

Venues TODAY

Dear April,

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Welcome to your **Venues Today** weekly e-newsletter, full of the latest live entertainment industry news. Happy New Year to our loyal subscribers and congratulations to the 2007 Venues Today Hall of Headlines winners: Wes Westley, Brad Parsons and Bruce Mactaggart, Larry Wilson and Ken Young. Our next publication, renamed VT Pulse and greatly enhanced for your reading pleasure, will be in your e-mailbox Jan. 9, 2008. We'll see you then. For further information or to subscribe to *Venues Today* visit www.venuestoday.com.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"We've had numerous offers to see if we would sell...What we needed to do was grow the business." — *Harvey Lister of Ogden IFC on the company's recent merger with AEG.*

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COMING JANUARY 9, 2008...

Your Venues Today e-newsletter will become...



VT PULSE - It's more than an e-newsletter, it's the pulse of the industry.

Venues Today is relaunching its e-newsletter in 2008 as "VT Pulse," a weekly electronic publication included in your annual subscription. VT Pulse will deliver the same original reporting in an easier-to-read format to keep you abreast of The News Behind the Headlines. VT Pulse officially launches on Jan. 9.

VENUE NEWS



Professor Frank Roach, Interim Dean of the Department of Sport and Entertainment Management at the University of South Carolina; Rod Pilbeam; Mayor Bob Coble, Columbia, S.C.; and Harvey Lister, at a ceremony honoring Lister and Pilbeam with the International Executives in Sport and Entertainment Award just weeks before they sold 50 percent of their company to AEG.

AEG AND OGDEN IFC UNITE FOR EXPANSIVE AUSTRALASIA PARTNERSHIP

For the second time, Harvey Lister and Rod Pilbeam, Ogden IFC, Brisbane, Australia, have a partner and for the first time, AEG Facilities, Los Angeles, has grown by partnering with another facility management firm.

It was announced today that AEG has acquired a 50 percent interest in Ogden IFC and AEG will form a new division, AEG Ogden, to operate arenas, theatres, stadiums, convention and exhibition centers in the Asia Pacific region.

The joint venture brings all the Ogden IFC management contracts into the AEG Ogden family. For Lister, Ogden IFC chairman and CEO, and Pilbeam, executive director, "we found a partner that can help triple the size of our business in the next five years," Lister said.

"We've had numerous offers to see if we would sell," Lister continued, but he and Pilbeam calculate they'll stay in the game at least another 10 years. "What we needed to do was grow the business." Ogden IFC currently has 209,000 seats under management, 1,175,127 square feet of exhibition space and over \$2 billion in assets under management. They have 690 full time employees and 5,011 casual employees. In the last year, Ogden IFC has hosted 7.4 million patrons, sold \$188 million in tickets, grossed \$65 million in food and beverage revenue and parked 862,000 cars.

Facilities in the newly formed AEG Ogden camp, effective Jan. 1, 2008, will include current Ogden IFC clients Suncorp Stadium, Brisbane, Australia; Acer Arena, Sydney; the Brisbane Entertainment Center; Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) Convention Center; Playhouse Theater, Perth, and Perth Concert Hall, to name a few.

Lister confirmed the company has also finalized a deal to manage the Delhi National Convention Center, New Delhi, India, which is being designed and will also have an arena component. Ogden IFC has a whole range of projects and while AEG Facilities has been focused on arenas, theaters and soccer stadiums, it can now add the convention business, at least in the Asia Pacific.

Bob Newman, COO, AEG Facilities, said the new venture is totally complementary to what AEG does. "Every one of our initiatives is truly on a project basis," he pointed out. No two deals are alike. "This is truly a unique opportunity for us to continue our strategic growth in the Pacific Rim."

Both Newman and Lister said the deal resulted from like-minded companies sharing best practices and industry trends casually until both realized this was an opportunity they should pursue. Those projects AEG was already exploring in the region will come under the umbrella of the new entity and all Ogden IFC projects move over, though management stays in place and Lister and Pilbeam will lead the charge.

For instance, Ogden IFC is partnered in a bid to develop a new sports complex in Singapore, which will now add AEG's clout to the bid.

