

**Rob Ocampo**

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**Subject:** FW: January 17, 2007 Venues Today



# VENUES**today**

The news behind the headlines

**January 17, 2007 VOL. VI, Number III ISSN 1547-4143**

Welcome to your **Venues Today** weekly e-newsletter, full of the latest live entertainment industry news. Staff Writer Dave Brooks has just returned from IAAM's stadium managers meet in Texas and Editor Linda Deckard visited the Western Fairs Association convention in Reno. See coverage here and in our February magazine. Please visit our new web site at your leisure. We're proud of it. For further information or to subscribe to *Venues Today* visit [www.venuestoday.com](http://www.venuestoday.com).

## **QUOTE OF THE WEEK**

"One person said we should take before and after pictures of season ticket holders in these seats." —*Bill Hunter, director of Ticket Operations for the Los Angeles Dodgers on a plan to sell seats with an inclusive all-you-can-eat meal ticket.*

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## VENUE NEWS



***A view from inside BC Place where a tear forced crews to deflate the facility's ceiling for repairs***

### MANAGING MEDIA KEY TO SOLVING ROOF TEAR AT BC PLACE

On Jan. 5, a panel on the west side of BC Place's roof tore. The roof is made of Sheerfill, panels of Teflon-coated fiberglass that are supported by air pressure. To control and assess damage, management at the Vancouver, British Columbia, stadium ordered the roof deflated. Then the crisis started.

Or so you'd think, if you listen to the media.

Television, newspaper and Internet reports said the roof collapsed. The 24/7 news cycle had reporters saying it was unknown how many people had been injured, or killed. Blogs debated which political party was responsible. Business reporters discussed how many trade shows would have to be cancelled, and speculated about massive losses in revenue.

Some even wondered how this event would impact the Vancouver 2010 Olympics.

So how did management deal with the real problem, and the created?

"We activated the Crisis Command Plan," said Graham Ramsay, director of Business Development at BC Place.

The problem started when staff members noticed a speaker system attached to the roof was hanging too low. They pumped up the roof, the recommended procedure. As it inflated, they realized there was a tear, and immediately decided to do a controlled deflation. The crisis plan went into place.

"It covers everything, from staff safety to evacuation. Everybody was out in 10 minutes, and nobody was hurt."

With staff and the building secure, and assessment and repair moving forward, they could focus on media management.

"Within an hour, we had a statement on the website," Ramsay said.

The statements kept coming—live and on the web—with General Manager Howard Crosley discussing the status of the repairs in a straight-forward manner, and correcting the media misinformation they were hearing.

"We were getting a lot of media inquiries and we wanted to make sure we were operating in an open and transparent environment and people got as much information as they needed," Crosley said.

Here's a sample of some of the posting's Crosley put on the site:

"Jan 5: Because of the tear, we activated a controlled deflation of the stadium roof. Everyone in the building was evacuated safely and the public were not in danger at any time. The good news is the tear occurred only in one panel and it is repairable. There are no events booked at BC Place for the next 20 days, so at this time, we do not anticipate any being affected. It is business as usual. This is the first time in BC Place history that there has been an issue with the roof, which is inspected each year. The last inspection was in 2006 and the roof was reported to be in good condition."

"Jan. 9: A total of 90 staff—45 stadium staff, 35 riggers, 10 restoration experts—and a safety consultant are working around the clock despite adverse weather conditions. A crane at the stadium was grounded at 9:30 a.m. today due to strong wind gusts and was recommissioned at 1:30 p.m. Precautions are being taken for all assessment teams."

"Jan. 15: The temporary replacement panel is being clamped and sealed. Approximately 60 percent of the U-bolts have been replaced. Restoration work on the Level 3 Private Suites is progressing well."

With clear, on-message statements going to the press, and repair efforts continuing, the tone of media reporting settled down.

"When it did go down, there were a lot of media requests to come inside the building, and we allowed some reporters access," he said. "Once they were inside, a windstorm picked up and started to throw the roof around like a rag. We were in a secure area, but the reporters could hear lots of banging and crashing. It was frightening and it showed many of them just how dangerous the situation really was."

Birdair Industries, the designer and manufacturer of the roof, sent engineers and

inspectors to BC Place. On Jan. 12, Geiger Engineers, an engineering firm inspecting the damage, said the tear was caused by a damaged section of fabric, rapid pressurization of the building, and wind.

"There was a small damaged section of deteriorated fabric that was not easily inspected," said Ramsay. "The roof was re-pressurized too quickly and that, and the weather, caused the tear."

At press time, the replacement panels had been installed, but the roof had not been re-inflated. Despite that, Ramsay felt confident things would be back to normal soon.

