

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

# Venues

## TODAY

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Welcome to your **Venues Today** weekly e-newsletter, full of the latest live entertainment industry news. For further information or to subscribe to *Venues Today* visit [www.venuestoday.com](http://www.venuestoday.com).

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### QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"And they don't fuss about that. Barack Obama got off his bus, bought his own ticket for him and his kids and wife, and walked through the gate. And John Edwards kind of did the same thing." — *Gary Slater, General Manager of the Iowa State Fair, on the presence of Presidential candidates on the heels of the Iowa Caucus.*

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**VENUE NEWS**



***Iowa State Fair costumed characters dance down the midway; Paul R. Knapp Animal Learning Center benefits from air-conditioning.***

#### **AIR-CONDITIONING, PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES MAKE NEWS AT IOWA**

Investing \$65 million in infrastructure in the past 10 years at the Iowa State Fair in upgrades that included adding air conditioning to some major buildings paid off when a heat wave resulted in just a minor attendance drop.

Attendance at the Aug. 9–19 event was 1,003,210, a one percent drop from last year, when the weather was much nicer, said general manager Gary Slater.

“The temperatures were in the low 90s, and the humidity was so high, it sent the heat indexes up into the low hundreds,” Slater said. “I’m sure that took a toll on attendance, and especially on food vendors.”

Whenever he had the chance in the media, Slater made sure to emphasize the number of air-conditioned buildings the fairgrounds has, and suggested that fairgoers rotate their time among indoor and outdoor activities. “I’m being truly honest when I say that, versus 10 years ago, we didn’t have any big, air-conditioned buildings that you could tell people they could go to,” he said.

That is because the fair, aided by the Iowa State Fair Ribbon Foundation, has put \$65 million into upgrades that included air conditioning many buildings. In the case of the Varied Industry Building, it was enclosed, renovated and air conditioned, which gives the fairgrounds 120,000 square feet of comfortable space for events.

“Now it’s a heated and cooled building that we use every weekend all year round,” Slater said.

Jim Murphy’s Tampa-based Mighty Blue Grass Shows placed 41 rides on the midway, but Slater did not know if the carnival was up or down. However, he did note that when Illinois Sen. Barack Obama, one of several visiting Presidential candidates, stopped by, he rode the Big Ben drop ride with his two young children.

"I think he was the only one that did that on the midway, but he's got the smallest kids," Slater said.

In addition to Obama, other candidates taking advantage of the fair because of Iowa's early caucus were Republicans Fred Thompson, Rudy Giuliani and John McCain, and Democrats Hillary Clinton and John Edwards, whose wife also attended a cancer survivor event at the fair.

The *Des Moines Register* offers a "hay bale" stump speech area for the candidates, each of whom gets 20 minutes to make remarks, Slater said. Other than that, the candidates pretty much just walk around and meet the public. When asked if the candidates pay their own way to the fair, Slater replied, "You bet, and all of their people with them.

"And they don't fuss about that. Barack Obama got off his bus, bought his own ticket for him and his kids and wife, and walked through the gate. And John Edwards kind of did the same thing."

No musical acts sold out the 10,500-seat grandstand, but several did well, Slater said. Drawing the best crowd was Christian group Casting Crowns with Tree63, selling more than 9,000 seats, Slater said. Joe Walsh, Alice Cooper with Blue Oyster Cult, Gary Allan, a rock 'n' roll review featuring Little Anthony, Percy Sledge and Gary "U.S." Bonds, and the "American Idol" tour featuring the top 10 contestants from the most recent installation, all did well, drawing in the 5,000 range, Slater said.

Concert tickets ranged from \$25 to a high of \$42 for the "American Idol" show, and that does not include admission, Slater said. The budget for the artist guarantees was \$990,000 and Slater expects to at least break even.

The fair's Web site featured audio clips of each artist, so a customer could double click on that act's photograph and hear a snippet of music, Slater said.

The marketing budget remained similar to last year's at about \$500,000, Slater said, but the effort was streamlined. More was done statewide, more was done in print with bigger ads, and the television advertising was very targeted to appear only during the local news.

"Traditionally, ratings in the summertime are the lowest all year long so we just used TV news spots," Slater said.

Sponsorships were up 10 percent to \$800,000, Slater said. The budget for the entire fair was \$14.5 million, he added.

A carnival megapass cost \$25 in advance and could be used any day, all day long. Pay-one-price wristbands also were available on the grounds for \$22, but were only good until 5 p.m. Otherwise, coupons cost \$1 and most rides required three to six coupons.

Adult gate admission is \$10 or \$6 in advance, and Slater noted that advance tickets are very popular. "They're a huge promotion," he said. "We probably sell more than 50 percent of paid admissions in advance of the fair."

