

THE NEWS BEHIND THE HEADLINES : SPORTS : MUSIC : FAMILY SHOWS : CONVENTIONS : FAIRS

Venues

TODAY

Dear Subscriber,

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Welcome to your **Venues Today** weekly e-newsletter, full of the latest live entertainment industry news. Writer Dave Brooks has returned from the rowdy Rock the Bells concert in Devore, Calif., and has filed his report on the concert. For further information or to subscribe to *Venues Today* visit www.venuestoday.com.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"Nobody got hurt..Some people had heat exhaustion, but we didn't have much in the way of injuries. You have to realize that people are not going to sit there and watch this concert as if it were Dave Matthews." — *Jim Granger of Contemporary Services Corporation on security at Saturday's Rock the Bells Concert in Devore, Calif.*

— *Headlining the concert was Rage Against the Machine.*

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VENUE NEWS



Rage Against the Machine performs at the Rock the Bells concert; Public Enemy's Flava Flav gets funky during his Rock the Bells set.

ROCK THE BELLS SETS OFF SAN BERNARDINO

DEVORE, Calif. — Tensions were high as a historic hip-hop and rock concert invaded Southern California on Saturday, but security personnel deemed the event a success with no major incidents and a sell-out performance.

The Rock the Bells concert at the Hyundai Pavilion in Devore attracted 45,000 concertgoers to the facility, which split fans between a general admission “pit” near the front of the stage, a VIP-seating area behind the pit and a massive general admission lawn area behind the seats. Currently in its fourth year, Rock the Bells’ popularity swelled after independent concert organizer Guerilla Union announced the show would include performances by the recently reunited Rage Against the Machine, who had previously only played one show together at Indio, Calif.’s Coachella in April since breaking up in 2001. Also on the bill was the Wu-Tang Clan, who hadn’t played together in three years. Saturday’s show was the third performance featuring both groups — Rage and Wu kicked off the Rock The Bells festival tour with two sold-out concerts at Randall’s Island in New York on July 28th and 29th.

“It was a real blessing that fell into our laps,” said Cheng Weisberg, CEO of Guerilla Union, which partnered with Live Nation to promote the show. “We were aware that Rage was looking to do some shows that would have a really big impact.”

Jim Granger, vice president of Contemporary Services Corporation, which provided security at the show, said he believed the concert was a success and was pleased that there were no injuries in the young crowd.

“Nobody got hurt,” he said. “Some people had heat exhaustion, but we didn’t have much in the way of injuries. You have to realize that people are not going to sit there and watch this concert as if it were Dave Matthews.”

While no one got hurt, there were isolated incidents around the venues. Several fans lit large trash fires in the grass area during the concert, and security forces tangled with the crowd before the opening of the Rage Against the Machine set as some fans tried to break through a barricade and storm the capacity-filled lower bowl. Some got through,

but most were held back, explained Granger.

"The sheriff stepped in behind our guys and started holding the line," Granger said. There were also some incidents involving the deployment of pepper spray, although Granger said his staff doesn't carry the agent. He estimated he had between 400 to 500 people working the event for CSC, as well as an additional 40 to 50 uniformed officers on site. San Bernardino Public Information Officer Arden Wiltshire confirmed her department used pepper spray at the concert "on at least one occasion."

"It was nice to see that Live Nation steps up with the right amount of staffing as well," Granger said, estimating the promoter had about 100 guest services employees on staff, as well as EMT teams with first aid stations located on both sides of the stage.

The event was originally scheduled to be held at the National Orange Show Speedway in nearby San Bernardino, but promoter Guerilla Union opted to move the concert to the normally assigned-seating venue in Devore.

"After we learned about the scope of the event and the capacity they expected, we decided it would be better held at a larger venue," said National Orange Show marketing director Michelle Rogers. "The demand was a lot more than we expected, and when we began to examine what would be involved in putting on an event of this scale, we knew that we weren't quite ready."