"The next trade show moves in Jan. 22. We're still calling that a go. After that, we're booked for the next four months straight," Ramsay said.

Media reports have said the stadium will be torn down after it hosts the 2010 Vancouver Olympics' ceremonies. Ramsay said that was more media speculation and they were already booking BC Place into 2012.

He said it was important to take things in stride.

"You get good stories. You get bad stories," he said. "The important thing is to have a plan." — Liz Boardman

*Interviewed for this article: Graham Ramsay and Howard Crosley, (604) 669-2300*

## **IAAM CONFERENCE PROVIDES UPDATES ON NEW LEGISLATION AFFECTING VENUES**

FRISCO, Texas — A host of new laws and regulations went into effect in 2006, affecting the way venue operators interact with their fans, performers and the disabled, according to IAAM attorney Turner Madden.

The Washington D.C.-based attorney provided venue managers with an update of new regulations affecting venues throughout the U.S. during IAAM's International Stadium Management Conference here from Jan. 11 to 13. Here are some of the new legislative items Madden said venues should be most aware of:

### **THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE'S "PROJECT CIVIC ACCESS"**

In an effort to bring entire communities in-line with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Department of Justice is launching a comprehensive policing action called "Project Civic Access."

Under the proposal, the Justice Department will send out teams of attorneys and safety engineers to large and medium-sized cities across the U.S. in an attempt to evaluate, and in most instances correct, facilities that are not in compliance with the law. A large target on the DOJ's radar will be venues and public facilities, Madden explained.

"You'll likely get a letter in the mail, and then within two months, a few attorneys and an architect will arrive at your building for an inspection," Madden told the audience of stadium managers. "They will also ask for a copy of disability access documents."

The teams will be looking for common ADA violations, such as inadequate facility parking or access points. Madden said a big target this year will be parking garage clearances — federal regulations require garages to have a 98-inch clear for vans that often transport the disabled.

"Will a judge make you tear down a garage if it doesn't have a 98-inch clearance? Probably not. But he could," Madden said.

So far, Project Civic Access has resulted in 147 settlements with venues and public facilities, which can often be costly and require major repairs on top of fees and fines. Madden said there is also a new demand on web sites to provide compatibility with software that allows blind individuals to use the computer through software that converts text into audio. Retail giant Target was recently sued because its web site wasn't compatible with the software. That case is still pending.

## **DISABILITY SEATING AND WHEELCHAIR AREAS**

"What we're hearing from the Justice Department is that they are planning a comprehensive update of ADA requirements that is expected to be completed by the end of the year," Madden said.

With those regulation changes come new parameters for disability seating, giving venue operators more flexibility. The biggest change will cut in half the required number of wheelchair spaces for a venue, from one-percent of total seating capacity to one-half-of-one percent.

"Performing arts centers will have a slightly higher threshold, requiring three-fourths-of-one percent of the total venue," Madden said. "The thinking is that more senior citizens attend events at performing arts centers, so they will in turn require additional seating needs."

Madden said IAAM has also developed a strategy for keeping non-disabled patrons out of wheelchair areas. Ticket-buyers have been increasingly requesting tickets for wheelchair areas because of the spaciousness and easy access to the concourse. Madden said box offices can't legally ask a ticket-buyer to prove their disability, but they can advise there will be no seats available in the section during the event.

Madden advises venues to hide the folding chairs for the wheelchair areas until the event starts and only provide seats to visitors who are accompanying fans in wheelchairs, not to people simply taking advantage of wheelchair seating.

"When advised that folding chairs are not available in wheelchair sections, many visitors without a disability will hesitate to purchase those tickets because they fear they'll have to stand the entire game," he said.

## **TAX WITHHOLDING LAWS FOR FOREIGN PERFORMERS**

In late 2006, the Internal Revenue Service sent out 253 notice letters to arenas and stadiums with over 8,000 seats, informing them of their responsibility and potential liability as a tax-withholding agent for payments to foreign enterprises.

According to the letter, venues will be required to withhold as much as one-third of the income paid to foreign performers for concerts in the U.S. That money must be put into an escrow account until the performer's tax bill is settled with the IRS.

"If a venue fails to withhold the money and a performer leaves the U.S. without paying the proper taxes, then the venue is not only responsible for paying back taxes, they're also responsible for paying fees and interest associated with that transaction," Madden said. "In many cases, that can be double the money owed."

## **ANTI -TRESPASS LAWS**

Ohio and Florida have both passed strict new anti-trespass legislation making it a misdemeanor to run onto a playing field during a professional sports game. The new legislation toughens old rules about interrupting a sports game, allowing authorities to jail people who run onto the field for up to six months.

