a press release the Fiat Group, which will provide transfer services and vehicles, stated its contribution had an economic value of \$47.6 million.

Sports apparel company ASICS said participation in the games was an excellent opportunity. The company, which is providing clothing for volunteers and for Italian athletes, signed on three years ago after being approached by organizers. "The Olympic Games are the ultimate expression of sport. Our philosophy [Anima Sana in Corpore Sano] marries perfectly with the Olympic spirit," commented director of marketing Paolo Lupani. "It also helps us to make our company and products better known," he added.

Long-term supporter Heineken beer, taking part in the games for the 8th time, said its participation has grown over time. Its reception area, Holland Heineken House, started as a hospitality venue and has now morphed into an entertainment experience, explained Nicole McNaughton, international brand manager at Heineken International. The house features an ice rink, a party tent, a business lounge and an athletes' room. Although special celebrations are held to celebrate Dutch victories, the space also attracts international visitors. "It is a meeting place not only for the Dutch, but also for the international community," McNaughton said.

In fact, despite the cost and logistics of organizing sponsorship events and activities, there are few drawbacks to participation, according to sponsors. "If the event is well organized, if there is a good atmosphere, if everything goes as planned, I don't see what disadvantages there can be," commented Lupani. "With the visibility offered by broadcasting, [our] logo [visible] around the world, 3 million telespectators that watched the opening ceremony, I'd say it is going extremely well," he added.

The Turin Olympic Winter Games kicked off on Feb. 10 and runs through Feb. 26. — Michele Howe

Interviewed for this story: Karen Webb, 00 39 338 89 81 418; Paolo Lupani, 00 39 0171 41 61 11; Nicole McNaughton, 00 39 01 1606 6188

IEG REPORT URGES INTERACTIVE SPONSORSHIPS

A new report showing unprecedented growth in sponsorship expenditures by North American companies should be taken into account by public assembly venues, even though permanent sports properties are slowing down a bit in their lead, with the events themselves making gains, according to authors of the latest IEG Sponsorship Report.

"My advice to venue managers and others is that sponsorships are not just a sign on the wall anymore," said William Chipps, senior editor for the report. "Increasingly, consumers are turning off marketing messages. So venues should be coming up with sponsorships that engage consumers when they are having a good time," he added.

The 22nd annual IEG Sponsorship Report found spending by North American companies for the first time since the heady dot.com boom grew by double digits in 2006. Sponsorship expenditures are expected to total \$13.39 billion this year, or a 10.6 percent increase over last year's \$12.1 billion.

The study said sports properties should continue to have far more total sponsorship revenue than any other categories, but that its share of the pie will dip three points to 66 percent this year. Three other categories will each pick up a point in market share: entertainment tours and attractions move to 11 percent; causes to 10 percent; and festivals, fairs and annual events to 5 percent.

Arts will maintain its current 5 percent share, while associations and membership organizations will also remain at their 3 percent share, according to the study.

The dollar amounts for all categories are rising in 2006 over the previous year.

The projected dollar amounts by category are led by sports, at \$8.9 billion, up 7.1 percent from the previous year; entertainment tours and attractions at \$1.41 billion, up 20.3 percent from the previous year; festivals, fairs and annual events to \$604 million, up 16.2 percent; arts at \$735 million, up 13.3 percent; causes at \$1.34 billion, up 20.5 percent; and associations and membership associations at \$401 million, up 17.6 percent.

The strong forecast was attributed to an explosion of nontraditional sponsorship opportunities as well as strides existing properties are making in adding value to their offerings, according to IEG founder and President Lesa Ukman.

In addition, indications are that this year will see a flood of corporations converting large segments of their ad spending to sponsorship and related marketing methods. Companies aren't limiting their ad spending because they don't have the money; it's because advertising doesn't deliver results," said Ukman.

