



VENUEStoday

The news behind the headlines

Dear April,

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Welcome to your **Venues Today** weekly e-newsletter, full of the latest live entertainment industry news. Dave Brooks has reports from INTIX and the Super Bowl in this issue. Look for more coverage in our March magazine and next week's e-news, along with updates on the Stadium Managers Association gathering in Florida and IAAM's PAMC in Nashville. For further information or to subscribe to *Venues Today* visit www.venuestoday.com.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"The Mudhens were asked to get into hockey and football. If they own the team, all of the proceeds in excess of expenses will help pay debt service on the arena."—*Jim Donnelly, CEO, SeaGate Convention Centre, Toledo, Ohio, on the strategy of maximizing revenues to pay for an \$82 million arena there. The Mudhens are a non-profit 501C3 baseball team.*

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VENUE NEWS

Toledo's SeaGate Convention Centre



SMG SELECTED TO MANAGE NEW TOLEDO ARENA, SEAGATE CENTER

SMG was selected Feb. 1 from among three finalists to manage the new \$82 million arena to open in Toledo, Ohio, in September 2009, and the existing SeaGate Convention Centre, which will be connected to the new venue by a pedestrian bridge.

Jim Donnelly, current president and CEO of the SeaGate, has announced his plan to retire in January 2008. Donnelly told *Venues Today* that he and his wife are moving to Florida. He plans to stay involved in the business but will not be part of the new Toledo team. He turned 66 on Jan. 23, so he'll be 67 by the time he retires from the Toledo venue, where he has presided since 1990.

Donnelly was part of the team that selected SMG, which will answer to the Lucas County Board of Commissioners. Bridgette Kabat,

chief of staff for that board, said that besides county staff, outside partners involved in the process included the Toledo Mudhens baseball team administration, convention center reps and the local hotel industry. "We heard a series of presentations with the three groups," she said, referring to SMG, Global Spectrum and IFG. "We just felt a kinship with SMG. We were on the same track, clicking right along. It was almost like family."

The board and SMG are now in the process of negotiating one contract with two pieces — pre-construction services up to the point the arena opens, and operating the arena and convention center. "We've asked them to give us a timeline on how they see the transition into our convention center before the arena comes on line. We want them in there early." She said it would probably be a minimum of a five-year contract.

The ultimate goal is to eliminate duplication of effort, "stepping on other people's jurisdictions," Kabat said. SMG will be able to market both facilities at the same time and even involve Fifth Third Field, home of baseball's Mudhens, which is also adjacent to the arena and SeaGate. "We could have run it with one staff that is government staff, but actually the current staff at the convention center is not county staff. It's the staff of the convention and visitors bureau. We are one of the appointing authorities on that board," Kabat said.

Donnelly pointed out that the new arena will complete what has essentially become a sports and entertainment district. The 75-year-old Toledo Sports Arena, which was owned by the Gladioux Family and sold to the city, will be demolished. The city is building a marina district at that site. Kabat said the success of the downtown venues in Grand Rapids, Mich., were an inspiration to Toledo's plan.

The new arena will have 8,750 seats, expandable to 10,000. HNTB was just selected as the architect; Lathrop Turner as construction manager. Ground will be broken in early summer or late spring.

Half of the \$82 million cost is a two percent increase in the hotel/motel tax, Kabat said. The rest will be from operations, naming rights, suite sales, advertising, all of the usual suspects.

Donnelly said SMG, Gateway Consulting and Garfield Traub Development will be seeking a title sponsor. Kabat also mentioned Pizzuti Solutions as a consultant.

Kabat said the county is also applying for state dollars from the Ohio Arts and Sports Facilities Commission and is looking for federal transportation dollars to help cover the costs of the new arena. "We are working with our regional transit authority to have a station at the arena. At Fifth Third Field, we have a bus station and were able to draw in federal dollars."

The final revenue piece will be net operating income from the arena, Kabat said. "Our preliminary numbers looks like the facility could support \$10 million in debt over operating costs over 30 years. We're tweaking those numbers each and every week."

The Mudhens, which operate as a 501C3, will purchase a hockey team, either the Toledo Storm which currently plays at the sports arena and is owned by Gladioux, or another one, Donnelly said. The baseball nonprofit will also purchase an af2 team. "The Mudhens were asked to get into hockey and football," Donnelly said. "If they own the team, all of the proceeds in excess of expenses will help pay debt service on the arena. A private owner would take those profits out of town. The nonprofit can't move the franchise out of Lucas County."