The law also makes it a crime to enter unauthorized spaces at a performing arts center, arena, amphitheater, stadium or other venues, including dressing rooms, green rooms, back stage areas, loading docks and other privileged spaces. — Dave Brooks

*Interviewed for this story: Turner Madden, (202) 349-2050*



***Bart Riberich, left, and Lee Slade during a presentation on retractable roof technology.***

## **ENGINEERS SAY ROOFS THAT ARE RETRACTABLE, ALSO PRACTICAL**

FRISCO, Texas — Once considered a luxury in the venues market, retractable roofs are returning to the forefront of design in most markets following the high-profile success of venues in the U.S.

The overwhelming response from the sports and architectural community of the new University of Phoenix Stadium in Glendale, Ariz., which uses both a retractable roof and retractable field, have created new demands on architects to include their design on new stadiums in all types of climates, said Ben Barton, president of the Association of Retractable Roof Operators Worldwide, during an informational meeting on the topic at IAAM's International Stadium Management Conference on Jan. 13.

"These roofs were originally designed as a means to deal with climate issues, but their success has made it a necessity for anyone designing a new facility to consider using this technology," Barton said.

Well, it's not exactly new. The first facility to use a retractable roof was Pittsburgh's Mellon Arena, built in 1961, and over 125 facilities worldwide use some type of retractable roof or field.

"I think we're going to see a continued growth in popularity as the cost of installing a retractable roof continues to drop, while the number of architects and engineering firms familiar with this process continues to rise," said Bart Riberich, president of Uni -

Systems, which designs and installs retractable roofs for the National Football League. "Up until five or six years ago, there really weren't that many architects that could handle these types of systems and many were shying away from proposing retractable alternatives because of the costs involved. That has really changed in recent years and most major firms have someone on staff equipped to handle these systems."

Riberich is working with the NFL's Dallas Cowboys and the Indianapolis Colts' new Lucas Oil Field to implement retractable roofs for their facilities, scheduled to be completed in 2008 and 2009 respectively.

"Weather was really a concern for both of those facilities, but beyond climate, what we saw driving construction on each of those buildings was sunlight management," Riberich said. "Take the Cowboys. They're going to have over 60 sideline suites that run for over half-a-million dollars per year. Owners like Jerry Jones can't ask for that much money if the sun is going to be in people's eyes blocking their view of the game."

Riberich said the facility's retractable roof will also be used to manage sunlight that hits the field on non-game days. In order to sustain a natural grass turf on a non-retractable platform, sunlight exposure has to be controlled to keep the surface healthy and avoid patches from shadowing.

Functionality is also improving, explained Lee Slade, a structural engineer with Walter P. Moore Associates, which helps build retractable roofs.

"Most retractable roofs are now capable of supporting a full rigging system," he explained. "It makes no sense to put up a big roof if you can't hang anything from it. The roof in Phoenix is capable of supporting the lighting and rigging for a major concert."

Slade said the functionality controls have also become much easier to use, often powered by a single flat screen-monitor that provides full control of the entire system.

"There is some significant training that goes into powering one of these systems, but typically anyone with an operational background at a venue can easily control it," Riberich said.

Another concern is interchangeability and repair costs — the hydraulics involved in installing these mechanized roofs is still quite costly, but Slade said his firm is partially keeping the cost down by spreading out mechanization over several engines.

"Instead of using two 75 horse-power engines to move the roof, we'll try and use 15 different 10-horse power engines," he said. "Not only is the power spread out, it's also easily replaceable."

New designs are also taking advantage of a number of advances in architectural technology including new covering materials such as a high-density cloth, sloping wheel tracks that allow roofs to take on new forms and moveable walls that can further alter the visitor's perception of interior space.

"It's now a fully integrated design process that goes beyond our high assurances of simply keeping the water out," Slade said. "With so many advances, the only thing holding us back is the architect's imagination." — Dave Brooks

*Interviewed for this article: Ben Barton, (425) 343-5735; Lee Slade, (713) 630-7300; Barton Riberich, (763) 526-0632*



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## BOOKINGS



### **HOT** tickets

#### **TSO TAKES OVER TOP FIVE**

**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 Dec. 26, 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*: \$703,378; *Event*: Trans-Siberian Orchestra - West; *Venue*: **Kemper Arena, Kansas City, Mo.**; *Attendance*: 19,619; *Ticket Range*: \$41.50-\$31.50; *Promoter*: Live Nation, Mammoth Live; *Dates*: Dec. 26; *No. of Shows*: 1