Weisberg said he thought the addition of Rage Against the Machine to the bill frightened the Orange Show staff, which doesn't typically host rock concerts. "We basically moved from a venue that was just barely tolerating us, to a venue that was embracing us. It made a huge difference," he said.

Concert organizers announced that they sold out the 45,000-seat venue the day before the Aug. 11 concert. Tickets ranged from \$79.50 for general admission to \$150 for VIP tickets. Besides access to a tented VIP area with its own bar, couches and pool table, VIP ticket holders were also supposed to have access to seating that wrapped around the general admission lower bowl, but a miscommunication with security guards saw the section fill up early with general admission holders, forcing some of the VIP-ticket holders to look for seats in the massive grass-area above the seating sections, Weisberg said.

Weisberg said he plans to continue the Rock the Bells tour and has signed corporate sponsorship deals with Heineken, Rockstar energy drinks and SanDisk, a technology partner that is helping the promoter broadcast the event over the Internet. He said he had a production company on staff to capture the concert and resell it on different Internet distribution channels. The first Rock the Bells concert in 2004 spawned a successful documentary film.

Rock the Bells originally began as a single hip-hop concert in 2004 that continued into 2005. In 2006, Guerilla Union launched a four-city tour of Rock the Bells.

"This year we had 16 dates. It was an experimental year," Weisberg said. "Do I think we'll have this many dates next year? No. We're looking at six to eight solid markets where we can continue to grow the festival."

Rock the Bells next concert is in the parking lot of McCovey Cove in San Francisco, near the AT&T Park on Saturday. A Sunday show was slated for the Sleep Train

Amphitheatre in nearby Wheatland, Calif., but that concert was cancelled following disappointing ticket sales, Live Nation announced in a press release. The facility's Executive Director Trevor Ralph was not reachable by this article's deadline.

The Sleep Train show was just a day away from the McCovey Cove show, but didn't feature popular acts like Rage Against the Machine, Nas, Public Enemy or the Roots — San Francisco is the last stop for many of the acts.

Next on the tour is an Aug. 21 show in Salt Lake City at the USANA Amphitheatre; an Aug. 22 show at the Red Rocks Amphitheatre in Denver; an Aug. 25 concert at the Metrodome in Minneapolis; an Aug. 26 concert at the Charter One Pavilion in Chicago; and Aug. 29 concert at the DTE Energy Music Center in Detroit, and a Sept. 1 concert at the Blaisdell Center in Honolulu. — Dave Brooks

Interviewed for this story: Cheng Weisberg, (626) 945-9903; Jim Granger; (818) 885-5150; Michelle Rogers, (909) 888-6788



Patrons beat the heat with a sky ride at the Ohio State Fair, Columbus.

HEAT DIDN'T HURT A STRONG OHIO STATE FAIR

A heat wave that hit during the middle of the Ohio State Fair, Columbus, lowered attendance by less than one percent over last year's 814,152. "The last three days were not so bad and we made up ground," said Virgil Strickler, general manager of the Aug. 1-12 fair, which posted attendance of 806,301.

Temperatures hit the high 90s with high humidity in a large part of the Midwest and East Coast during early August. "I think everybody is getting to the point where they realize how many air conditioned buildings we have," Strickler said. "We had better attendance than I thought we would."

Not only that, but Strickler and his staff also got some relief by installing Big Ass Fans products. "They look like helicopters," Strickler said of the fans, which were placed in livestock barns and in Cooper Arena, where dairy cows and horses are shown.

In spite of the slight attendance decline, Brett Chance, assistant general manager and entertainment director, expects concert revenue to be up. "I would call this one of the best years ever," he said. "It's going to take a little bit of time for me to get the invoices, but I'm definitely going to be up."

Daughtry, the band fronted by Chris Daughtry of "American Idol," kicked off the concert series with a "great turnout," Chance said, selling more than 6,000 \$32 tickets and grossing more than \$200,000.