To Lister, it's even a more logical business decision than when they sold the original International Facilities Group to Ogden Entertainment in 1995. They later bought it back. In the process, they learned that it's difficult when the parent company has a variety of businesses, from nuclear energy to airports. AEG is immersed in sports and entertainment, as is Ogden IFC, making it the perfect marriage because they are "specifically focused on the business we're in."

"We have similar views as to the new business model to operating facilities," Lister continued. There has been a major shift in the music business, which has led to a re-emergence of the importance and viability of arenas, the live experience, he said. "AEG has done a fantastic job with Staples Center and L.A. Live and the O2 in London...It is a very, very commercial model." Lister appreciates that the focus is on the patron experience, which is much more than just the concert. It starts with buying the ticket and continues until they return home from the show.

Technically, AEG acquired 50 percent of the holding company for Ogden IFC, which is International Facilities Corp. (IFC), Lister said. "We were very comfortable to sell 50 percent. They didn't ask for 51." AEG Ogden will be run by four directors, two of those being Lister and Pilbeam, two from AEG.

The territory includes China, Asia, the Middle East and North Africa (called MENA), and the Western Pacific.

When Lister said it will triple the size of his business, he meant the bottom line, not the number of facilities. Both are private companies, and neither Lister nor Newman would discuss the details of the partnership financially. Lister said it was a meeting of the entrepreneurial minds.

"AEG has the size and strength to make things happen. We could have the vision and identify the projects ourselves, but we didn't have the financial strength to make it a reality" Lister said. – Linda Deckard

Interviewed for this story: Harvey Lister, 617-3265-5888; Bob Newman, (213) 763-5425

Wrestling with alligators at the Nebraska State Fair, Lincoln.



NEBRASKA STATE FAIR FACES POSSIBLE MOVE FROM ITS 100-YEAR LOCATION IN LINCOLN

The University of Nebraska, Lincoln, wants the 250 acres occupied jointly with the Nebraska State Fair for its own Research and Technology Park. They have made it known they will seek legislative recourse over purchasing the property.

Meanwhile, the state fair can't justify the cost of relocating which, according to a study by HOK Smith + Forkner, would cost in the \$175

million range, said Barney Cosner, fair manager. To upgrade the current site to an acceptable level would cost \$30.7 million.

Friday, Dec. 14, the Agricultural Committee is scheduled to hear five presentations regarding moving the fair. Those proposals will come from Grand Island, Carney, Gretna, LaVista and Lancaster County, Cosner said. Each believes it has an acceptable location to host state fair park.

Cosner expects he'll be much wiser about the options after those presentations, but the prevailing preference with state fair administration is to stay put. They will make their

own presentation to the Ag Committee. "I'm looking forward to it; to see the thought processes about what facilities are out there," he said of the upcoming presentation. "I've been getting e-mails from land sellers regularly." There's even a site Wal*Mart gave up in West Lincoln that has been made available.

"We are within 25 miles of 300,000 people here," Cosner said. The fair drew 299,175 attendance last year, its fourth increase in a row. It has grown 24 percent since 2003.

And it is simply impossible to duplicate the facilities without a huge expenditure, none of which the university is willing to cover.

The state fair operating budget is \$8 million and its operating revenues, including lottery income of about \$2.5 million, is \$8 million, Cosner said.

The university is arguing it has the "highest and best use" for what is now state fair park. The university group projects a research park would be an opportunity to create \$1 billion worth of economic impact.

The fair first occupied the space in 1901. The 2008 fair, Aug. 22-Sept. 1, isn't going anywhere. The carnival is Mighty Blue Grass Shows. The entertainment budget is \$315,000. The marketing budget is \$325,000.

But the future, that's the question. "We have no money to relocate; no money to create a new state fair park," Cosner said. As to relations with the university, "we've agreed to disagree," he said. The chancellor of the university is on the state fair board. – Linda Deckard

Interviewed for this story: Barney Cosner, (402) 473-4110

NFL EXPECTED TO MAKE ANNOUNCEMENT ON SECONDARY DEAL

The National Football League is soon expected to announce its partner for a league-wide online secondary ticketing platform. Both StubHub and Ticketmaster are believed to be in negotiations for the contract, which economists have valued at \$20 million annually.