Next year's dates will be Aug. 7-17. – Mary Wade Burnside

*Interviewed for this story: Gary Slater, (515) 262-3111.*



### *Inside the Texans' new field-level suites*

#### **TEXANS OFFER THE 'SUITE' LIFE AT FIELD LEVEL**

After only being on the market for about a month, eight newly constructed field-level suites at the Texans' Reliant Stadium in Houston have been sold.

Part of a \$184,000 investment, the suites are expected to add at least \$2.4 million to the team's coffers, according to officials

with the Houston Texans. John Schriever, vice president of Ticket and Entertainment Services for the National Football League team, said the \$50,000 suites are on staggered six-, eight- and 10-year terms.

A few individuals and companies purchased the suites, which are located mid-field. The suites are at the low-end of the price range compared to luxury suites and do not come with quite as many amenities.

"Some of those who bought the suites are people who already had club seats who were looking for a different experience," Schriever said.

The field-level suites have 10 seats, and the scoreboard is obstructed from view, but Schriever said tenants have a "great view" of games between the 40- and 50-yard lines. The suites are temporary units that come with VIP parking and access to the club lounge at the stadium. Each suite has a 32-inch high-definition television and 15-inch tabletop monitors in a bar-like setting — relaying information normally relayed via scoreboard. Tenants can have food catered and have access to liquor. The suites do come with an attendant.

The Texans spent about \$140,000 building the field-level suites. Schriever said revenue for the first year is \$400,000.

The field-level suites do not have private restrooms. The field suites are not as big nor do they have as luxurious of fixtures as the permanent suites. "They don't have granite countertops, for example," Schriever said, who added that the field-level suites are "a step up from the club level."

The Texans began toying with the idea of constructing field-level suites last year by turning a portion of the concourse into a "hospitality area," said Schriever. The test went well and the suites went on the market in April. The eight suites were sold out within six weeks.

Schriever said Texans' management saw similar offerings in stadiums across the nation and decided to look into ways to maximize the experience Texans fans may want to have.

The Texans share the SMG-managed Reliant Stadium with the Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo. When rodeo time comes around, the field-level suites come down.

He said the Texans are considering adding more field-level suites next year. "It is something we are looking at but we are not sure if we will do it or not," he said.

Christopher Lamberth, of 360 Architecture, based in Kansas City, Mo., said similar field-level suites have been popping up in stadium design plans in recent years. Seattle's Qwest Field has zone suites, for example. He said the suites allow Seahawks fans to get even closer to the action on the field. The Dallas Cowboys are also planning field-level suites for their new stadium.

He said stadiums and team owners should be looking for ways to meet the needs of their markets and lower-level or field-level suites seem to be one way to make some extra cash. He said not all markets are suitable for the indoor suites, though.

"Football in New York is a cold-weather sport," he said. "Fans like being outside to watch the Giants or the Jets."

Lamberth said colleges may want to find ways to utilize alternative spaces for suites in order to appeal to the alumni and local businesses. But he hasn't seen lower-level suites in colleges yet. He said staggering lease terms on the suites are used to spread out and maximize availability and revenue.

The Texans also partnered with the Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo and Harris County Sports and Convention Corp. to renovate the permanent, luxury suites at Reliant Stadium, restoring 166 units to how suite holders first saw them five years ago.

Carpet was replaced, woodwork was refinished, and chrome finishing was polished and buffed in each suite. It took more than \$1 million to refurbish the suites along the stadium's 200- and 400-level with an "opening-day" look.

"It gives the suites that new look when everyone first came in the building back in 2002. That was our goal in this process," said Brian Varnadoe, Texans director of premium seating.

The suites were unveiled during the Texans' preseason opener against Chicago Aug. 11. To mark the occasion, the doors to the suites were sealed with battle-red, Houston Texans ribbon. Each suite holder ceremonially cut the ribbon upon arrival. The Texans also left a bottle of champagne in each suite as a gift.

According to Siemens suite holder Caroline Seiter, the Texans really put on a "first-class operation."

Juan Rodriguez, assistant general manager for SMG-Reliant Park, said the renovation project was done within a five-week period conducted prior to the preseason game opener.

Some areas of carpeting had been stained beyond repair. The carpet was replaced with "tile-carpeting" making it easier for stadium staff to pull out and replace carpet that might become stained in the future.

Rodriguez said some woodwork in the suites had been nicked and damaged over the years and needed to be refinished. Chrome work was refurbished, walls were painted, and automatic flushers were installed in bathroom toilets.

The *Houston Chronicle's* vice president of circulation, Gene Haddock, said he noticed the carpeting when he first walked into the newspaper's suite at Reliant Stadium. "It looks new, it looks very crisp and clean," he said. — Allen Jones

*Interviewed for this story: Chris Lamberth, (214) 720-0360; Juan Rodriguez, (832) 667-1400; John Schriever, (832) 667-2211*

***Kelley Earnhardt Elledge, Dale Earnhardt Jr. (center) and Kerry Earnhardt share a laugh during the "Alabama Motorsports Park, A Dale Earnhardt Jr. Speedway" announcement Sept. 12, 2006. (Photo Credit: John Adams)***



### **DALE JR. ACCELERATES MOBILE RETAIL WITH PLANS FOR RACEWAY**

In an area of south Alabama where no mall has been built for 35 years, a village of new retail is on track — or at least planned — around several tracks.