2) *Gross Sales*: \$554,406; *Event*: Trans-Siberian Orchestra - West; *Venue*: **Scottrade Center, St. Louis**; *Attendance*: 14,228; *Ticket Range*: \$44-\$34; *Promoter*: Live Nation; *Dates*: Dec. 27; *No. of Shows*: 1

3) *Gross Sales*: \$507,376; *Event*: Trans-Siberian Orchestra - West; *Venue*: **Bradley Center, Milwaukee**; *Attendance*: 13,973; *Ticket Range*: \$43-\$33; *Promoter*: Frank Productions, Live Nation; *Dates*: Dec. 28; *No. of Shows*: 1

4) *Gross Sales*: \$457,602; *Event*: Trans-Siberian Orchestra - East; *Venue*: **Verizon Center, Washington**; *Attendance*: 10,261; *Ticket Range*: \$49-\$39; *Promoter*: Live Nation, In-house; *Dates*: Dec. 30; *No. of Shows*: 1

5) *Gross Sales*: \$370,767; *Event*: Trans-Siberian Orchestra - East; *Venue*: **Hartford (Conn.) Civic Center Coliseum**; *Attendance*: 8,074; *Ticket Range*: \$49-\$39; *Promoter*: Live Nation, Metropolitan Entertainment Group; *Dates*: Dec. 26; *No. of Shows*: 1

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

1) *Gross Sales*: \$795,690; *Event*: Rod Stewart; *Venue*: **Jacksonville (Fla.) Veterans Memorial Arena**; *Attendance*: 8,050; *Ticket Range*: \$95-\$54; *Promoter*: AEG Live; *Dates*: Jan. 13; *No. of Shows*: 1

2) *Gross Sales*: \$688,140; *Event*: Black Eyed Peas; *Venue*: **Mandalay Bay Events Center, Las Vegas**; *Attendance*: 7,652; *Ticket Range*: \$131.25-\$47.25; *Promoter*: Fantasma; *Dates*: Dec. 29; *No. of Shows*: 1

3) *Gross Sales*: \$539,963; *Event*: Van Morrison; *Venue*: **Silver Spurs Arena, Kissimmee, Fla.**; *Attendance*: 4,476; *Ticket Range*: \$175-\$75; *Promoter*: Fantasma; *Dates*: Jan. 2; *No. of Shows*: 1

4) *Gross Sales*: \$258,720; *Event*: The Flaming Lips; *Venue*: **USC Galen Center, Los Angeles**; *Attendance*: 4,704; *Ticket Range*: \$55; *Promoter*: AEG Live, Goldenvoice; *Dates*: Dec. 31; *No. of Shows*: 1

5) *Gross Sales*: \$183,826; *Event*: Arenacross; *Venue*: **Van Andel Arena, Grand Rapids, Mich.**; *Attendance*: 12,830; *Ticket Range*: \$16; *Promoter*: Live Nation Motor Sports; *Dates*: Jan. 5-7; *No. of Shows*: 3

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

1) *Gross Sales*: \$215,490; *Event*: WWE Smackdown; *Venue*: **Dodge Arena, Hidalgo, Texas**; *Attendance*: 6,763; *Ticket Range*: \$60-\$20; *Promoter*: WWE; *Dates*: Jan. 13; *No. of Shows*: 1

2) *Gross Sales*: \$145,197; *Event*: The Fray; *Venue*: **Elliott Hall of Music, W. Lafayette, Ind.**; *Attendance*: 5,694; *Ticket Range*: \$25.50; *Promoter*: Jam Productions; *Dates*: Jan. 11; *No. of Shows*: 1

## 5,000 or Fewer Seats

1) *Gross Sales:* \$858,600; *Event:* Jerry Seinfeld; *Venue:* **Caesars Palace, Las Vegas**; *Attendance:* 8,193; *Ticket Range:* \$150-\$75; *Promoter:* AEG Live, Concerts West, In-house; *Dates:* Dec. 26-27; *No. of Shows:* 2

2) *Gross Sales:* \$502,280; *Event:* Umphrey's McGee; *Venue:* **Aragon Ballroom, Chicago**; *Attendance:* 11,995; *Ticket Range:* \$62.50-\$27.50; *Promoter:* Jam Productions; *Dates:* Dec. 29-31; *No. of Shows:* 3

3) *Gross Sales:* \$350,470; *Event:* Yonder Mountain String Band; *Venue:* **The Fillmore Auditorium, Denver**; *Attendance:* 10,457; *Ticket Range:* \$27.50; *Promoter:* Live Nation; *Dates:* Dec. 29-31; *No. of Shows:* 3

4) *Gross Sales:* \$288,750; *Event:* The Raconteurs; *Venue:* **Riviera Theatre, Chicago**; *Attendance:* 5,000; *Ticket Range:* \$79-\$36.50; *Promoter:* Jam Productions; *Dates:* Dec. 30-31; *No. of Shows:* 2