While few details of the deal or the negotiations have been released — and neither Ticketmaster nor the NFL would comment for this story — the deal is expected to be one of the largest in professional sports and could have a lasting impact on how sports tickets are resold, said economist Steve Happel of Arizona State University, an expert on the secondary market.

"As it stands, Ticketmaster has the technological ability to stop ticket-reselling by requiring ticket-holders to provide identification for tickets, similar to how the airlines enforce their own tickets," he said. "Right now, there are a number of factors preventing them from enforcing these type of anti-scalping rules, but the technology is there."

Happel said that if Ticketmaster won a contract to serve as the official secondary reseller of the National Football League, they would essentially be able to control all tickets by enforcing that a person's name match the name on the ticket. Ticketmaster already reprints tickets that are resold through its secondary site TicketExchange — it wouldn't be much different to reprint the secondary buyers name on the ticket. Of course, actually enforcing naming requirements could be hugely unpopular with season-ticket holders, who might want to share their tickets with a family member

StubHub, on the other hand, serves as a middleman between ticket-sellers and ticket-buyers, but doesn't actually reprint tickets. That might change as the company launches its platform to serve as Major League Baseball's official secondary ticket seller — a contract that Ticketmaster unsuccessfully bid for.

"Ticketmaster's own resale platform is struggling and this is their chance for glory," said Happel.

The NFL deal, however, could prove a lot less lucrative for Ticketmaster than the baseball deal. For one, Major League Baseball's owners unanimously approved a deal to allow its online unit Major League Baseball Advanced Media (MLBAM) to negotiate its secondary rights. The NFL's secondary operations are much more fragmented, with the secondary rights mostly in the hands of the individual team owners.

StubHub currently acts as the official ticket resale agent for eight teams including last year's Super Bowl Champion Indianapolis Colts, as well as perennial favorites like the San Diego Chargers and the Chicago Bears — deals that are typically five years in length. U.K. secondary startup Viagogo recently announced an exclusive deal to resell tickets for the Cleveland Browns.

Ticketmaster, for its part, has secondary ticketing deals with 17 NFL teams including the New York Giants, the Dallas Cowboys and the Pittsburgh Steelers. Making the deal even more difficult is that some states like Massachusetts explicitly ban reselling tickets for more than their face value (although that hasn't stopped StubHub from listing home game tickets for either the New England (Boston) Patriots or the Denver Broncos, who ban season-ticket holders from reselling tickets.

And without a owner-mandated entity like MBLAM that possesses the rights to delegate secondary tickets, the NFL's league offices can only encourage individual teams to use the endorsed system, but not contractually require them to strike a deal.

"The NFL doesn't have contractual rights to dictate policy to its teams regarding its tickets," said Sean Pate, spokesperson for StubHub. "Whoever signs the deal is just going to have the right to use the shield and not much more than what already exists. It is going to have a lot less reach than the MLB deal."

And even if Ticketmaster does land the NFL deal, that won't stop StubHub from selling NFL tickets on its site. Even with teams that have an official secondary agreement with Ticketmaster, StubHub remains highly competitive. For example, the Dallas Cowboys use TicketExchange as their official resale site and have 473 tickets available for the team's Sunday home game against Philadelphia — StubHub has 436 tickets listed on its site.

Currently, Ticketmaster won't list secondary tickets for teams with which it doesn't have an official agreement, said company spokesperson Bonnie Poindexter, while StubHub will sell secondary tickets for any team or event, contract or not. This means that Ticketmaster will likely stop selling secondary tickets for MLB once the StubHub contract goes into effect, while StubHub has already said it has no plans to halt NFL secondary sales for any team it doesn't have a contract with.

"Ticketmaster can have as many relationships as it wants to, the brand affinity is nowhere near what StubHub has," said Pate, later adding, "The relationships don't make the market, the service does." — Dave Brooks

Interviewed for this story: Steve Happel, (480) 965-5454; Sean Pate, (415) 222-8442



Scenes from the Arizona State Fair, Phoenix.

A BUNDLE OF BOO BRINGS CROWDS TO ARIZONA STATE FAIR

In a promotion that was new this year to the Arizona State Fair, Phoenix, Circle K customers could buy a product from Coors, Corona or Dr Pepper at the convenience store and the receipt acted as both an admission ticket to the fair and a concert ticket for the Daughtry show.