Developers of a \$600-plus million speedway project involving Dale Earnhardt Jr. plan to bring two-million square feet of retail – the equivalent of a large regional mall – to northern Mobile County in the towns of Saraland and Pritchard.

The project, the Alabama Motorsports Park, a Dale Earnhardt Jr. Speedway, includes six tracks, an RV park, and a fishing lake. There are plans for hotels and theaters for musical acts.

"The land around a successful sports facility accelerates in value," said Bill Futterer, of PSE-3, a sports marketing company, and Futterer Partners LLC, which is part of the investor group behind the project, Gulf Coast Entertainment LLC.

"We wanted to take advantage of that acceleration and also make the process more orderly," he said. "So we decided to master plan the project."

The Alabama Motorsports Park plans set aside 120 acres for a lifestyle center and 120 acres for big box retail. An additional 40 acres has been set aside for traditional racing-related retail.

Ancillary projects, such as retail or office, have become "the engines that make the economic model work" for financing sports venues, said Ray Artigue, executive director of the MBA Sports Business Program at the W. P. Carey School of Business at Arizona State University.

"(The venues) provide the foot traffic for mixed-use projects," said Artigue, a former senior vice president of marketing for the Phoenix Suns basketball team.

Futterer, who managed the process that led to the NFL's return to Cleveland in 1999, said his Raleigh N.C. -based marketing firm plans to make a retail project a part of another sports venue. He said his firm is working on an undisclosed project involving a team sport.

The racing facility is set in an area that's been largely rural until recently and has been

short on retail.

"That's a great thing if the people who live in the area have more services and more places to shop," said Leigh Perry Herndon, vice president of communications for the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce.

Gulf Coast Entertainment has retained a firm to recruit retailers. "It's early in the process," Futterer said, adding the reception has been favorable so far.

The Alabama Motorsports Park is in the permitting process. Futterer said he expects construction to begin in the second or third quarter of 2008 with the track opening for racing in early 2010.

The centerpiece of the project is the six race tracks:

- A 7/10 of mile oval with a 75,000-seat permanent grandstand
- A road course
- A drag strip
- A dirt/sprint track
- A karting track
- A motorcross facility.

NASCAR Nextel Cup star Dale Earnhardt Jr. was recruited as part of the ownership group, along with his sister Kelley Earnhardt Elledge, the general manager of Jr. Motorsports, and brother Kerry Earnhardt, a well-known driver in the NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series.

Gulf Coast Entertainment investors include NFL Hall of Famers Willie Lanier and John Stallworth and Mike Dow, former four-term mayor of Mobile.

Kerry Earnhardt said he had worked with Futterer's marketing firm, and he approached his siblings. "My brother and sister were somewhat skeptical at first," Kerry Earnhardt said. "But they checked it out."

Kerry Earnhardt said he's on the lookout for projects outside of driving. "You never know what will happen to you in racing," he said. "It's good to have something to fall back on."

The track bears Dale Earnhardt Jr. name much as high-end golf courses use the name of a famous golfer or courses designer's name. "It's like an Arnold Palmer or Jack Nicklaus golf course," Futterer said.

Earnhardt is not the first NASCAR star to have his name attached to a track. The Iowa Speedway is "A Rusty Wallace Signature Series Track."

There won't necessarily be a string of Dale Earnhardt Jr. tracks, despite the use of the word "A" in the title, Futterer said.

"We didn't want to call it 'Alabama Motorsports Park, Dale Earnhardt Jr. Speedway,'" Futterer said. "A Dale Earnhardt Jr. Speedway' fit the marketing tag."

Earnhardt was consulted on amenities that would make the track appealing to drivers as well as sanctioning bodies, Futterer said.

"He made suggestions about the banking ... driver access in and out of the track," he said. "These were incorporated in the design."

HOK Sports was retained as the architect for the project. — Tom Gibbons

*Interviewed for this article: Bill Futterer, (919) 719-2772; Ray Artigue, (480) 965-5533; Leigh Perry Hurdon, (251) 433-6951*



***Show riders at the Calgary (Alta.) Stampede***

### **LATE HEAT HURTS CALGARY, BUT HIGHLIGHTS STILL MOUNT UP**

The Calgary (Alta.) Stampede appeared to be ahead of last year on attendance until a heat wave set in during the last three days of the July 5-14 event, prompting a slight decrease in attendance from last year's 1,262,518 to 1,251,105.

When the bad weather sets in so late, noted Paul Rosenberg, senior manager, sales and programming, there is no way to make it up.