Donnelly sees similar entertainment districts as the wave of the future and “much better for the general population of the area.” He also sees private management of these districts as the trend. “It’s better for the populace because there’s not competition, but concentration in one central district of parking, recreational opportunities, bars and restaurants.” Such districts also increase economies of scale and the lessened cost of people, equipment and infrastructure falls to the bottom line.

“We put in a micro turbine which is generating 55 percent of our electricity,” Donnelly said by way of example. “In our discussion with SMG, we asked can we design a larger area in our building to supply cooling, heating and electricity to the arena? Could we do the same thing for the Mudhens? See the economies of scale of us becoming a central power supplier?”

The county’s arena plans supercede earlier and failed efforts by the city to build an arena where the Toledo Sports Arena now resides. That effort has been ongoing for more than five years. Several of the city fathers involved now sit on the county board of commissioners, Kabat said. And “the city will be at the table every step of the way,” she said.

One of those commissioners, Tina Wozniak, said she is excited about the “enhanced vibrancy of downtown” resulting from the new entertainment district. — Linda Deckard

Interviewed for this story: Jim Donnelly, (419) 255-3300, ext. 5010; Bridgette Kabat, (419) 213-4500; Tina Wozniak, (419) 213-4315



2007 INTIX ANNUAL CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION, HOUSTON, JAN. 30-FEB. 2

Above, from left: Jamey Rootes, president of Business Operations for the Houston Texans National Football League team, was the keynote speaker at this year’s INTIX conference. Center: Christy Hartman(from left), Jessica Horak and Joei Boyd from Communikay Graphics in Alvin, Texas ,were a popular trio on the convention floor, ready to talk printing with anyone in need of a new printer. Right: This year’s Lifetime Achievement Award went to Debra K. Duncan, who returned from retirement to work as the University of Southern California’s ticketing manager. (VT Photos)



Above, left: Andrew Recinos of Jacobson Consulting Applications in Portland spent most of the day with friend Amber Marisa Cook of the University Musical Society in Ann Arbor, Mich. helping her look for a new ticketing contract. Center: Sebastian Quinn, Nick Begley and Mike Evensen, all from XOS Technologies, helped host a cocktail reception on the second night of the INTIX conference at the Hilton Hotel in Houston. Right: Performing arts centers were one of the best represented groups at this year's INTIX conference. Pictured above are John-Michael Whitney of the Shubert Theater in New Haven, Conn. alongside Sharon D. King from the Peace Center for the Performing Arts in Greenville, S.C. (VT Photos)



Paul Sergeant; Glenn Menard; Pat Christenson

FACES & PLACES: MENARD TO ATLANTA; SERGEANT TO BRISBANE; CHRISTENSON TO STARDOM

Glenn Menard has resigned his post as general manager of the **Louisiana Superdome**, New Orleans, SMG, and has moved to Atlanta. Menard told Venues Today he plans to stay in the industry. His wife, Jill, will finally work out of the home office of Edelman Public Relations, where she has commuted one week a month for the past several years.

"New Orleans is tough," Menard admitted of the rebuilding effort post Hurricane Katrina. He moved to New Orleans to work for SMG in 1998 and helped open the New Orleans Arena, then helped rebuild it for National Basketball Association play, then moved to the Superdome and since helped rebuild it after it was destroyed by the hurricane. His building expertise also includes working on the design committee for the Cajundome, Lafayette, La., after 12 years of working at Blackham Coliseum at Louisiana State University. He also worked for the Olympics in Atlanta and the World Cup in Dallas, besides employment with several motorsports venues.

Menard said he has several projects in the works and plans to continue his membership in the International Association of Assembly Managers, a group he joined later in his career than he should have, he said. He particularly learned from and contributed to IAAM's shelter task force, which developed guidelines that will help the next facility manager in the path of a killer storm.

Doug Thornton, SMG regional VP, told the local newspaper the plan is to have a new GM at the Superdome by June.

Meanwhile, another private management firm, **Ogden IFC**, has hired **Paul Sergeant**, 45, as general manager of Suncorp Stadium, Brisbane, Australia.

For the past three and a half years Sergeant was chief executive of the 74,500 seat Millennium Stadium in Cardiff, Wales.