"It was a great sponsorship and a great promotion for us," said Wanell Costello, fair deputy director.

Fair admission was \$12 at the gate for adults and \$6 for children and senior citizens. The fair also offered a variety of promotions, including a \$1 day on opening day and a \$5-before-5 p.m. admission price on Fridays.

A new admission promotion available on Halloween was called the Boo Bundle. The promotion was available on the fair's Web site and for \$15 for adults or \$10 for children, a patron could purchase admission to the fair plus 10 rides. The midway had a \$1 a ride promotion that day, so any additional rides cost \$1 each.

Total attendance dipped 6.8 percent from last year's all-time record of 1,303,690 to 1,214,442, which was still the fair's third highest attendance ever, Costello said..

Weather was good during the 21-day fair that was held Oct. 12–Nov. 4 with Mondays off, but competition in the market, including college football, might have kept the numbers down, Costello said.

Laveen, Ariz.-based Ray Cammack Shows provided about 65 rides on the midway, said Tony Fiori, director of marketing. "The attendance was down and grosses were down," he said, although he could not provide an exact percentage.

Two new rides did well, Fiori said. Those were the Spinning Coaster and the ride Speed, but, he said, "I think La Grande Wheel always does the best."

Of the 12 concerts in the Arizona Veterans Memorial Coliseum, the best attended were Rihanna, Kid Rock, Sugarland with Little Big Town, Daughtry and the Steve Miller Band,

Costello said.

Other performers included Live with Collective Soul, Montgomery Gentry, Alice Cooper, Gretchen Wilson, "Weird Al" Yankovic and Howie Mandel.

The coliseum has 14,000 seats but is configured with fewer spaces during the concert series, Costello said. The concerts are a mix of ticketed and free with the price of admission, and the ratio varies from concert to concert.

"It works because you have those fans who want a reserved seat and we keep our prices low, and you have those people who like to come in with the admission," Costello said. "It kind of has something that appeals to everyone."

Tickets range from \$15 to \$25, Costello said, and they do not include fair admission.

Pay-one-price ride wristbands were available on Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday, Costello said. "It's a tradition for us," Costello said. "We've done it for several years. We have that demographic that loves the wristband and they know what day it's on."

Wristbands cost \$25 on Tuesdays and Thursdays, with a \$5 coupon available which dropped that price to \$20. On Sunday, wristbands cost \$30.

In marketing, fair officials focused on promoting new e-commerce discounts, coded to work with the Ray Cammack Shows' bar-coded ride ticketing system. "For the first time, our e-commerce customers could buy on-line, print their purchases and bring them to the fair," said Kristi Walsh, fair director of marketing.

About 5,000 fairgoers procured tickets that way, Walsh said. "The people I spoke with did like the convenience of printing their purchases," she added.

"What was interesting was that while the discount packages were popular, they weren't the top sellers in every category. It seemed that people preferred to purchase just before driving to the fair that day."

Next year's dates will be Oct. 10-Nov. 2. – Mary Wade Burnside

Interviewed for this story: Wanell Costello and Kristi Walsh, (602) 252-6771; Tony Fiori, (602) 237-3333



Rendering of the expansion at the Pantages Theatre, Hollywood, Calif.

HISTORIC HOLLYWOOD PANTAGES TO GET A 10-STORY ADDITION

A Hollywood icon will finally get an addition it was meant to have in 1929. Last week, the Nederlander family announced the \$75- to-\$100-million addition of 10-stories of office space to the historic Pantages Theater. The addition is expected to be finished in 2012.

The construction is a case of going back to the future, said David Green, senior vice president and CFO of the Nederlander organization, one of the largest operators of live theatre venues in the country.

In the late 1920s, Los Angeles mogul Alexander Pantages designed the Art Deco theater as a 12-story building, but the stock market crash ended construction at two stories. "When Mr. [James M.] Nederlander purchased Pantages in 1977, he learned of the plans," Green said. "In 1978, when I was hired, he said it was something he would make happen."

They had to re-establish the Pantages first, a task that took many years. The once spectacular venue, which hosted the Academy Awards from 1949 to 1959, was showing its age, and Hollywood had become synonymous with homelessness and crime, not the Golden Age of film nor new business development.