Other concerts that did well included R&B act KEM, playing on a \$10 ticket to an audience of 6,103 and grossing \$61,030; George Jones and Merle Haggard, \$30, 6,130

seats, \$183,900; "Weird Al" Yankovic, \$20, 5,169, \$103,380; and Corbin Bleu from The Disney Channel's "High School Musical" and Drake Bell from Nickelodeon's "Drake & Josh" with special guest Jordan Pruitt, \$25, 5,184, \$129,600.

"I didn't have any real clunkers," Chance said.

He especially was pleased with Yankovic's two-plus-hour show, which included costume changes and videos. "The way he mixes that video in and changes costumes, it's a very well put-together show," he said.

Fair officials aim for a well-rounded slate of musical acts that hit all tastes and demographics, Chance said. Other acts that played the 10,000-seat Celeste Center included Pat Benatar, Quiet Riot and Diana Reyes.

This year's budget to purchase acts was \$670,000. "That budget fluctuates," Chance said. "If we can get a bunch of top-shelf acts that we think are right for us, I could spend as much as \$900,000. Or if there aren't as many, I could spend as little as \$500,000. We try to make independent decisions on whether we think it's the right act at the right price."

Chance estimated that he spent an additional \$250,000 on lights, sound, security, catering and miscellaneous overhead.

In addition to the Celeste Center concerts, Rascal Flatts appeared at Crew Stadium, home of the Columbus Crew soccer team. Two of the members are from Columbus and it was the third year in a row for the concert, said Chance, who did not have final information on revenues because the contract is through the soccer team. "We partner with them," he said.

Christina Minier, marketing and PR director for the Ohio Expo Center and State Fair, said she did some very targeted campaigns both for the Reyes concert and for a BMX event, with spots on extreme sports programs for the latter. For the Reyes concert, ads were done in Spanish, she said.

"We worked with local outlets to produce very specific programming and made tickets available at Hispanic businesses," she said. The fair did not do exit polls, but the BMX event and the Reyes concert both drew well, she said.

The \$350,000 marketing budget is flat from 2006, she added.

Amusements of America placed 65 rides on the midway. Strickler said revenues increased because the pay-one-price wristband charge went up from \$15 in advance and \$18 at the gate to \$17 and \$20.

The top grossing ride was the Giant Slide, followed by the Chance Giant Wheel, said Luis Perez, assistant general manager.

The heat prompted a decline in food grosses but helped with the beverage grosses, which was noticeable in the drink-only joints, Perez said. "People just weren't eating when it's that hot," he said.

Advance tickets to the fair cost \$6 and gate admission cost \$8, with parking at \$5, Strickler said. Next year's dates are July 30-Aug. 10. – Mary Wade Burnside

Interviewed for this story: Virgil Strickler, Brett Chance, Christina Minier, Luis Perez, (614) 644-4000.

BOZEMAN BEGINS FUNDRAISING FOR NEW EVENTS CENTER

The Gallatin County Fair Board in Bozeman, Mont., has begun the planning and fundraising for a 6,000-seat special events center, indoor ice arena, swim center, water park and sports fields to be located on the fairgrounds.

Preliminary plans show the project will be built in phases over the next five to 10 years. Estimated costs for the entire project is coming in at \$25 million, all of which is expected to come from private donations.

"This isn't something we have all of the sudden decided we needed," said Sue Shockley, fairgrounds manager. "The events center has been planned since the late '70s. We have done feasibility studies and community studies. There is a huge need for this type of building in this area. We have all the infrastructure there and ready."

The fairgrounds includes 68 acres currently, but that number will increase when the county road department moves offices. That will add another 10 acres. There are four exhibit buildings on the grounds, all of which have undergone extensive renovations at a cost of \$500,000.

Shockley said the fairgrounds are extremely busy year-round with an event held there everyday. Because of the limited capabilities at the grounds, some events are being turned away.