Sergeant replaces **Alan Graham** who is leaving to pursue private business interests and will retain a consulting role with Ogden IFC. Sergeant is expected to arrive down under the week of Feb. 16.

The *Las Vegas Sun* has named **Pat Christenson** the town's Most Influential Sports Figure. Christenson is currently president of **Las Vegas Events**.

Other contenders included Andre Agassi, Las Vegas Mayor Oscar Goodman, Las Vegas Speedway owner Bruton Smith and George Maloof Jr., owner and operator of the Palms Hotel and Casino.

Christenson was assistant director, then director of the Thomas & Mack Center and Sam Boyd Stadium from 1983-2001. As president of Las Vegas Events, he directs an operation whose mission is to produce, present and support events that contribute to the economic growth of Las Vegas and Southern Nevada including the Wrangler National Finals Rodeo, NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series, NHRA Drag Racing, USA Basketball Men's Senior National Team Training and Exhibition, the Las Vegas Bowl, PBR World Finals, Rolex FEI World Cup Finals, Vegoose Music Festival and the signature New Year's Eve production, America's Party.

In addition, Christenson currently serves as the chairman of the Arena Task Force consulting on the design, operation and marketing of a new arena being proposed in Las Vegas. — Linda Deckard

Interviewed for this story: Glenn Menard, (504) 957-6285; Greg Adermann, communications manager, Suncorp Stadium, 617 3331 5162; Michael Mack, Las Vegas Events, (702) 260-8605.



BOOKINGS



HOTtickets

DINOSAURS WALK ALL OVER AUSTRALIA

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. 9, 2007. 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:* \$3,740,439; *Event:* Walking With Dinosaurs; *Venue:* **AcerArena, Sydney, Australia**; *Attendance:* 82,774; *Ticket Range:* \$74.88-\$30.65; *Promoter:* WWT-Rex Touring Pty. Ptd.; *Dates:* Jan. 9-21; *No. of Shows:* 21
- 2) *Gross Sales:* \$1,356,523; *Event:* Delirium; *Venue:* **The Palace Of Auburn Hills (Mich.)**; *Attendance:* 15,962; *Ticket Range:* \$112.50-\$39.50; *Promoter:* Cirque du Soleil, Live Nation, Palace Sports & Entertainment; *Dates:* Jan. 24-27; *No. of Shows:* 3
- 3) *Gross Sales:* \$1,320,326; *Event:* Justin Timberlake; *Venue:* **HP Pavilion at San Jose (Calif.)**; *Attendance:* 17,116; *Ticket Range:* \$96-\$56; *Promoter:* AEG Live, Concerts West; *Dates:* Jan. 11; *No. of Shows:* 1
- 4) *Gross Sales:* \$1,169,049; *Event:* Justin Timberlake; *Venue:* **Jobing.com Arena, Glendale, Ariz.**; *Attendance:* 14,645; *Ticket Range:* \$85-\$39.50; *Promoter:* AEG Live, Concerts West; *Dates:* Jan. 14; *No. of Shows:* 1
- 5) *Gross Sales:* \$1,126,172; *Event:* Rod Stewart; *Venue:* **BankAtlantic Center, Fort Lauderdale, Fla.**; *Attendance:* 13,439; *Ticket Range:* \$127.75-\$55; *Promoter:* AEG Live, Concerts West; *Dates:* Jan. 12; *No. of Shows:* 1

10,001-15,000 Seats

- 1) *Gross Sales:* \$2,091,712; *Event:* Walking With Dinosaurs; *Venue:* **Brisbane (Australia) Entertainment Centre**; *Attendance:* 39,757; *Ticket Range:* \$74.90-\$30.66; *Promoter:* WWT-Rex Touring Pty. Ptd.; *Dates:* Jan. 26-Feb. 3; *No. of Shows:* 10
- 2) *Gross Sales:* \$1,279,311; *Event:* Roger Waters; *Venue:* **Brisbane (Australia) Entertainment Centre**; *Attendance:* 9,503; *Ticket Range:* \$269.41-\$75.26; *Promoter:* Michael Coppel Presents; *Dates:* Feb. 5; *No. of Shows:* 1
- 3) *Gross Sales:* \$356,728; *Event:* John Mayer; *Venue:* **Jacksonville (Fla.) Veterans Memorial Arena**; *Attendance:* 6,974; *Ticket Range:* \$44.50-\$35.50; *Promoter:* Fantasma; *Dates:* Jan. 25; *No. of Shows:* 1
- 4) *Gross Sales:* \$343,571; *Event:* The Tragically Hip; *Venue:* **John Labatt Centre, London, Ontario**; *Attendance:* 8,589; *Ticket Range:* \$41.88-\$33.42; *Promoter:* House

of Blues Canada; *Dates:* Feb. 5; *No. of Shows:* 1

5) *Gross Sales:* \$223,065; *Event:* Tenacious D; *Venue:* **Brisbane (Australia) Entertainment Centre**; *Attendance:* 4,141; *Ticket Range:* \$53.86; *Promoter:* The Frontier Touring Company; *Dates:* Jan. 13; *No. of Shows:* 1