"Mr. Nederlander accumulated a lot of property in Hollywood during those days," Green said. "In his mind, the re-development of Hollywood is 30 years behind, and he's not sure why things didn't happen quicker."

The neighborhood began to change in 1999, when Pantages secured rights to Disney's The Lion King, and embarked on a 2-year, \$10 million renovation and upgrade. Clarett Group, a New York developer with offices in Los Angeles worked with Nederlander on that project and will partner on this one as well.

"Clarett is taking care of the financing arrangements," Green said.

During the 1999 renovations, Nederlander began discussing Alexander Pantages' original vision for the building with Clarett Group and they were excited by the possibilities.

In the last eight years, more than \$1 billion of additional development has been undertaken or planned around the corner of Hollywood and Vine, including a W hotel and an upgraded transit station.

One of the projects is another Nederlander/Clarett Group partnership, Blvd. 6200, a super-sized 1,000-unit retail and apartment complex about to break ground on Nederlander-owned parking lots near the Pantages. Blvd. 6200 is Hollywood's largest mixed-use project to date.

"The development will have an extremely positive effect on our already quite healthy theatre business because all the development and improvements presently going on and planned will only make Hollywood a more attractive destination. More restaurants, more shopping, more activity make for an even better theatre experience," said Green. "The Pantages Office Tower project resulted from a completely unique set of circumstances that would be almost impossible to duplicate. That being said, the Nederlander organization is always looking to improve and enhance its existing facilities throughout the country."

While city officials and historical organizations have embraced the office tower concept so far, Clarett Group Senior Managing Director Frank Stephan said the plan still faces some hurdles.

A recently released structural feasibility study has shown the building remains in good enough shape to support the weight of additional floors.

"Despite the fact that the building was never put on, all the levels were built as if it was going to be there," Stephan said.

The new addition must comply with modern day earthquake requirements, and the developer must complete a state-required environmental impact report, which could take 18 to 24 months to complete.

While they recognize the challenges, Green and Clarett Group representatives are optimistic about the project.

"The idea of [the Pantages] project has been well embraced," said Frank Stephan, senior managing director of Clarett Group. "We like to view it as density where you want density, right across from a transit stop. Hollywood has been smart enough to realize not all density is bad. It's emerging as a walkable neighborhood city."

After the environmental impact study is complete, construction is expected to take another two years. Nederlander will move their office spaces out of Pantages during construction, but they plan to continue performances in the theater.

Stephan said this is possible because the new office will be built over the lobby, office and retail space, not the stage.

"Our intent is to keep the theater open during construction, even if it takes a little longer," Green said. "There are too many shows that want and deserve to play here."

Details of how that will happen have yet to be determined, the men said.

When the tower opens in 2012, Green believes the office space will be sought after and bring an excellent return on investment. Only about 8 percent of Hollywood's office space was vacant at the end of last quarter, according to the L.A. Times.

"It will be attractive office space, with the prestige of a historic theater and an instant identity," Green said. "We will go from being a low to moderate rent district to a higher rent district with classier offerings, without losing the ambience of Hollywood." — Liz Boardman.

Interviewed for this article: David Green, (323) 817-6108; Frank Stephan, (310) 807-8405

HELP WANTED ADVERTISEMENT



The advertisement features a background image of a waterfall. At the top, the word "NIAGARA" is written in a large, serif font, with a stylized graphic of three curved lines above it. Below this, the text "CONVENTION & CIVIC CENTRE" and "NIAGARA FALLS CANADA" is displayed in a smaller, sans-serif font. A central text block states: "\$100 million project consisting of a 232,000 sq. ft. facility located 500 yards from the Falls to open in 2010". The bottom half of the ad is a white rounded rectangle containing the job title "President & General Manager" in a large, bold, sans-serif font, followed by "of the Niagara Convention & Civic Centre in Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada" in a smaller font. At the bottom of this white area, it says "For details please see : www.fallsconventions.com/executivesearch" and "deadline for resumes is January 11th @ 5pm".