"Our community is growing so fast," she said. "There are new schools being built and a new jail is set to be constructed. All of these things have to come from a bond issue, which is why we plan to do this with private donations. There is support for the fairgrounds."

Shockley doesn't plan for this building to compete with any other building in the area. She feels it will fill a niche that is needed.

Yet, there is the 9,000-seat Brick Breeden Fieldhouse on the campus of Montana State University (MSU), Bozeman, that may feel the affect of another building in so close proximity. Duane Morris, director of events marketing for auxiliary services at MSU, said his building does about seven concerts a year as well as a Broadway series with four or five events a year. The building also hosts many family shows such as Ringling Brothers, Barnum & Bailey Circus, Sesame Street Live, Globetrotters, Monster Trucks, and rodeos.

"Our first priority is MSU sports, though," Morris said. "We host men's and women's basketball for the university. But, we still are able to fill the building with other events."

Morris said there are about 150,000 people in an 150-mile radius. Many visitors to concerts and other events are outside of Gallatin County. In fact, 60 percent of those attending a Fleetwood Mac concert were from outside the county.

"People in Montana are used to driving long distances," he said.

There is a smaller facility in downtown Bozeman called the Wilson Auditorium, with a seating capacity of 1,119. Lori Ross, administrative assistant, said that building is mostly used for the school district there which owns it. But, there are performances by the symphony and opera there.

Shockley feels the fairgrounds will offer a variety of community oriented events, which is sorely needed in that growing community. There is a local Ice Foundation which has already started fundraising for the indoor ice arena. The Fairgrounds Foundation is the fundraising arm of the fair and a campaign is already beginning.

The special events center is the backbone of the project, which is proposed to have an arena floor large enough for rodeos, concerts, indoor soccer, conventions, theater productions and athletic events. The smaller events such as weddings and family gatherings would still be part of the mix.

The other components of the project will connect to the events center by concourses large enough to house exhibits.

The indoor swim center is expected to have a competition-sized pool and water park, the latter mostly a splash park for children. The indoor ice arena, which would seat 700 to 1,200, would be a year-round facility that could accommodate hockey and figure skating.

Landscaping is also part of the project. There are plans for park trails and picnic areas.

"We will get started on the project within the year," Shockley said. "I just don't know what component we will start on first."

She wants the special events center to complement the MSU's Brick Breeden Fieldhouse, not compete against.

Does Morris feel it will compete?

"Well, you just have to look at the history," he said. "You have to look at markets this size with multiple buildings and you will find your answer."

The Gallatin County Fair was held July 18-22, drawing about 45,000 visitors this year. That was an increase over the 41,000 in attendance in 2006. — Pam Sherborne

Interviewed for this story: Sue Shockley, 406-582-3270; Duane Morris, 406-994-7117; Lori Ross, 406-522-6042



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BOOKINGS



HOTtickets

COUNTRY SWEEPS 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 July 24, 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:* \$1,427,162; *Event:* Kenny Chesney; *Venue:* **First Midwest Bank Amphitheatre, Tinley Park, Ill.**; *Attendance:* 28,739; *Ticket Range:* \$76.50-\$37.50; *Promoter:* AEG Live, Live Nation, The Messina Group; *Dates:* Aug. 11; *No. of Shows:* 1

2) *Gross Sales:* \$1,222,458; *Event:* Tim McGraw & Faith Hill; *Venue:* **St. Pete Times Forum, Tampa, Fla.**; *Attendance:* 13,368; *Ticket Range:* \$99.25-\$53.25; *Promoter:* Live Nation; *Dates:* July 25; *No. of Shows:* 1

3) *Gross Sales:* \$1,058,155; *Event:* Kenny Chesney; *Venue:* **Verizon Wireless Amphitheater, Maryland Heights, Mo.**; *Attendance:* 21,000; *Ticket Range:* \$77-\$39; *Promoter:* AEG Live, Live Nation, The Messina Group; *Dates:* Aug. 10; *No. of Shows:* 1