5,001-10,000 Seats

1) *Gross Sales:* \$242,393; *Event:* The Fray; *Venue:* **BankUnited Center at The University of Miami, Coral Gables, Fla.**; *Attendance:* 7,212; *Ticket Range:* \$34.50-\$29.50; *Promoter:* Live Nation; *Dates:* Jan. 25; *No. of Shows:* 1

2) *Gross Sales:* \$239,660; *Event:* Jamie Foxx; *Venue:* **Borgata Resort Spa & Casino, Atlantic City, N.J.**; *Attendance:* 2,211; *Ticket Range:* \$225-\$150; *Promoter:* Live Nation; *Dates:* Jan. 14; *No. of Shows:* 1

3) *Gross Sales:* \$232,814; *Event:* John Mayer; *Venue:* **BankUnited Center at The University of Miami, Coral Gables, Fla.**; *Attendance:* 6,340; *Ticket Range:* \$39.50-\$37.50; *Promoter:* Fantasma; *Dates:* Jan. 26; *No. of Shows:* 1

4) *Gross Sales:* \$208,458; *Event:* Monster Jam; *Venue:* **Dodge Arena, Hidalgo, Texas**; *Attendance:* 15,943; *Ticket Range:* \$22-\$10; *Promoter:* Live Nation Motorsports; *Dates:* Jan. 26-28; *No. of Shows:* 2

5) *Gross Sales:* \$207,585; *Event:* O.A.R.; *Venue:* **UIC Pavilion, Chicago**; *Attendance:* 6,170; *Ticket Range:* \$35; *Promoter:* Live Nation; *Dates:* Jan. 19; *No. of Shows:* 1

5,000 or Fewer Seats

1) *Gross Sales:* \$4,389,020; *Event:* High School Musical; *Venue:* **Fox Theatre, Atlanta**; *Attendance:* 84,519; *Ticket Range:* \$66-\$25; *Promoter:* Theater of the Stars; *Dates:* Jan. 12-28; *No. of Shows:* 23

2) *Gross Sales:* \$2,347,155; *Event:* The Lion King; *Venue:* **Bob Carr Performing Arts Center, Orlando, Fla.**; *Attendance:* 34,453; *Ticket Range:* \$125-\$20; *Promoter:* PTG Florida; *Dates:* Jan. 2-15; *No. of Shows:* 16

3) *Gross Sales:* \$575,977; *Event:* Larry the Cable Guy; *Venue:* **Fox Theatre, Detroit**; *Attendance:* 13,193; *Ticket Range:* \$44.75; *Promoter:* Outback Concerts; *Dates:* Jan. 19-20; *No. of Shows:* 3

4) *Gross Sales:* \$471,984; *Event:* Larry the Cable Guy; *Venue:* **Youkey Theatre, Lakeland, Fla.**; *Attendance:* 11,676; *Ticket Range:* \$41.75; *Promoter:* Outback Concerts; *Dates:* Jan. 11-14; *No. of Shows:* 6

5) *Gross Sales:* \$453,008; *Event:* All Shook Up; *Venue:* **Wharton Center For Performing Arts, East Lansing, Mich.**; *Attendance:* 9,305; *Ticket Range:* \$58-\$25; *Promoter:* In-house; *Dates:* Jan. 16-21; *No. of Shows:* 8

Compiled by Rob Ocampo, HotTickets@venuestoday.com

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Jonezetta



you take what you can get. No matter what. Especially if it gets you in front of new potential philosophy being taken by up-and-coming Jackson, Miss. punk-pop band Jonezetta, who has been in the country for the past 9 months, hopping from tour to tour as they work their way toward an eventual first headlining tour this fall.