NIAGARA
CONVENTION & CIVIC CENTRE
NIAGARA FALLS CANADA

\$100 million project consisting of a 232,000 sq. ft. facility
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BOOKINGS



DANE COOK ANOINTED PALACE JESTER

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 Nov. 20, 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:* \$1,891,302; *Event:* Elton John; *Venue:* **AcerArena, Sydney, Australia**; *Attendance:* 12,392; *Ticket Range:* \$300.90-\$84.96; *Promoter:* Chugg Entertainment; *Dates:* Nov. 28; *No. of Shows:* 1
- 2) *Gross Sales:* \$1,828,575; *Event:* Soda Stereo; *Venue:* **Home Depot Center, Carson, Calif.**; *Attendance:* 19,377; *Ticket Range:* \$200-\$25; *Promoter:* AEG Live, Goldenvoice; *Dates:* Nov. 21; *No. of Shows:* 1
- 3) *Gross Sales:* \$1,346,235; *Event:* Van Halen; *Venue:* **Rose Quarter, Portland, Ore.**; *Attendance:* 14,284; *Ticket Range:* \$125-\$49.50; *Promoter:* Live Nation; *Dates:* Dec. 1; *No. of Shows:* 1
- 4) *Gross Sales:* \$1,279,703; *Event:* The Police; *Venue:* **Arena Monterrey, Nuevo Leon**; *Attendance:* 16,134; *Ticket Range:* \$300-\$50; *Promoter:* In-house; *Dates:* Nov. 27-28; *No. of Shows:* 2
- 5) *Gross Sales:* \$1,240,124; *Event:* Dane Cook; *Venue:* **The Palace Of Auburn Hills (Mich.)**; *Attendance:* 18,095; *Ticket Range:* \$102.50-\$32.50; *Promoter:* Palace Sports & Entertainment; *Dates:* Nov. 24; *No. of Shows:* 1

10,001-15,000 Seats

- 1) *Gross Sales:* \$846,352; *Event:* Lionel Richie; *Venue:* **Brisbane (Australia) Entertainment Centre**; *Attendance:* 8,811; *Ticket Range:* \$120.57-\$79.58; *Promoter:* The Frontier Touring Company; *Dates:* Dec. 5; *No. of Shows:* 1
- 2) *Gross Sales:* \$526,507; *Event:* Trans-Siberian Orchestra; *Venue:* **Atlantic City (N.J.) Boardwalk Hall**; *Attendance:* 9,596; *Ticket Range:* \$60.50-\$40.50; *Promoter:* Live Nation; *Dates:* Dec. 7; *No. of Shows:* 1
- 3) *Gross Sales:* \$427,613; *Event:* Trans-Siberian Orchestra; *Venue:* **Jack Breslin Student Events Center, East Lansing, Mich.**; *Attendance:* 9,248; *Ticket Range:* \$49.50-\$39.50; *Promoter:* Live Nation, In-house; *Dates:* Nov. 30; *No. of Shows:* 1
- 4) *Gross Sales:* \$412,160; *Event:* George Lopez; *Venue:* **Rabobank Arena, Bakersfield, Calif.**; *Attendance:* 9,463; *Ticket Range:* \$47.50-\$37.50; *Promoter:* AEG Live, Goldenvoice; *Dates:* Nov. 23; *No. of Shows:* 1
- 5) *Gross Sales:* \$352,074; *Event:* Keith Urban; *Venue:* **Bi-Lo Center, Greenville, S.C.**; *Attendance:* 6,872; *Ticket Range:* \$55.50-\$20; *Promoter:* Outback Concerts; *Dates:* Dec. 6; *No. of Shows:* 1

5,001-10,000 Seats

- 1) *Gross Sales:* \$525,235; *Event:* Ministry of Sound Annual; *Venue:* **Hordern Pavilion,**

Sydney, Australia; Attendance: 6,828; Ticket Range: \$83.76; Promoter: Ministry of Sound; Dates: Dec. 1; No. of Shows: 1

2) Gross Sales: \$421,176; Event: Lionel Richie; Venue: **Westpac Centre, Christchurch, New Zealand**; Attendance: 5,429; Ticket Range: \$98.75-\$72.31; Promoter: The Frontier Touring Company; Dates: Nov. 26; No. of Shows: 1

3) Gross Sales: \$367,209; Event: Muse; Venue: **Westpac Centre, Christchurch, New Zealand**; Attendance: 7,270; Ticket Range: \$53.65; Promoter: Solid Entertainment; Dates: Nov. 25; No. of Shows: 1