"When the inclement weather hits you on the final weekend, it's much tougher," Rosenberg said. "People make the decision to take the kids to the lake to cool off, and there is no opportunity to come back. That's how we look at inclement weather in the front versus the end of the show."

However, other aspects of the fair went well. Los Angeles-based North American Midway Entertainment set up 65 rides on the midway, and a combination of strategic price increases plus efficiency on getting people on and off the rides quickly helped increase those revenues.

Having a ticket taker that swipes the customers' electronic cards separate from the ride operator on the larger rides has been a big help, Rosenberg said. "North American has

been focusing on high-capacity rides that can get more people riding more often, and they've done an excellent job of bull penning people, having them collect units and not hold the line up," Rosenberg said. "So when the ride stops and unloads, the people are processed so they can walk right onto the rides. It seems to have helped on the large, popular rides. In our game, that turnover is important to us and for the customer who pays one price and wants to ride a lot."

Spending also was good, Rosenberg noted, both for food and beverages and advanced concert and rodeo tickets. Bon Jovi sold out the 11,000-12,000 seat Pengrowth Saddledome in 11 minutes with tickets that ranged up to \$160 for about 1,100 gold seats.

Other successful concerts included Reba McEntire, a double bill of Big & Rich and Gretchen Wilson, and the Canadian band The Tragically Hip. Adult gate admission was \$12.23. Rosenberg did not divulge a budget for the paid entertainment, but noted the budget for the free entertainment is around \$1 million at the fair, which has a total 10-day budget of \$62 million.

The marketing budget was about \$1.4 million, with a bit of inflationary increase over last year's figure, Rosenberg said. A decision was made to spend that money on traditional outlets, such as newspapers, billboards, radio and television.

Last year, the Stampede entered the world of viral marketing with a clever video posted on YouTube. Nothing like that was done this year, Rosenberg said, but officials do not rule it out in the future.

"It's something we will continue to do in the future, not on an annual basis but when the right idea comes along from the selling point of view," said Rosenberg, who noted that while the video might have garnered a lot of industry attention, officials have no way of measuring how many customers attended the Stampede after seeing the spot.

"We haven't mandated ourselves to pursue viral opportunities at the expense of what I'll call more traditional mediums."

As for the more traditional media, officials had their advertising agency come up with a base ad in which the front and back ends could be changed to give the spot three different looks. "It was a cost saver and it allowed us to market our individual products a little better," Rosenberg said.

However, every ad the Stampede does features the event's Web address, [www.calgarystampede.com](http://www.calgarystampede.com). The Web site hits were impressive enough that the site will be reconfigured this fall in order to make the more popular parts more accessible.

The Web site received 72.39 million hits, with the peak being on opening day with 3,393,510 hits. The page for the Coca Cola Stage, which featured musical acts that included Finger Eleven, Good Charlotte, Keshia Chante, Tom Cochrane with Red Rider and Three Days Grace, was the most visited page, with 4,185 million hits.

"I think our IT guy calls it a heat map, and we're taking a look where they land on the Web site, like where do they go and when they repeat visit, what are they looking for," Rosenberg said. "So we're taking the heat map and the information drawn from it and reworking the Web site so it responds to how our visitors use the Web."

Next year's dates will be July 4–13. – Mary Wade Burnside

*Interviewed for this story: Paul Rosenberg, (403) 261-0101*

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The City of Phoenix Convention Center Department is seeking proposals from firms experienced in providing food and beverage services for its Venues. The selected firm shall be responsible for providing exclusive food and beverage sales and services including catering, concession(s) and operation of a Starbucks™ retail outlet for the Phoenix Convention Center and Venues.

The release of the RFP will be considered for approval by the City's Downtown, Economy, Sports and International (DESI) Subcommittee meeting on Thursday, September 13, 2007. The RFP will be available mid-September. Entities wishing a copy of the RFP shall make their request to:

Ms. Charlene Reynolds  
Management Assistant II  
Phoenix Convention Center  
100 North Third Street  
Phoenix, Arizona 85004  
(602) 262-5063  
[charlene.reynolds@phoenix.gov](mailto:charlene.reynolds@phoenix.gov)

When making your request, please include a contact name, address, telephone and fax numbers, and state whether you prefer a paper or electronic copy of the document. **The procurement schedule for the RFP is as follows and shall be firm once approved:**

DESI Subcommittee: Thursday, September 13, 2007

Proposal Issue Date: Monday, September 17, 2007

**Mandatory Pre-Proposal Conference\*: Friday, September 28, 2007**

Deadline for Questions: Wednesday, October 3, 2007

Proposal Due Date: Wednesday, October 24, 2007

Phase I – Technical Evaluation: Thurs – Fri., November 8-9, 2007

Phase II - Interviews: Thurs. – Fri., November 15-16, 2007

Notification of City Council Recommendation for Award: Tuesday, November 20, 2007

DESI Subcommittee: December 2007 (tentative)

City Council Approval: January 2, 2008 (tentative)

Contract Effective Date: March 4, 2008 (tentative)

\*The mandatory pre-proposal conference will be held at the Phoenix Convention Center, 100 North 3rd Street, Phoenix, AZ 85004, in the Lecture Hall, (Room 207),

beginning at 10:00 a.m. Phoenix local time.