4) *Gross Sales:* \$1,041,441; *Event:* Kenny Chesney; *Venue:* **Verizon Wireless Amphitheatre, Charlotte, N.C.**; *Attendance:* 18,817; *Ticket Range:* \$77-\$39; *Promoter:* AEG Live, Live Nation, The Messina Group; *Dates:* Aug. 2; *No. of Shows:* 1

5) *Gross Sales:* \$943,271; *Event:* Kenny Chesney; *Venue:* **Verizon Wireless Amphitheater, Bonner Springs, Kan.**; *Attendance:* 18,000; *Ticket Range:* \$77-\$39; *Promoter:* AEG Live, Live Nation, The Messina Group; *Dates:* Aug. 9; *No. of Shows:* 1

10,001-15,000 Seats

1) *Gross Sales:* \$916,509; *Event:* Bob Dylan; *Venue:* **Brisbane (Australia) Entertainment Centre**; *Attendance:* 8,806; *Ticket Range:* \$134.82-\$68.08; *Promoter:* Chugg Entertainment; *Dates:* Aug. 13; *No. of Shows:* 1

2) *Gross Sales:* \$687,968; *Event:* The Cure; *Venue:* **Brisbane (Australia) Entertainment Centre**; *Attendance:* 7,417; *Ticket Range:* \$97.20-\$80.51; *Promoter:* Michael Coppel Presents; *Dates:* Aug. 8; *No. of Shows:* 1

3) *Gross Sales:* \$452,699; *Event:* Josh Groban; *Venue:* **Wachovia Arena, Wilkes-Barre, Pa.**; *Attendance:* 5,518; *Ticket Range:* \$97.75-\$42.25; *Promoter:* Live Nation; *Dates:* July 31; *No. of Shows:* 1

4) *Gross Sales:* \$431,780; *Event:* Keith Urban; *Venue:* **i wireless Center, Moline, Ill.**; *Attendance:* 9,091; *Ticket Range:* \$47.50-\$37.50; *Promoter:* Jam Productions; *Dates:* July 27; *No. of Shows:* 1

5) *Gross Sales:* \$412,487; *Event:* Steve Miller Band; *Venue:* **Nikon at Jones Beach Theater, Wantagh, N.Y.**; *Attendance:* 9,375; *Ticket Range:* \$70-\$20; *Promoter:* Live Nation; *Dates:* July 28; *No. of Shows:* 1

5,001-10,000 Seats

1) *Gross Sales:* \$278,985; *Event:* Incubus; *Venue:* **Charter One Pavilion, Chicago**; *Attendance:* 8,244; *Ticket Range:* \$35-\$33; *Promoter:* Live Nation; *Dates:* July 25; *No. of Shows:* 1

2) *Gross Sales:* \$254,232; *Event:* O.A.R.; *Venue:* **Charter One Pavilion, Chicago**; *Attendance:* 8,294; *Ticket Range:* \$33-\$24.75; *Promoter:* Live Nation; *Dates:* July 26; *No. of Shows:* 1

3) *Gross Sales:* \$253,702; *Event:* Goo Goo Dolls; *Venue:* **Chastain Park Amphitheatre, Atlanta**; *Attendance:* 5,496; *Ticket Range:* \$48-\$38; *Promoter:* Live Nation; *Dates:* July 31; *No. of Shows:* 1

4) *Gross Sales:* \$226,107; *Event:* Lyle Lovett; *Venue:* **Greek Theatre, Los Angeles**; *Attendance:* 3,107; *Ticket Range:* \$86-\$41; *Promoter:* Nederlander; *Dates:* July 26; *No. of Shows:* 1