The high energy band, whose music is a mix of such neo-new wavers as the Killers and a dose of dance punk in the vein of the Faint and the Rapture, started out three years ago in Clinton, Miss., and after several years of gigging locally and regionally, they finally got out on tour last March after finishing their debut album for the Tooth & Nail record label.

"The whole idea behind it is that we're a young band and we're just getting out there so far on tour?" explained road manager Alex Warren, a friend of the group who began working for them (they are currently without management). Since coming off the Tooth & Nail tour last spring, they've done another up-and-coming act, Anberlin. They took a single week off in June before jumping in with friends in As Cities Burn, which led to one of their most successful pairings to date, a still-ongoing tour with rockers Mute Math and fellow new wave revivalists Shiny Toy Guns in September.

Booking agent Dave Galea of The Agency Group said his plan with Jonezetta is pretty simple: to book acts he represents that have graduated from small clubs to 1,000-capacity rooms, such as the recently sold-out Paramore. "If an intelligent opportunity presents itself from a touring standpoint, you need to take it," he said. "No one is selling records and acquiring fans by sitting at home – you need to get out there."

"As we do more tours, people are getting to recognize and know the music more and they're striding toward a bigger fan base because they were playing to thousands and they had a lot of success," said Warren. That tour ended just before Thanksgiving and less than a week later the band was back on the road with Action Action for dates that wrapped just before Christmas. Early January brought a few more dates, another tour with another headlining buzz band, Waking Ashland, which began on January 15 and will end in February. "Now we're going out again with Anberlin for a two month tour and then we'll be back on the road," Warren said.

"We went from Mute Math, playing for hundreds, if not thousands a night to Action Action playing in front of 50 or 100 each night," first time tour manager Warren added. "We've gotten over the nerves of how many people we're playing in front of because there's a million bands out there and we feel like we're up to the challenge." Besides, even when they do get home for more than a week, they start itching to go back out on the road with their goal of landing their own headlining tour.

According to Galea, ticket prices on Jonezetta tours have "normally ranged from \$10-\$14, but now they're looking at more like \$12-\$14."

Galea said the real balancing act is being smart about which bands you pair yourself with. One of the reasons Jonezetta works with a lot of different artists, which opens them up to a lot of different

"This isn't unique to Jonezetta, but the hardest part about booking any band at that level is the level of competition these days. There are literally hundreds of bands competing for the same opening spots."

But for now, if there's a band out there with a few records out who has a solid fanbase and wants Jonezetta to tour with them, it doesn't matter if they like their music or not, Jonezetta is probably going to join them on the road. That might explain why they've had a total of about 30 days off at home since they began seriously touring last March.

Galea said a headlining tour probably wouldn't begin before the fall, unless of course, another better offer doesn't come up first. — Gil Kaufman

Interviewed for this story: Dave Galea, (212) 581-3100; Alex Warren, (601) 214-2141

MARKETING

Glenn Taylor of the Houston Symphony moderates a discussion panel with Patti Martin of the Houston Health Museum and Joseph Conner of the Houston Theater District.



TARGETING DIVERSE MARKETS TAKES INVOLVEMENT, INVESTMENT AND INITIATIVE

HOUSTON — Diverse groups and minorities are being looked at around the nation as a new market for ticket sales, which was a topic of discussion at the annual INTIX conference here Jan. 31. But can traditional marketing techniques be used to appeal to these groups?

While arenas and amphitheatres are turning to Latin and

Reggaeton acts to attract new audiences, performing arts centers are undergoing their own self-evaluation in hopes of determining what methods do and don't work.

Panelist Patti Martin of the Houston Health Museum and former ticketing manager of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo said that it was important to make oneself visible in minority communities early on. Just as she had attended various functions for business and charity groups like the Chamber of Commerce, she had also begun to seek out minority associations.

"You have to understand your target market and find out how they want to be communicated with," she said.

Martin said she subscribes to a school of thought called the "Four I's" when reaching out to minority groups. The first is to be generally interested in the customer, and in turn, trying to create interest in one's own organization. The second is being included through outreach techniques.

"For me that means showing up to events I'm invited to and staying in contact with people who are key members of the community."

With that comes the importance of being invested, and for Martin, that means "not thinking of people as numbers, even when the job description requires large sales made at a fast pace." Instead, she added, it was important to "take ownership of the group's goals and understand what they mean."

Finally, Martin said it was important to be involved — "you can't just sit in your house and sell tickets," she joked.