\*\*Please note: All interested firms **must call** to reserve their space at the pre-proposal meeting.

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## BOOKINGS



### HOTtickets

#### DMB FINDS FRIENDS ON EAST COAST

**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 Aug. 7, 2007. 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:* \$1,346,129; *Event:* Kenny Chesney; *Venue:* **Nissan Pavilion at Stone Ridge, Bristow, Va.**; *Attendance:* 25,139; *Ticket Range:* \$77.50-\$39.50; *Promoter:* AEG Live, Live Nation, The Messina Group; *Dates:* Aug. 25; *No. of Shows:* 1
- 2) *Gross Sales:* \$1,233,257; *Event:* Justin Timberlake; *Venue:* **TD Banknorth Garden, Boston**; *Attendance:* 16,417; *Ticket Range:* \$95-\$56; *Promoter:* AEG Live; *Dates:* Aug. 10; *No. of Shows:* 1
- 3) *Gross Sales:* \$1,169,069; *Event:* Dave Matthews Band; *Venue:* **Nissan Pavilion at Stone Ridge, Bristow, Va.**; *Attendance:* 25,282; *Ticket Range:* \$61-\$36; *Promoter:* Live Nation; *Dates:* Aug. 11; *No. of Shows:* 1
- 4) *Gross Sales:* \$1,152,710; *Event:* Dave Matthews Band; *Venue:* **Saratoga (N.Y.) Performing Arts Center**; *Attendance:* 25,238; *Ticket Range:* \$65-\$40.50; *Promoter:* Live Nation; *Dates:* Aug. 14; *No. of Shows:* 1
- 5) *Gross Sales:* \$1,104,231; *Event:* Dave Matthews Band; *Venue:* **Post Gazette Pavilion, Burgettstown, Pa.**; *Attendance:* 23,015; *Ticket Range:* \$65-\$40; *Promoter:* Live Nation; *Dates:* Aug. 10; *No. of Shows:* 1

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

- 1) *Gross Sales:* \$773,992; *Event:* Projekt Revolution; *Venue:* **Nikon at Jones Beach Theater, Wantagh, N.Y.**; *Attendance:* 13,797; *Ticket Range:* \$76-\$40; *Promoter:* Live Nation; *Dates:* Aug. 15; *No. of Shows:* 1
- 2) *Gross Sales:* \$753,690; *Event:* Rascal Flatts; *Venue:* **Atlantic City (N.J.) Boardwalk Hall**; *Attendance:* 9,202; *Ticket Range:* \$175-\$55; *Promoter:* In-house; *Dates:* Aug. 23; *No. of Shows:* 1

3) *Gross Sales:* \$656,328; *Event:* Def Leppard; *Venue:* **Nikon at Jones Beach Theater, Wantagh, N.Y.**; *Attendance:* 10,963; *Ticket Range:* \$96-\$26; *Promoter:* Live Nation; *Dates:* Aug. 14; *No. of Shows:* 1

4) *Gross Sales:* \$413,303; *Event:* Keith Urban; *Venue:* **Richmond (Va.) Coliseum**; *Attendance:* 7,695; *Ticket Range:* \$56.50-\$46.50; *Promoter:* Outback Concerts, Police Productions LLC; *Dates:* Aug. 19; *No. of Shows:* 1

5) *Gross Sales:* \$255,557; *Event:* Heaven and Hell – The Dio Years; *Venue:* **Brisbane (Australia) Entertainment Centre**; *Attendance:* 2,397; *Ticket Range:* \$116.74-\$97.37; *Promoter:* Andrew McManus Presents; *Dates:* Aug. 14; *No. of Shows:* 1

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

1) *Gross Sales:* \$854,260; *Event:* Justin Timberlake; *Venue:* **Mohegan Sun Arena, Uncasville, Conn.**; *Attendance:* 9,735; *Ticket Range:* \$500-\$75; *Promoter:* Live Nation, In-house; *Dates:* Aug. 11; *No. of Shows:* 1

2) *Gross Sales:* \$461,452; *Event:* Beastie Boys; *Venue:* **Red Rocks Amphitheatre, Denver**; *Attendance:* 9,407; *Ticket Range:* \$49.50; *Promoter:* Live Nation, Nobody In Particular Presents; *Dates:* Aug. 16; *No. of Shows:* 1

3) *Gross Sales:* \$387,218; *Event:* 311; *Venue:* **Red Rocks Amphitheatre, Denver**; *Attendance:* 9,450; *Ticket Range:* \$42.50; *Promoter:* Bill Bass Concerts Inc., Live Nation; *Dates:* Aug. 15; *No. of Shows:* 1