5) *Gross Sales:* \$224,923; *Event:* Snow Patrol; *Venue:* **Red Rocks Amphitheatre, Denver**; *Attendance:* 6,588; *Ticket Range:* \$37; *Promoter:* Live Nation; *Dates:* July 30; *No. of Shows:* 1

5,000 or Fewer Seats

1) *Gross Sales:* \$874,673; *Event:* Jerry Seinfeld; *Venue:* **The Colosseum at Caesars Palace, Las Vegas**; *Attendance:* 8,269; *Ticket Range:* \$150-\$75; *Promoter:* AEG Live,

Concerts West, In-house; *Dates:* Aug. 3-4; *No. of Shows:* 2

2) *Gross Sales:* \$192,210; *Event:* The Moody Blues; *Venue:* **Bank Of America Pavilion, Boston**; *Attendance:* 4,079; *Ticket Range:* \$60-\$35; *Promoter:* Live Nation; *Dates:* July 30; *No. of Shows:* 1

3) *Gross Sales:* \$177,218; *Event:* Lyle Lovett; *Venue:* **Santa Barbara (Calif.) Bowl**; *Attendance:* 2,864; *Ticket Range:* \$69.50-\$39.50; *Promoter:* Nederlander; *Dates:* July 28; *No. of Shows:* 1

4) *Gross Sales:* \$158,304; *Event:* Alison Krauss & Union Station featuring Jerry Douglas; *Venue:* **Fox Theatre, Detroit**; *Attendance:* 3,353; *Ticket Range:* \$49.50-\$39; *Promoter:* Live Nation, AC Entertainment, Outback Concerts; *Dates:* July 31; *No. of Shows:* 1

5) *Gross Sales:* \$149,946; *Event:* The White Stripes; *Venue:* **Chevrolet Theatre, Wallingford, Conn.**; *Attendance:* 4,591; *Ticket Range:* \$33.50; *Promoter:* Live Nation; *Dates:* July 25; *No. of Shows:* 1

Compiled by Rob Ocampo, HotTickets@venuestoday.com

MISL Commissioner Steve Ryan with Orlando Sharks Investor/Operator Sham Maharaj and team president Rich Bradley during the Feb. 21 announcement of the team's formation.



INDOOR SOCCER ADDS THREE TEAMS; MULLS MORE

Major Indoor Soccer League is growing as an arena sport with three high-profile markets picking up franchises for the upcoming 2007/2008 season beginning in October. And there are three more on the drawing boards — Kansas City, Mo.; Jacksonville, Fla.; and Grand Rapids, Mich. — for possible future expansion.

In Orlando, the Sharks will be playing at the Amway Arena until a new facility is built. The team will be owned by Sham Maharaj, who also has the first right of refusal to other soccer franchises in the state of Florida. Maharaj is the owner of the Buena Vista Corporation, a land development company that is currently constructing a \$2 billion commercial/residential real estate project in the Orlando area.

In Newark, N.J, the IronMen will be playing at the soon-to-be-opened Prudential Center and will be owned by Jeff Vanderbeek and Michael Gilfillan, former investment bankers who also own the National Hockey League's New Jersey Devils and the arena. Finally, Monterrey, Mexico, will be getting their own team called La Raza, which will play at Arena Monterrey and will be owned by the Salinas family, which also owns the facility.

Originally launched in 1984, the league went through several name and ownership changes before being re-branded in 2001. The MISL is a single-entity owned league where individual teams share league-revenue and costs, similar to the structure used by the Women's National Basketball Association and Major League Soccer.

"The structure is to help keep player salaries in check," said Rich Bradley, president of the Orlando team. "The league was a good product in the 1980s, but it took some reorganization to get the structure back together."

Besides the single-ownership structure, Bradley said it was important to get the right ownership in place that could absorb the costs of hosting the growing sport. There also needs to be a return to major markets, which suited Orlando since the team was recently ranked number two on a per-capita basis for spending on soccer-related items in a report by the Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association. Orlando's Citrus Bowl was host to several games during the 1994 World Cup.