Research also helps, said Joseph Cooper of the Houston Theater District.

"You have to really make an effort to grasp an understanding of how these communities work. Who are the leaders? What do they value? You can't just show up on the day of show and hope to move tickets, or these groups will say 'Here they go again, wanting something from us. Why should we care?'"

He also laid out some other rules for dealing with diverse communities. Most importantly, what descriptive terminology do the groups use internally? In Houston, people of Mexican and South American descent often prefer to be called Chicanos, while the same individuals in Southern California may prefer to be called Latinos or Hispanics.

Besides defining the target audience, Cooper said it's also important to recognize that each community possesses its own diversity with subgroups divided regionally or ethnically. He also added that community leaders in minority groups, especially those with a large base of non-English speaking individuals, can hold significant influence over their community.

"You have to remember that Latinos are being targeted by all major art societies and consumer groups for their disposable income and they're starting to feel empowered," he said. "When things begin working, find out what's driving it and don't be afraid to ask questions. I've also found that focus groups work really well."

And diversity doesn't always mean minorities. Glenn Taylor at the Houston Symphony said his company has begun targeting a population segment that rarely goes to see classical music — young people.

In hopes of capturing a bigger chunk of the young professionals market, the Houston Symphony has undertaken a number of marketing initiatives, including a separate web site with a musician's blog and additional interactive features.

"Our goal in going after young people isn't necessarily about making money, but about getting some new people involved and creating some excitement at the symphony hall," he said. — Dave Brooks

Interviewed for this article: Patti Martin, (713) 521-1515; Joseph Cooper, (713) 227-2787; Glenn Taylor, (713) 224-4240

OLEVIA AND AEG INK MULTI-PROPERTY SPONSOR DEAL

AEG, the international sports and entertainment company that owns venues like L.A. Live, the Staples Center, has inked an innovative new sponsorship deal with Syntax-Brilliant Corporation.

Under the agreement, Syntax-Brilliant will place their HDTV brand, Olevia™'s products, throughout AEG's facilities—on large exterior signs, scoreboards, concourses, and hospitality areas. AEG will also integrate Olevia™ televisions throughout the venues. Olevia™ will have category exclusivity at each venue.

The two entities are calling the deal "ground breaking." But is it?

"It is a unique arrangement because there are so many moving parts in the deal," said Richard Sherwood, president of Front Row Marketing. "First of all there are the hi-tech products to be utilized and then there are many different venues, events, teams, and attractions in the U.S. and London that will be exposed to the products — all in a single contract with AEG."

The companies are not releasing the terms of the agreement, but call it "multi-million dollar." The central component is sponsorship opportunities at L.A. Live, the four-million-square-foot sports and entertainment complex AEG is developing next door to Staples Center and the Los Angeles Convention Center. The \$2.5 billion L.A. Live covers six-city blocks and will feature the Nokia Theatre at L.A. Live, a 7,100-seat venue that will host high profile awards shows, special events, and concerts; a 2,200-seat capacity live music venue, Club Nokia; a 54-story, 1,000-room hotel; a 15-screen Regal Cineplex movie theatre; broadcast facilities for ESPN; and entertainment, restaurant, residential and office space. Sections of L.A. Live are slated to open in the Fall of 2007.

But the deal doesn't end in L.A. Through 2010, the Olevia™ brand and equipment will be featured at other AEG venues. Starting immediately, their sponsorship will be evident at Los Angeles Kings National Hockey League games, and in the team's radio and game night advertising. They'll also be highly visible at the Amgen Tour of California, Feb. 18-25. In the future, they'll be featured at Kansas City's Sprint Center, which opens in October 2007; Los Angeles' Staples Center; Harrison, N.J.'s Red Bull Park; and Ontario, Calif.'s Citizens Business Bank Arena, slated to open in 2008.

"It's very appropriate that AEG's first multiple-property Founding Partner agreement is also our first in the extremely relevant 'High Definition TV' category," Timothy J. Leiweke, president and CEO, AEG, said in a statement. "With Olevia™'s emphasis and priority on the broadcast and presentation of live sports and entertainment, and AEG's core objective on presenting and viewing live sports and entertainment in person, it seemed natural for this partnership which ultimately provides the best entertainment experience to consumers no matter where they choose to watch our events."

This is not Syntax-Brilliant's first foray into sponsorships.