The result is that a growing number of companies are putting their money in places where it will generate ROI. Proctor & Gamble, for example, cut its cable TV ad budget by 25 percent and upped its sponsorship spending last year. "Consumers are tuning out traditional marketing messages, so it's up to companies to come up with the kind of promotions around sponsorships that lets them engage targeted audiences," said Chipps.

Consumers at public assembly venues such as stadiums, arenas, convention centers and theaters are more receptive to advertising because they associate the event with relaxation and pleasure, said Chipps. That makes sponsorship messages more palatable.

Ukman said the increased focus on sponsorship is also due in part to the marketing medium's ability to talk to consumers through events, causes and organizations they care about.

But Ukman said the current market also requires sponsorship to become more than a medium that earns attention for corporate marketers. Sponsors need to go beyond name recognition to persuade consumers to seek out certain brands. "To accomplish this, sponsorships must be inspirational," Ukman said. "Inspired sponsorships, which enrich lives by providing access or enhancements that would not otherwise be possible, go beyond being a form of communication and instead become a part of the actual product offering."

Chipps said public assembly venues will need to find ways of giving value to their messages. "That can run the gamut of promotions to engage a targeted audience," he said. Companies might consider handing out premium items, he said. One example might be plastic children's batting helmets for spectators attending sporting events.

Abiding interest in sports in North America should ensure its continued domination of sponsorship expenditures. "Everyone loves sports," he said.

The lack of sponsorships in the arts category may be partly because of attitudes in that sector, he said. "A lot of arts properties like symphony orchestras have the old-school way of thinking about sponsorships, where they're sometimes hesitant because of concerns about selling out to the corporations," he said.

But in light of the growing sponsorship trend, he added, that attitude is also changing.

IEG's latest report also found that including North American spending, 2006 global expenditures on sponsorship should reach \$33.8 billion, a 10.8 percent rise from 2005's \$30.5 billion. European countries will also increase sponsorship outlays from \$8.5 billion last year to \$9.6 billion this year, an increase of 12.9 percent. And sponsorship expenditures in Pacific Rim, and Central and South American companies are also on the upswing. — David Wilkening

Interviewed for this story: Lesa Ukman, William Chipps, (312) 944-1727

CONCESSIONS

RETURN OF NHL, INSURANCE PAYOUTS BOOST ARAMARK QUARTER

Aramark Corp. Chairman and CEO Joseph Neubauer reported a 16 percent increase in sales to \$110.2 million for the Sports & Entertainment sector in the first quarter of 2006, including \$3.7 million in insurance proceeds related to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita last year.

The operating margin improved by 5.9 percent "driven by the return of hockey and solid performance in basketball, despite lingering effects of the hurricanes on a few of our convention centers," said Fred Sutherland, chief financial officer. "The impact of the return of the National Hockey League on the organic growth rate was somewhere in the range of 1-2 percent."

The company had record sales of \$2.9 billion for the first quarter of 2006, a 7 percent increase over the prior year quarter. Organic sales growth was 6 percent.

In the U.S. Food and Support Services segment, sales increased 6 percent from the prior year quarter to \$1.9 billion, due to strong growth in the Education, Corrections and Refreshments businesses. Organic sales growth was 7 percent. Segment operating income rose 16 percent to \$110.2 million.

Sales in the International Food and Support Services segment grew 13 percent to \$623 million, with organic sales growth of 7 percent, reflecting strong sales growth in Canada, Germany and Chile. Segment operating income was up 17 percent to \$24.6 million, driven by improved profit performance in the United Kingdom, Canada and Germany.

A foodservice company was acquired in China, bringing the total Aramark employees in that country to 8,000.

Neubauer announced that Aramark has secured the foodservice contract for several stadiums hosting FIFA World Cup soccer games in Germany this summer. Attendance is expected at more than 2 million.

Convention center proceeds are expected to remain down due to hurricane effects, Sutherland said. "It's clear in New Orleans and surrounding areas that tourism is not going to come back in the near term."

Whether Aramark will continue to benefit from insurance payouts is unclear. Claims remain outstanding, Sutherland said. "It's a complex process and we're still in discussion with the carriers."