Former Amway Arena General Manager Bill Becker was one of the organizers during those World Cup games. He's now the director of facilities for the Orlando team owner's BVC Sports & Entertainment, an offshoot of Buena Vista Corporation. Orlando will launch its first home game on Oct. 26 at the re-configured arena — which will see the removal of the side-field glass to create an open air experience.

"It's similar to in-your-face seats for Arena Football where the ball can go into the crowd and you feel like you're participating in the game," Becker said, adding he hoped to draw about 5,000 people per night in the first season. Tickets will be scaled at \$16 for general admission; \$22, \$40, \$75 and \$185 for second tier seats and \$225 for the front row, Bradley added.

"Every night there will be a party theme; it's an entertainment-based event," said Becker. "One night we will have a Mardi Gras theme, another night we will have a jazz night. We're not just going after soccer fans, we're targeting anyone looking for entertainment."

Becker said the Orlando Magic NBA team controls most of the arena's suites and agreed to rent several suites to the soccer team based on demand. The MISL has the ability to capitalize on sponsorship opportunities on the floor, on field barriers and on the dashboards.

The MISL season officially kicks off on Oct. 19 and runs until April 6, followed by two weeks of playoffs and a finals match at a pre-selected site.

"I just got back from a series of meetings in Las Vegas where we are looking at creating a Super Bowl-type of event," Bradley said, adding that the MGM Grand Garden Arena is a likely candidate.

Dale Adams, general manager for the soon-to-be-opened Prudential Center, said team management hasn't finalized its plans to operate the team, but said he's dealt with soccer before and believes the franchise will be a good match for his facility.

"We're actually planning on bringing the team in during the last days of construction," he said, adding that the team's shared ownership with the hockey franchise has created unique sponsorship opportunities. "We still haven't finalized our plans, but we're expecting the soccer team to do very well." — Dave Brooks

Interviewed for this story: Rich Bradley, (407) 403-6000; Bill Becker, (407) 538-8679; Dale Adams, (973) 522-4800

MARKETING



The new WAMU VIP section at the Greek Theatre, Los Angeles

WAMU CREATES VIP EXPERIENCE FOR FANS

Certain concertgoers at the Greek Theatre in Los Angeles can now enjoy a wooden-decked VIP lounge under the stars, a special entrance and concession lines without paying a dime more than the rest of the folks.

A new sponsorship deal between Washington Mutual and the Greek – as well as similar deals at five other venues – has made the bank's customers instant VIPs with a flash of their debit, credit, ATM or home equity card.

The WaMu Live! entertainment platform gives bank customers access to special entrance lines, concession lines, and at some venues special parking, as well as access to the WaMu Lounges at the Greek, the Hollywood Bowl, the Verizon Wireless Amphitheater in Irvine, Calif., the Shoreline Amphitheatre in Mountain View, Calif., the new WaMu Theater at Madison Square Garden and the WaMu Theater at Qwest Field in Seattle.

"We were really looking to maximize the assets that we had as well as look for an appropriate way to give our customers an experience that would make them smile," said Jane Zalutsky, WaMu first vice president in experiential marketing. "People are so passionate about music and passionate about their entertainment experience that we thought the platform was perfect."

The sponsorship dollars have helped renovate some of the public space at the theaters, as well as created new lounge areas.

At the WaMu Theater at Madison Square Garden, new carpeting, lighting, and wall coverings are being put in, with a new lounge area with new permanent food and beverage areas being scheduled for completion by Labor Day, spokesman Dan Schoenberg said.

Some of the venues are also banking on being exposed to new customers through Washington Mutual's marketing campaign, which includes a heavy online presence and promotional materials at each branch.

WaMu customers can buy event tickets through the bank's website, download photos they take at photo booths set up at certain venues, get e-mail alerts and enter online contests – all continually driving them back to the website.