5) *Gross Sales:* \$250,042; *Event:* Doubt; *Venue:* **Devos Hall, Grand Rapids, Mich.**; *Attendance:* 6,605; *Ticket Range:* \$57-\$20; *Promoter:* Broadway Theater Guild; *Dates:* Jan. 3-7; *No. of Shows:* 7

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

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### **The Dodge Theatre, Phoenix**



### **LIVE NATION TAKES 5,000-SEAT DODGE FOR SPIN**

More bookings and sponsorships are likely on the horizon for the 5,000-seat Dodge Theatre, Phoenix, with Live Nation entering into a long-term lease agreement to operate, manage and book the venue. Live Nation took over Jan. 1, retaining Judy

Alberti as general manager.

Alberti said most of the 10 full-time staff will likely make the transition. They had been employed through Sports and Entertainment Services (SES), which also operates U.S. Airways Arena and has some operations involvement with Bank One Ballpark. Paige Peterson oversees SES. He answered to a collective that owns the Dodge, lead by

managing partner Mel Shultz.

"Going forward, they are still sorting out U.S. Airways Arena's involvement," Alberti said. "They were the managing team as far as event services."

Bruce Eskowitz, Live Nation's president and chief executive officer of Global Venues and Alliances, called the Dodge "an incredible theater in an incredible market. We bought the House of Blues to diversify our portfolio and have a lot of different size venues, more of the small and mid-range venues. You will continue to see us being aggressive to find more venues in the 5,000-6,000 range."

He declined to reveal the terms or length of the lease, other than "long," but did say Live Nation's goal is to "drastically increase the number of shows."

Whether that will include an open door policy to Live Nation's competing promoters is unknown. "We haven't made that determination," Eskowitz said. "If you want to book the building, call Danny Zelisko and Terry Burke. We're interested in having all kinds of shows in this building."

This past year, Live Nation brought in about 25 or one-fourth of the shows at the Dodge, Alberti said. Live Nation also owns the amphitheater in Phoenix, which could make for nice synergies.

Eskowitz was bullish on the mid-size venue and Alberti echoed that thought. Shows there have averaged 70 percent capacity and the 5,000-seater has proven a big magnet for comedy shows, even comedians who could fill an arena.

George Lopez is playing three nights at the Dodge in February, Alberti said.

Other promoters are on the books. Steve Litman Presents brought in Bill Cosby Jan. 13. John Robertson's Celebration Concerts will promote Chris Tomlin Jan. 25-26. Alberti said both shows will sell out.

Live Nation has the Music of Led Zeppelin with the Phoenix Symphony booked for Jan. 20.

Would other promoters continue to book the Dodge? "We've talked to several and they've said if the door is open, they'd like to walk through it," Alberti said.

She also anticipates Live Nation will bring new sponsor dollars and clout to the Dodge. Besides the title sponsorship, the theater currently has five building sponsors. Verizon is a sponsor and a condominium high rise sponsors the main level.

The Dodge Theatre has 16 party suites, seating 12 each, which leases for \$65,000-\$75,000 annually. Alberti said all but two are leased. There are also four party suites, seating 24 each, used for sponsor fulfillment or concert-by-concert sales.

The venue also features modern arena technologies, including moving sidewalls. The theatre's capacity can easily shift from 1,900 seats to as many as 5,500, Eskowitz said.

"We think the Live Nation partnership will take us to the next level," Alberti said.

"In any transition, there is so much to do to make it happen, and after that I don't see a big change going forward except Live Nation has a lot of big wheels in motion, like national sponsorships, that should be very helpful," Alberti said.

November proved to be a stellar month, with 10 shows, she said. There are seven booked in January.

Prior to joining the Dodge a year ago, Alberti was vice president of entertainment for Station Casinos for 11 years.

"It's an incredible facility. I wish I had 25 just like it," Eskowitz said of The Dodge. While he said the industry would continue to see Live Nation be aggressive branding House of Blues and Fillmore to other locations, they are happy to have Dodge in this case. "We take them one at a time, and look at the economics of each building."