4) *Gross Sales:* \$372,075; *Event:* Jenni Rivera; *Venue:* **Gibson Amphitheatre at Universal CityWalk, Universal City, Calif.**; *Attendance:* 5,971; *Ticket Range:* \$104.75-\$44.75; *Promoter:* Live Nation; *Dates:* Aug. 10; *No. of Shows:* 1

5) *Gross Sales:* \$371,835; *Event:* Dariush and Mansour; *Venue:* **Greek Theatre, Los Angeles**; *Attendance:* 1,853; *Ticket Range:* \$254-\$15; *Promoter:* Zorba Corporation Inc.; *Dates:* Aug. 11; *No. of Shows:* 1

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

1) *Gross Sales:* \$905,684; *Event:* West Side Story; *Venue:* **Fox Theatre, Atlanta**; *Attendance:* 18,869; *Ticket Range:* \$64-\$20; *Promoter:* Theater of the Stars; *Dates:* Aug. 21-26; *No. of Shows:* 8

2) *Gross Sales:* \$296,547; *Event:* James Taylor; *Venue:* **Chevrolet Theatre, Wallingford, Conn.**; *Attendance:* 4,494; *Ticket Range:* \$90.50-\$40.50; *Promoter:* Live Nation; *Dates:* Aug. 15; *No. of Shows:* 1

3) *Gross Sales:* \$256,836; *Event:* Beastie Boys; *Venue:* **Central Park SummerStage, New York**; *Attendance:* 5,500; *Ticket Range:* \$51; *Promoter:* Live Nation; *Dates:* Aug. 8; *No. of Shows:* 1

4) *Gross Sales:* \$249,547; *Event:* Chris Botti and Diana Krall; *Venue:* **Keller Auditorium, Portland, Ore.**; *Attendance:* 2,760; *Ticket Range:* \$99.50-\$75; *Promoter:* PMC Entertainment; *Dates:* Aug. 9; *No. of Shows:* 1

5) *Gross Sales:* \$238,481; *Event:* George Lopez; *Venue:* **Santa Barbara (Calif.) Bowl**; *Attendance:* 4,317; *Ticket Range:* \$72.50-\$39.50; *Promoter:* Nederlander; *Dates:* Aug. 11; *No. of Shows:* 1

*Compiled by Rob Ocampo, [HotTickets@venuestoday.com](mailto:HotTickets@venuestoday.com)*

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## MARKETING



### *The Everett Events Center*

#### **COMCAST BUYS NAMING RIGHTS TO EVERETT EVENTS CENTER**

The Everett Events Center and Comcast Corporation have finalized a \$7.4 million, 10-year naming rights and advertising deal. For the next year, the venue will be called the Comcast Arena at Everett Events Center, and then it will become the Comcast Arena at Everett for the final nine years.

Keeping Everett in the name was important to the town, and to the Everett Public Facilities District, who developed the venue, which opened in 2003, and still own it, according to Thomas Gaffney, treasurer of the EPFD.

"The buzz in the community has been positive, and it helped that they were keeping the city name," said Kim Bedier, general manager of the venue, which is managed by Global Spectrum, a Comcast-Spectacor company. "We are in the shadow of Seattle. The Everett Events Center changed the community psyche, it puffed out our chests and gave us something to be proud of."

"Comcast saw the same value in keeping the Everett name," Gaffney said.

The Everett Events Center, a 10,000-seat venue, is home to Western Hockey League franchise Everett Silvertips, and the Everett Hawks, an AF2 team. The venue includes an ice rink, which can be converted into a 57,000 square foot space for trade shows and other special events, and a conference center.

The center is widely seen as the engine that brought revitalization to downtown Everett. Since its opening, new businesses have sprouted up around it to accommodate the approximately 700,000 visitors who came to see the Silvertips, concerts like the Black Eyed Peas and the Barenaked Ladies, and for-profit and non-profit community events.

The nation's largest cable service provider's investment will average \$340,000 annually. They'll also provide \$400,000 annually in advertising to promote Everett, the venue, and its events.

In return, they will see their name prominently displayed on the main entrances and around the building; the Comcast logo will appear on trash cans, souvenir cups and, starting in September, the marquee. Center employees will wear the Global Spectrum "How You Doin" customer service button with a Comcast logo on it. The luxury suites already have Comcast-powered high speed Internet and premium cable and pay-per-view, according to Bedier.

"Comcast just picked up Fandango, [an Internet service that offers movie ticketing for 15,000 screens.]" Bedier said. "We'll benefit as they get into new and different things."

The Comcast Community Ice Rink, located within the center, will not change names. As part of the contract, the Events Center will not take any advertising from any Comcast competitors for the life of the deal. Comcast will also get use of a luxury box and will be able to offer discounted tickets to its 1,000 employees in the Everett area.

"In the original business plan and throughout the development project, our goal was to sell naming rights," Gaffney said.