"I think it's a great thing for the Greek. It runs us a higher profile in areas where we haven't been seen before – in banks," Greek Theatre General Manager Rena

Wasserman said. "People go to the bank and may not be used to seeing a flier for a Greek Theater show and our ability to hit this kind of new group of people, possibly, is much larger than what we normally would do."

Zalutsky said eventually the bank will add more online advertising, radio advertising and other tactics to continually drive people online and to the venue.

Although representatives from the venues and Washington Mutual would not disclose the details of the sponsorship deals, at the Greek the activation budget part of the sponsorship created an opportunity for both parties to design the new space with funds coming from both.

"The Greek has long history of very little sponsorship because we're very selective of who our partners are," Wasserman said. "We take great pride in being in the park; there are no advertisements coming up here, no billboards. The great thing for us about WaMu is what they care about in providing an experience to customers is very similar to our attitude and our patrons."

The Hollywood Bowl has numerous banking sponsors, but the other five deals have Washington Mutual as the venues' exclusive bank sponsor.

At both the WaMu Theater at Madison Square Garden and the Greek, existing space was used for the lounges, but more staff will be added to direct Washington Mutual customers to their separate entrance, concession lines and to the lounge.

But venue patrons who aren't customers at WaMu won't be wholly neglected with the new sponsorship. Washington Mutual is bringing interactive experiences to all venue customers, including photo booths in Seattle and New York and at the July 26 kick-off concert at the Greek.

It also could potentially lessen the wait time in concession and entrance lines since Washington Mutual customers can access these in separate areas.

The experience will be available to bank customers at all shows at the venues, except for the Hollywood Bowl.

"We're putting our marketing muscle behind their venues essentially," Zalutsky said. "All of the marketing we do to talk to our customers will be talking about their venues."
– Amanda Pennington

Interviewed for this story: Jane Zalutsky, (214) 691-0513; Rena Wasserman, (323) 665-5857; Dan Schoenberg, (212) 465-6367



Coming Soon - Year End Deadlines!

December will be here before you know it so take a moment to add the following to your "to do" list:

***Contact Rob Ocampo (hottickets@venuestoday.com) to see if you are current on your **box office score** submissions. The year end reports will cover: **Oct. 16, 2006 - Oct. 15, 2007**. Start now to ensure your numbers are accurate!

***Gather your nominations for our 3rd annual **Hall of Headlines Awards**. We will begin taking nominations immediately in the following categories: News, Bookings, Marketing & Concessions. Send nomination to: (linda@venuestoday.com)

*****Reserve your ad space now for the year end issue**. This issue fills up quickly so make sure you don't miss out by reserving space early! (P.S. Advertising rates will increase in 2008. Sign a yearly contract with your VT rep now to ensure that you keep the lower 2007 rates during that contract period.)

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CONCESSIONS

Miami Dolphins fans enjoy the concessions improvements at Dolphin Stadium in the Sprint Fantasy Lounge



FOOD REDESIGN TIPS: MIAMI DOLPHINS ARE AHEAD OF THE CURVE

The Miami Dolphins of the National Football League debuted Dolphin Stadium's new club level food service Aug. 11 at a Miami Dolphins-Jacksonville Jaguars exhibition game. George Torres, Dolphins senior director of corporate communications and development, said the improvements to concessions and catering areas involved a major portion of

the \$300 million being spent to improve the stadium between 2006 and 2009. Funding is from team owner Wayne Huizenga and bonds issued by the city of Miami and Dade County.

Phase III will open in 2009, so the stadium improvements will be complete by 2010 when Miami once again hosts the NFL Super Bowl. Use of the new spaces in the venue during the 2007 Super Bowl helped dictate some of the permanent improvements now in place, Torres said. The Dolphins had completed Phase I, which added 360,000 square feet to the stadium. That space was made available to the NFL, which brought in portable and temporary equipment to dress it up. The team then watched how the



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