This is a rare commodity in the Live Nation stable of 170 venues globally which they own, operate and/or have booking rights for. Excepting some boutique amphitheaters, the 5,000-6,000 size is not much in evidence. But that's not to say it won't be in the future. — Linda Deckard

*Interviewed for this story: Bruce Eskowitz and John Vlautin, (310) 867-7127; Judy Alberti, (602) 379-2826*

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## MARKETING

***From left, Jim Farley, Jan Taylor, Tawny Tesconi, Mike Bradley, and Rick Pickering.***



### **PARTNERSHIPS SPELL SUCCESS FOR WFA AWARD WINNERS**

RENO, Nev. — Five award-winning ideas that served fairs in the Western region of the U.S. were described in detail for attendees at the Western Fairs Association's 84th Annual Convention and Trade

Show here Jan. 14-17. While the projects and events were diverse, from an Ugly Dog Contest to a pre-fair Table Top Exercise for crisis management, there was a common theme — partnerships.

**Jim Farley, Marin County Fair**, San Rafael, Calif., talked about "Healthy Food Choices," a program which involved working with the community and food concessionaires at the fair to offer healthier food and drink options to fairgoers. By partnering with the Marin County Health and Human Services, Nutrition Wellness Program, the Kaiser Permanente Health Education Services and the American Cancer Society, the fair was able to add and market an educational side to the healthy food program.

Those groups helped the fair develop a "Prevention Pavilion" where 40 nonprofits provided information on health issues. That tent was among the most popular at the fair, Farley said.

Out on the grounds, 11 of the fair's 30 vendors agreed to follow new guidelines that included eliminating trans-fats in cooking and offering healthy food options along with the traditional fair food. They were invited to participate a few months before the fair so they had time to make any necessary adjustments. Those vendors who participated were then promoted at the Prevention Pavilion. A map pinpointing their locations was handed out at the pavilion and each concessionaire adorned his stand with Alvin the Smiling Apple. There were also monetary prizes and ribbons for the participants at the end of the fair.

Farley deemed the promotion successful because it received considerable positive media coverage and partnered the fair with some heavy hitters in the community. "Families are our primary food guests," Farley said. It's important to promote good health and pay attention to the trends toward healthier eating that have grabbed the attention of the nation.

He anticipates more vendors and more partners will participate in the 2007 edition of Healthy Food Choices.

**Jan Taylor, Linn County Fair**, Albany, Ore., also emphasized partnerships for the success of her fair's participation in the national "Tough Enough to Wear Pink" campaign to heighten breast cancer awareness. Neal McCoy was booked to perform and there was some concern about selling out a big name show in a community of 120,000. He was known to have an interest in the breast cancer cause.

In addition, a little research revealed there is a higher than normal incidence of breast cancer in the Linn County community. So the fair partnered with Samaritan Health Services, which had a new women's imaging center. They got permission to use the logo and materials from the national campaign. Locally, they created an atmosphere in which people in the community were working together for a cause, Taylor said.

"We needed the perfect link," she said, and that was seeing bullriders wearing pink. More businesses than ever supported the 2006 fair. Neal McCoy's performance day was designated Tough Enough to Wear Pink Day and several businesses donated a dollar for each fairgoer dressed in pink. The day saw record attendance. "Neal McCoy totally played it up," Taylor said. "Everything we did was pink."

In 2007, the fair will add a golf tournament prior to the fair to raise funds for breast cancer research.

**Rick Pickering, Alameda County Fair**, Pleasanton, Calif., has found several partners, from law enforcement to the media, though his project is crisis management, not promotion. After the fair endured a tragic shooting incident in 1998, every effort has been made to prevent future incidents and manage any future crisis. Lessons were learned in 1998, but what good are they if nothing changes? he wondered.

So now the fair has an extensive crisis management plan which handles the five key issues: stop what's causing the crisis; attend to the victims; attend to the employees; attend to the involuntary participants; and attend to the press and media.

The fair has a "news media protocol" which is handed out to all attending press, and follows through by making sure fair management is accessible, Pickering said. Most importantly, "we speak with one voice," and that's partially the plan and partially the preparation.

"We instituted a tabletop training program at the fair," he said. One month in advance of the fair, they host a tabletop mock exercise, inviting the sheriff's department, fire

department, Alcoholic Beverage Control, health services, fair management and fair suppliers, including the carnival and anyone who might be involved in a crisis. They then go through the drill, around the table, what each player would do in the event of, for example, a bio-terrorism threat or a fire on the hill which spooked the animals first.

"We go person to person, what would you do?" Pickering said.

The training program has a dual purpose. "It's a good way to market the fair to people you do business with," he said. "We go over the concert lineup and the new food offerings." The tabletop exercise lasts two hours. "We trap them and buy them lunch." Pickering said it's also an invaluable way to meet any new players in the game when the chain of command changes in the community.

**Mike Bradley, California State Fair**, Sacramento, said that fair found it was time to update. The Farm is a longstanding agricultural program at the fair, but with budget cuts and concerns, it was time to take a hard look at it. It was becoming dry and stagnant, he recalled.