The key to continuing this growth rate is three-fold: retention, base business growth and new business acquisitions, Neubauer said. "You've got to work on all three of them because any one by itself will not give you results," he said. "We're much more broadly diversified in types of services in the U.S. than we ever have been before."

"Consumer-focused marketing efforts are very helpful across all those elements," he added. — Natasha Emmons

Interviewed for this story: Joseph Neubauer, Tom Sutherland, (215) 238-3000

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SHORT TAKES

BOSTON PREPARES FOR WOMEN'S FINAL FOUR

Pat Moscaritolo, President & CEO of the Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau, Paul Sacco, Executive Director of Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism, and Speaker of the House Salvatore F. DiMasi joined Governor Mitt Romney who signed into law a \$1 million appropriations bill to support the 2006 NCAA Women's Final Four Division I basketball championship. The event will be held in Boston at the TD Banknorth Garden April 2–4 and is expected to draw more than 30,000 visitors and pump an estimated \$25 million into the Boston economy. This marks the 25th Anniversary of the Women's Final Four and the 100th Anniversary of the NCAA. The \$1 million will be used for promotion, event and volunteer coordination and logistical support, among other things. Events surrounding the 2006 Women's Final Four include Hoop City, a three-day festival for fans at the Hynes Convention Center, team practices and autograph sessions at the TD Banknorth Garden, NCAA Youth Education through Sports (YES) Clinics and the Women's Basketball Coaches Association annual convention, which draws nearly 3,000 coaches of women's basketball throughout the country.

Contact: Larry Meehan, (617) 867-8231

SANDUSKY CONVENTION CENTER TO OPEN IN AUGUST

Kalahari Resort, Sandusky, Ohio, has begun construction of a 95,000-square-foot, \$12 million convention center. The resort opened last year. The new center is scheduled for completion in August and is attached to a 596-room hotel and an 80,000 square foot indoor water park.

Contact: Kalahari Resort, (419) 433-7759

PAC SHOW CANCELLED IN RHODE ISLAND

Due to the State of Emergency declared in the midst of a blizzard on Sunday, Feb. 12 by Rhode Island Governor Donald Carcieri, both the 1 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. performances of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* at Providence Performing Arts Center were cancelled. All ticket purchasers will to be automatically refunded for the full ticket price.

Contact: P.J. Prokop, (401) 421-2997

WACHOVIA GOES ON WITH THE SHOW

During the weekend's blizzard, which dropped 14 inches of snow on Philadelphia, the American Hockey League Phantoms were stranded in Chicago so their Feb. 12 game at Wachovia Center vs. Springfield Falcons was postponed with a new date to be announced. A 2 p.m. Live Nation Monster Jam show went on as scheduled at Wachovia Spectrum. "Sixty-percent of our paid/comp total showed for the Monster Jam on Sunday at Wachovia Spectrum. We had no problems with our lots or major streets or highways. There were some issues with secondary roadways, though," said John Page, Chief Operating Officer of Global Spectrum, which manages the venue. A Feb. 13 Villanova basketball game drew a record 20,859, with a per cap of \$15.83.

Contact: John Page, (215) 389-9558

TURF MANAGERS MEET IN ORLANDO SETS RECORD

At the 2006 Sports Turf Managers Association Conference in Orlando, the DD

GrassMaster surface at INVESCO Field in Denver, and Ross Kurcab CSFM, were honored as the best Professional Football and Professional Soccer Field of the Year. Attendance at the annual conference, held Jan. 18-21 this year, was 1,016, a record and 10 percent increase over 2005. There were 500 exhibitors at the trade show. A new chapter was officially affiliated: The Sports Turf Managers of New York, which brings the total of STMA affiliated chapters to 26. STMA's 18th Annual Conference & Exhibition will be in San Antonio, Texas, January 17-21, 2007. The Convention will be at the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center.

Contact: STMA, (800) 323-3875

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