Bedier said the center has large sponsorship deals with a local bank, the local Anheuser Busch distributor and Pepsico. But Comcast was the only serious contender for naming rights, she said.

"Over the years, we'd had some interest, but we weren't going to do it unless it was with a good partner. Comcast is a good partner, with an interest in Everett. It's win-win," Gaffney said.

"Comcast has been with us since our grand opening in 2003," Bedier said. "They gave their name to the ice rink three years ago. For the past two years, we've been discussing putting their name on the arena. After the board meeting [to finalize the deal] it was almost a let down. We all took a breath and said, 'Okay, it's done now.'" — Liz Boardman.

*Interviewed for this story: Kim Bedier, (425) 322-2611; Thomas Gaffney, (425) 388-1651; Tammi Bryant-Olson, (425) 322-2606*

## **BANK OF AMERICA BECOMES OFFICIAL BANK OF THE NFL**

The nation's largest bank has teamed up with the country's largest sports league in hopes of tapping into an army of loyal fans.

Under a three-year agreement, Charlotte-based Bank of America will be the country's only bank that can use the National Football League shield logo and other NFL-licensed marks, such as the Super Bowl, in advertising and marketing promotions through the 2009 season.

Bank of America is also launching NFL checking, which will include logos on checks and check cards. The program is an expansion on Bank of America's MyExpression affinity banking, a program that caters to people with similar interests—such as favorite sports teams, colleges, professional groups or charitable causes—by offering specialized banking products with logos.

NFL personal banking products, including checks, debit cards and credit cards that show the NFL shield logo, will be available starting in November through Bank of America, the country's second largest bank. Financial terms of the deal weren't released.

NFL checking lets consumers express their passion for NFL football through their everyday bank transactions, said Joe Goode, corporate spokesperson with Bank of America. NFL Checking cards and other banking products will not cost extra, Goode said.

"Our customers have interests in and show passion in a variety of special interests, whether it's sports, professional organizations, cause-related organizations like Habitat

for Humanity, or universities," Goode said.

Currently team-specific checks and banking cards are available for fans of the Dallas Cowboys, Carolina Panthers, New England Patriots and Washington Redskins.

NFL spokesperson Brian McCarthy said that customers who carry NFL checks and check cards will not get discounts on NFL game ticket purchases. He said that the cards are more a way that fans "could show their love for the NFL" and their favorite teams because of their personal banking decisions to place an NFL team on a debit card, credit card or checks.

Bank of America also provides NFL checking customers with some incentives that regular Bank of America customers don't get, Goode said. NFL checking customers are eligible to join Bank of America's popular Keep the Change savings program. That program rounds debit card purchases up to the nearest dollar and transfers the difference into the customer's Bank of America savings account. NFL checking customers will get 100 percent matching contributions for the first three months.

After those three months Bank of America will reward NFL checking customers by matching 10 percent of their Keep the Change savings for the life of the account, up from the five percent match that regular Keep the Change customers get, Goode said. Customers may earn up to \$250 a year for the match.

Bank of America also is the official bank for NASCAR and Major League Baseball.

Although it's still early to predict financial results of the NFL-Bank of America agreement, Goode said that affinity banking-related checks and debit cards could contribute 10 percent of deposit growth over the year.

That 10 percent deposit growth includes money from all affinity banking customer groups, including not only sports-oriented customers but also those who have college-oriented, charity-related and professional-oriented banking items, he said. According to Goode, 30 to 40 percent of that 10 percent deposit growth is through sports products resulting from relationships with not only the NFL but also NASCAR and MLB.

Goode declined to provide statistics in terms of how many people have team-related bank products featuring the four NFL teams.

Bank of America and the NFL are ideal partners because they are two of the country's most visible brands, Goode said. Also, he said, "We want to be where our customers are, and a lot of our customers are passionate fans of NFL football."

Before Bank of America became the NFL's official bank, the NFL had more of a partnership with MBNA, McCarthy said. Then Bank of America acquired MBNA. "This deal significantly enhances that relationship and partnership and extends it more nationwide," he said.

Although the NFL is collaborating with Bank of America on behalf of all NFL teams, Bank of America handles negotiating deals for team-specific checks and bank cards, McCarthy said.

Bank of America serves more than 57 million consumer and small business relationships with more than 5,700 retail banking offices, more than 17,000 ATMs, and

online banking with more than 22 million active users. The company serves clients in 175 countries. — Mary Susan Littlepage

*Interviewed for this story: Joe Goode, (617) 434-7314; Brian McCarthy (212) 450-2069*



### 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](mailto: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](mailto: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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## SHORT TAKES

### TICKETMASTER OPENS TICKET CENTER LOCATIONS IN MACY'S

Ticketmaster has announced the opening of 38 new Ticket Center locations in Macy's stores. The new centers will serve consumers in Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania. Event tickets are now available for purchase seven days a week during each store's normal hours of operation.