"We have a thorough, on-going sponsorship with ESPN," said Chad Giron, media relations for Syntax-Brilliant. "We're not specifically in any other venues, but we have outfitted ESPN's operations with (televisions) at events like the CES (Consumer Electronics Show) in Las Vegas and, recently, Sundance in Park City, Utah."

"This sponsorship with AEG creates powerful opportunities to extend the Olevia™ and Vivitar brands into the sports and entertainment markets nationally and internationally, and to work with a partner proven to create, execute and manage compelling events, venue and franchises," added Hope Frank, chief marketing officer, Syntax-Brilliant.

As one of L.A. Live's Founding Partner's, Olevia™ will receive a high-level of brand exposure. They will be touted on interactive displays, like the newly developed advertising towers; on the giant LED screen on Nokia Plaza, on rotating displays outside Nokia Theatre, and on fixed signs throughout L.A. Live—an area that is being compared to New York City's Times Square.

As part of the deal, Syntax-Brilliant receives tickets to events at both the Nokia Theatre and Club Nokia to use for corporate hospitality.

"This landmark agreement exemplifies Olevia™'s ascension to the top tier of digital entertainment brands," said Vincent Sollitto, CEO and chairman, Syntax-Brilliant, said in a statement.

"There have been multiple venue deals made in the past, but not necessarily with the sizzle of this one," Sherwood said. "It sounds like this will help expose a lot of people to the brands and their capabilities." — Liz Boardman

Interviewed for this story: Hope Frank, (602) 380-2027; Chad Giron, (602) 380-2027; Dick Sherwood, (215) 218-7529

CONCESSIONS



From left, some fans begin to take refuge from the heavy rains during the first quarter of the game, but many remain in their street clothes hoping to beat the weather; (center) by the beginning of the half-time show, nearly every fan had either purchased or worn some type of rain coat, or simply left the game; (right) Colt's quarterback Peyton Manning accepts the game's MVP award — the only dry moment of the game. (VT Photos)

SOGGY SUPER BOWL MEANS NEW REVENUES AT DOLPHIN STADIUM

MIAMI — What happens when it rains during one of the biggest sporting events in the United States? Todd Boyan, general manager at Dolphin Stadium in Miami, turned it into an opportunity, finding a way to boost per caps and merchandising sales at this year's Super Bowl, produced by the National Football League.

Merchandise sales were up, specialty items sales went through the roof, and per caps were way up, hitting \$17.80 at the Feb. 4 game. Boyan said the rainy weather and wet conditions were the driving force behind most of the merchandise and specialty sales,

which he estimated consisted of "the vast bulk of our non-Super Bowl-logo items."

The biggest seller of the day — plastic ponchos. Nicole Epley, the Dolphin's merchandising coordinator for the game, said her team sold over 12,000 plastic ponchos to protect fans from the rain at \$5 a-piece.

"We knew rain was coming, so we placed a huge order with one of our suppliers in Tampa," she said. "When the rain started picking up, we had fans all over the stadium searching for the ponchos. One guy would see another putting one on and ask where they could get one. We didn't need signs because everyone was talking about them."

The plastic ponchos covered most of the body, and were sold folded into the size of a small menu. The ponchos were normally used for emergency crews working in wet conditions, but have been used by the Dolphins and other open-air football stadiums where rain can affect game play.

"We expected to sell a lot more of the ponchos than a normal game because most of the fans who came were from out of town, and we didn't expect them to have brought a rain coat," Boyan said. "In fact all week, sports announcers had been bragging about the beautiful weather in South Florida, and we didn't get the rain announcement until Friday, so we expected a lot of people to be unprepared."

The poncho sales were set up in team stores throughout the lower concourses of the stadium at stations near the exit doors of the shops. While regular shoppers were allowed to peruse the store, those interested in buying ponchos formed a separate line and paid cash. Special merchandise workers were on hand to collect the money and hand out ponchos. The lines got as long as 20 to 30 people, but never took more than two to three minutes to move through.

"We had a system in place that has worked at the Dolphin's rain games," he said. "We don't usually get this wet weather during football season, but we were able to pull it off pretty well," Boyan said.

Since the Dolphins controlled the sales of the ponchos, they were able to keep all proceeds as opposed to the NFL's Super Bowl merchandising, which they receive a fraction of, that Boyan said he couldn't disclose.

The biggest non-Super Bowl related merchandise items to sell were rain jackets and golf jackets, available on the first and second levels of the facility.