So the fair created Fairtime School Tours that would attract sponsors and partners in the areas of agriculture, nutrition and exercise. Partners like the Friends of the California State Fair, hospitals and health clinics funded the program. The fair organized two-hour tours of The Farm for schools kids on Tuesday mornings, but it included new information, from seed planting to the nursery to blacksmithing to handwashing to frontier agriculture. Each station was manned by fair staff. An activity book, which Kaiser Permanente funded, even had Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's signature on the back of the book.

Business partners brought in-kind fresh fruits and vegetables and each student went away with some knowledge or memento to share at school.

On the bonus side, the program received a lot of positive newspaper review, Bradley said.

**Tawny Tesconi, Sonoma-Marin Fair**, Petaluma, Calif., found a partner in the Animal Planet Network, partially accidentally.

For 18 years, the fair has held an Ugly Dog Contest. It needed some refreshing, so fair management decided to make it a world championship, but they had a hard time finding a national sponsor. First they upped the prize to \$1,500, which brought in out-of-state competitors. But national sponsors still didn't seem to get it, Tesconi said.

That's when they went online with the Ugly Dog Contest. The online component was launched in February. The fair is in June. "The first five days were great," she said. "Then a hacker got in and suddenly one dog had 20 million votes and the rest had 29,000."

The owners of the ugly dogs turned out to be a militant crowd and they felt wronged, Tesconi recalled. They started contacting the media and there was a huge flurry of coverage for the fair's Ugly Dog Contest. That led to national news coverage and finally to interest from Animal Planet, which taped the 2006 show and continues to air it every two months. Tesconi knows because every time it runs, they get calls and e-mails.

What could have been bad PR turned into a media blitz. Animal Planet greatly improved the production as well. "They transformed the stage into a great set," and paid a \$4,000 production fee.

The only downside was they wanted to push the other media out because of the money they invested, but a fair compromise was reached, Tesconi said.

In 2006, 23 million people in a 24-hour period saw some clipping of the Ugly Dog Show at the Marin-Sonoma County Fair. "We had 1.68 million hits on our web site," she concluded. — Linda Deckard

*Interviewed for this story: Jim Farley, (415) 499-6400; Tawny Tesconi, (707) 283-3247; Rick Pickering, (925) 426-7600; Mike Bradley, (916) 263-3247; Jan Taylor, (541) 926-4314*

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## CONCESSIONS

### ***Dodger Stadium***



### **DODGERS INTRODUCE ALL-YOU-CAN-EAT SEATS**

After test marketing an all-inclusive ticket concept three times last season, the Los Angeles Dodgers will launch it in the 2007 season. Dubbed the "All You Can Eat Pavilion," tickets for 3,000 right-field seats will include as many Dodger Dogs, peanuts, and other fan favorites as the ticket holder would like.

All that food comes at a price—seats that ran \$10 last season will run between \$20

for a member of a large group who purchased tickets for a mid-week game in advance to \$40 for a single Saturday night ticket, purchased on game day.

"With snack food at the ballpark running between \$3 and \$5.25 per item, it's a great value for a fan," said Bill Hunter, director of ticket operations for the Los Angeles Dodgers.

There are limits. Food service begins 90 minutes before game time, and ends two hours after the opening pitch. (The average game runs 2 hours, 48 minutes.) Hot dogs, peanuts, popcorn, nachos, soda and water are included. Beer, candy and ice cream are not, but are available for an additional cost.

"Fans like paying one price and not reaching for their wallet again," said Michael Hall, Group Sales director for the St. Louis Cardinals, who have offered versions of all-you-can-eat areas since 1996.

At Dodger Stadium, food is served at a regular concession stand and through buffets. "We test marketed it at three games in 2006," said Hunter. We capped the seats at 500, 1,000 and 1,500 seats over the three nights, so Levy Restaurants (the Dodgers concessions provider) could fine tune it."

Fans loved the idea, but in the early trials, the lines were too long. Self-serve conveniences, like automatic fountain soda dispensers, and barrels of peanuts, were added to get fans back to the game quicker.

In St. Louis, there are several seating areas that offer the same stadium staples, buffet style, but being in a stadium named Busch, they include beer — with limitations. Beer starts pouring 30 minutes before the game, and stops in the 8th inning. And legal age requirements still apply.

“The bartenders and ushers make the ultimate call if we have to cut somebody off,” Hall said.

“At the higher price points, we add menu items, like chicken breast, or barbeque,” Hall said.

While neither team would discuss profit margins, typical fountain soda mark-ups for fast-food restaurants exceed 60 percent. And movie theatre trade magazines have pegged the profit on popcorn at 90 cents on the dollar.