Contact: Bonnie Poindexter: 310-360-2321

### TEAMS FOR WOODEN CLASSIC ANNOUNCED

Two West Coast teams, San Diego State and Saint Mary's, round out the line up for the 14th annual John Wooden Classic to be held at Honda Center in Anaheim, Calif. on Dec.

8. San Diego State and Saint Mary's face each other in Game One while UCLA and Davidson take the court in Game Two. Established in 1994, the Wooden Classic is an annual tribute to former UCLA coach John Wooden. The event is co-produced by Pantheon International, LLC and Anaheim Arena Management.

*Contact: Emily Koch: (714) 704-2988*

### **EXPANSION ON HOLD AT NEW ORLEANS CONVENTION CENTER**

The Ernest N. Morial Convention Center's board voted to shelve plans for the long-delayed Phase IV expansion of the New Orleans convention center. Some of the money will be redirected to upgrading the current facility and creating an incentive fund for marketing. The land appropriated for Phase IV has been retained and may be deployed at some future date. Phase IV will expand the convention center by 524,000 square feet. The vote officially terminates the construction contract for the project and places the \$300 million in bonds it sold in an escrow account. The bonds reach maturity in 2013.

*Contact: Rosalie Mortillaro, (504) 582-3027*

### **MORRISSEY OFFERS CREATIVE TICKETING, EXTENDS TOUR**

Morrissey has announced 30 more final U.S. shows on what has become a 137-show tour to date. The tour now ends Nov. 4 and totals 168 shows, playing small intimate venues, including the final 10 shows at the Los Angeles Palladium before it closes for extensive renovation. In New York, he will play five shows at the Hammerstein Ballroom. In both cities, a "season ticket" will be made available, eliminating all surcharges for any fans attending every show, "a savings of over \$50." Also, for the Palladium run, fans will have a special, limited-time opportunity to purchase tickets to all 10 concerts for the price of nine, and to gain early entry into the venue for each show. For the New York shows, fans planning to attend all five shows will receive a special package price of \$200, thereby saving \$125 off of the individual tickets, as well as a commemorative poster, and they will be allowed to go to the front of the line each night so they can be the first ones in the building and closest to the stage. The announced dates start at El Foro, Tijuana, Mexico, Sept. 20, and end Nov. 4 at the Tabernacle, Atlanta.

*Contact: Aleix Martinez, (212) 989-2222*

### **OFFICIAL HOT DOG NAMED FOR COYOTES**

Wienerschnitzel restaurant chain has been named the "Official Hot Dog" of the Phoenix Coyotes and Jobing.com Arena, the Coyotes announced. The multi-year deal includes prominent signage throughout Jobing.com Arena and promotional appearances at Wienerschnitzel locations by Coyotes players and Howler – the Coyotes' mascot – in addition to branded food stands inside the arena. Wienerschnitzel will also offer a special Coyotes Meal Deal at its restaurants throughout the Valley.

*Contact: Jeff Holbrook, (623) 772-3249*

### **MONONA TERRACE EARNS LEED SILVER**

Monona Terrace Community & Convention Center, Madison, Wis., has been designated by the U.S. Green Building Council as a "silver" level LEED – EB (Leadership in Energy and Design – Existing Building) certified green building. Sandy Wiggins, chair of the U.S. Green Building Council, will present the award to Mayor Dave Cieslewicz at the opening session of the Greening The Heartland Conference at Monona Terrace on Sept.

12.

Contact: Fran Puleo, (608) 261-4011

### PROVO ARTS CENTER REVEALS TITLE SPONSOR

The Provo (Utah) Center for the Arts is now the Covey Center for the Arts, named for Sandra Covey who donated \$2 million. The 670-seat performance hall, already hosting events, will celebrate its official grand opening in October.

Contact: Director, (801) 852-7007

### WWE BANNER TO FLY AT CONTINENTAL AIRLINES ARENA

World Wrestling Entertainment honored the one-millionth fan to attend a WWE event at Continental Airlines Arena, East Rutherford, N.J., since 1984, on Aug. 28. The arena will hang a permanent commemorative banner from its rafters to mark the occasion. The fan, Thomas Mezzacappa of Staten Island, N.Y., was recognized during the show and took home a replica WWE Championship belt signed by SummerSlam main event combatants John Cena and Randy Orton. WWE has held more than 92 separate events in the arena

Contact: Gary Davis, (203) 353-5066

### POISON STRIKES A SOUR NOTE AT FAIRGROUNDS

Fairgoers have complained about a shot of a topless woman in a video shown during a performance by Poison at the Douglas County Fair, Roseburg, Ore. Upcoming fair date managers were warned about the incident. Fran Romeo, TBA Global, booked the show and was not aware of the semi-nude content. Fair audiences generally include a large number of children. APA is the responsible agent. Poison was also booked for the Colorado State Fair, Pueblo.

Contact: Fran Romeo, (503) 788-3826



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