NFL merchandising coordinator Derrell Hankins said the most popular items for the league's 34 merchandise stations were specialty Super Bowl t-shirts, followed by pennants and Super Bowl windbreakers.

"We didn't change much in terms of weather-related operations for sales," said Hankins. "We did what we normally do and put everything in plastic bags so that the items wouldn't get wet, but otherwise it was business as usual."

Each fan at the game was given a free Super Bowl XLI seat cushion, and a Visa promotion at the stadium gave out free blankets in the concourse. Otherwise, the game was devoid of freebies, and prices on most food items were raised. Food items were raised by an average of \$1.25, while plastic bottled beers were increased from \$7.50 to \$10.

"We were worried that the rain would drive down food sales because people would be reluctant to get out of their seats in the rain, but that wasn't the case," Boyan said. "A lot of people congregated in the concourse to watch the end of the game on the

television monitors. It was just too wet for some people. We actually redirected our food sales people into the concourse because we were making more sales indoors than out in the stadium." — Dave Brooks

Interviewed for this article: Todd Boyan, (305) 623-6100; Nicole Epley, (305) 614-7563; Derrell Hankins, (202) 573-4823



2007 FAIRS & FESTIVALS RESOURCE GUIDE

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SHORT TAKES

HEADLINER, DATES SET FOR HONDA CIVIC TOUR

Fall Out Boy will headline the 40-city 2007 Honda Civic Tour. The tour kicks off April 18 at the Verizon Amphitheater, Charlotte, N.C., playing mostly amphitheatres, some arenas and a few performing arts centers. Announced dates conclude June 11 at the Charter One Pavilion, Chicago. Supporting Fall Out Boy will be Plus Forty Four (+44), the band created by former Blink-182 members Travis Barker and Mark Hoppus, also past Honda Civic Tour headliners, The Academy Is, Paul Wall and Cobra Starship. The presale, tied to Fall Out Boy's album release, began yesterday. The general onsale starts Feb. 17.

Contact: www.hondacivictour.com

MINNESOTA STATE FAIR IMPROVEMENTS APPROVED

More than \$5.3 million in improvements and maintenance projects for the Minnesota State Fairgrounds were approved by the fair's board of managers during the annual meeting of the Minnesota State Agricultural Society in January. Approved projects include preliminary work on a new International Bazaar to open in 2008, a new restroom complex, a roof for the Coliseum, a major upgrade to the fair's electric

distribution system and hundreds of painting, maintenance and landscape jobs across the historic 320-acre State Fairgrounds. All projects are funded through State Fair operating income and grants from the Minnesota State Fair Foundation. The 2007 fair runs Aug. 23-Sept. 3.

Contact: Brienna Schuette, (651) 288-4452

ENGLAND'S DONINGTON PARK SOLD

Donington Park Racetrack, Castle Donington, Derby, England, has been sold to the newly formed Donington Ventures Leisure Ltd., lead by Simon Gillett and Lee Gill. The consortium also purchased surrounding properties. The 150-year lease at Donington Park includes the right to stage events at the venue, a privilege they bought from Live Nation.

Contact: Nav Sidhu, 44-207-491-9900

GROUND BROKEN FOR SAN MARCOS CONVENTION CENTER

The \$71 million hotel and conference center complex in San Marcos, Texas, is slated to open in October 2008. Construction began last week. The hotel adjoining the 77,300-square-foot conference center is being developed by John Q. Hammons Hotels and Resorts LLC of Missouri. The city will own the conference center. The architect is Lohmeyere-Fussell Architects PC.

Contact: City of San Marcos, (512) 393-8000

PITTSBURGH CONVENTION CENTER FLOOR GIVES WAY

A section of the concrete floor of the David L. Lawrence Convention Center, Pittsburgh, Pa., gave way under the weight of a tractor trailer, forcing the postponement of the Pittsburgh International Auto Show, which was to begin this weekend. The concrete slab fell onto a walkway below. No one was injured. The auto show is scheduled through Feb. 18 and may still go forward with a shorter run.

Contact: Convention Center office, (412) 565-6000

HELP WANTED

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

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Compass Facility Management, Cedar Rapids, IA - Executive Director - Compass Facility Management, Inc. (www.compassmgmt.com), a fast growing firm specializing in...

City of Mesa (Ariz.) - Events Coordinator - \$44,740 - \$60,403. Duties: Coordinates client use of the MesaConvention Center...

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