In other words, all-inclusive plans make for happy—if heavier—fans, without any negative impact to the club’s bottom line.

“We started with a pre-game picnic area in the mid 1990’s,” Hall said. “It was all-inclusive, but fans had to move to a reserved seat in the bowl.”

Cardinals fans wanted to stay and watch the game from the picnic area, but some of the seats were obstructed, so the team decided against it. Instead, they created new seating areas on the right-field side, and added a club-type area in center field.

“We sell seats in the picnic area now,” Hall said. “We lowered capacity to make sure none of the seats were obstructed.”

At both venues, the areas are set apart, so standard ticket holders can’t wander in for freebies. This also means all-inclusive ticket holders don’t have to wear wrist bracelets or have their hands stamped.

The deal appeals across marketing segments.

“Families, corporate parties, church groups, they all enjoy it,” Hall said.

Hunter said the Dodgers are finding it’s pre-selling especially well with groups.

They both market the idea heavily, in their collateral, online, and through direct-marketing mailings. “We’ve had lots of press, too,” Hunter said. Media hits have included stories that ran on TV, online, and in print. The All-You-Can-Eat deal also gave more than a few sports talk radio jockeys food for talk.

The Dodgers don’t rule out expanding the all-inclusive concept to include merchandise, parking or other amenities. “We can always grow,” said Hunter. “This first year, we’ll roll it out, and then we can build on it.”

And speaking of growing. . .

While health nuts can be as fanatical as a rabid baseball fan, neither club has had complaints about the overabundance of unhealthy all-inclusive food.



"Lots of jokes, though," said Hunter. "One person said we should take before and after pictures of season ticket holders in these seats."

Perhaps, if all-inclusive catches on, the 7th inning stretch will become 7th inning workout. Otherwise, the stadiums may need to invest in wider seats. — Liz Boardman

*Interviewed for this article: Bill Hunter, (323) 224-1478; Michael Hall, (314) 345-9600*

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## SHORT TAKES

### HOK SPORT DESIGNS DOMINICAN BASEBALL FACILITY FOR PADRES

HOK Sport and the San Diego Padres will break ground on a new baseball training academy for the Padres in San Cristobal, Dominican Republic. The 15-acre training academy will provide players with a training facility to prepare for baseball that includes two regulation-size practice fields, an 18,000 square foot players' residence to

accommodate up to 60 players, a 5,000 square foot managers'/coaches' residence and a 20,000 square foot clubhouse

Contact: Gina Leo, (816) 329-4409

### **GIANTS UNVEIL PLANS FOR GIANT SCOREBOARD**

The San Francisco Giants and AT&T plan to install a new Mitsubishi Electric Diamond Vision scoreboard, to be unveiled to the public at the beginning of the 2007 baseball season. Construction of what will be the highest quality outdoor scoreboard in the nation and one of the five largest scoreboards in baseball is currently underway and will be completed by the end of March. The board will stand 103 feet wide by 31-and-a-half feet high. The board will also feature a four-foot high strip below the main board to accommodate text or graphics.

Contact: Mark Scott, (714) 220-6896

### **IMPLOSION DATE SET FOR MEMORIAL COLISEUM**

Veterans Memorial Coliseum in New Haven, Conn. has yet another date with destiny. The oft-delayed implosion of the six-level steel and concrete structure has been scheduled for 7:30 a.m. on Jan. 20. Crews are getting ready by trucking in 15,000 rented tires to absorb the impact and expanding structures that will protect underground utilities.

Contact: Don Hurtado, (203) 876-2383

### **HAWAII BUREAU PARTNERS WITH SMG FOR WEB LAUNCH**

The Hawaii Visitors and Convention Bureau and SMG Hawaii/Hawaii Convention Center have launched BusinessAloha.com, an online resource for meeting planners and are promoting it with prizes for a few lucky winners. The HCC Giveaway provides 50 percent off its rate card and \$50,000 in destination services for new bookings finalized by Dec. 31. The HVCB Giveaway provides complimentary accommodations and reduced fees for event services and venues throughout the state of Hawaii by submitting a brief essay on why Hawaii is perfect for business or incentive meetings. Three winners will be chosen. The Giveaways can be accessed via the web site by clicking "promotions."

Contact: Teddi Anderson, (808) 535-9099, ext. 103

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## **HELP WANTED**

For more information or to submit listings, e-mail April Stroud, Director of Sales & Marketing at: [April@venuestoday.com](mailto:April@venuestoday.com)

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**Everett (Wash.) Events Center - Building Engineer** - Responsible for facility maintenance and operations. Minimum 4 years experience...

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To update your Fair or Festival Listing for the Resource Guide, contact:

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