4) Gross Sales: \$332,052; Event: So You Think You Can Dance; Venue: **Comcast Arena at Everett (Wash.) Events Center**; Attendance: 7,083; Ticket Range: \$54.50-\$35; Promoter: AEG Live; Dates: Nov. 28; No. of Shows: 1

5) Gross Sales: \$323,290; Event: Manheim Steamroller; Venue: **Comcast Arena at Everett (Wash.) Events Center**; Attendance: 5,243; Ticket Range: \$150-\$28; Promoter: AEG Live, Live Nation; Dates: Dec. 2; No. of Shows: 1

5,000 or Fewer Seats

1) Gross Sales: \$936,027; Event: Spamalot; Venue: **Wharton Center For Performing Arts, East Lansing, Mich.**; Attendance: 14,765; Ticket Range: \$73-\$25; Promoter: In-house; Dates: Dec. 4-9; No. of Shows: 8

2) Gross Sales: \$275,492; Event: Hairspray; Venue: **Ruth Eckerd Hall, Clearwater, Fla.**; Attendance: 4,416; Ticket Range: \$67-\$47; Promoter: In-house; Dates: Nov. 23-24; No. of Shows: 3

3) Gross Sales: \$217,727; Event: Tony Bennett; Venue: **Broward Center For The Performing Arts, Fort Lauderdale, Fla.**; Attendance: 2,677; Ticket Range: \$125-\$50; Promoter: In-house; Dates: Dec. 6; No. of Shows: 1

4) Gross Sales: \$178,629; Event: Jethro Tull; Venue: **Massey Hall, Toronto, Ontario**; Attendance: 2,705; Ticket Range: \$68.85-\$49.03; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: Nov. 24; No. of Shows: 1

5) Gross Sales: \$178,196; Event: Turtle Creek Chorale "Children Will Listen"; Venue: **Majestic Theatre, Dallas**; Attendance: 1,704; Ticket Range: \$50-\$18.40; Promoter: Turtle Creek Chorale; Dates: Dec. 7-9; No. of Shows: 5

Compiled by Rob Ocampo, HotTickets@venuestoday.com



A reunited Spice Girls

SPICE GIRLS BRING HEAT ON REUNION TOUR

It was the tour they said would never happen. No, not the Eagles ...or the Police...or Van Halen. Not even the (alleged) Led Zeppelin '08 tour. We're talking about the Spice Girls reunion tour, which has turned into one of the hottest bills this side of Hannah Montana. Ten years after fracturing amid a flurry of personality conflicts, the original Girl Power quintet is back on the road and, by the sounds of it, hitting on all cylinders as they clean up at the box office and merchandise booth by tapping into a profitable mix of nostalgia and youthful curiosity.

It's a given that the Girls – in all fairness now all women in their 30's and most of whom have one, or more children – would do well in England, where they launched their global assault almost 15 years ago. But judging by a pair of dates, Dec. 5 and 7, at the Staples Center in Los Angeles, the Girls are poised to conquer America once again.

"I was at the Forum when they played in L.A. in 1998 and I thought the crowds were pretty much the same," said Lee Zeidman, general manager of Staples Center, just days after the group set new records in the building for merchandise sales for a two-night stand.

The two sold-out nights wound up with merchandise per caps in excess of \$20 per patron, with the three biggest selling items including the black photo event tee, the black vintage flag tee and the white greatest hits tee, priced between \$35-\$40 apiece. "Girl Power certainly proved it had a lot of money to spend," said Zeidman. "I think [*Los Angeles Times* music critic] Natalie [Nichols] was right when she said the audience

was probably young girls 8-10 years old who were their audience in 1998 and now they're teenagers or young adults and they were at the show with their girlfriends instead of their moms. I also think it was women who were in their early teens or 20s then and who were now at the show with their kids in tow."

Zeidman said the audience appeared to be 65 percent female and he credited the speedy sellout and capacity crowds to the fact that the group's members have kept themselves in the public eye for the past decade courtesy of their solo careers.

The Spice Girls production was substantial, Zeidman said. They travel in 18-20 trucks and 10 buses. At Staples Center the call was for 98 stagehands. They hung 130,000 pounds of equipment. The arena staff came in for the pre-rig at 6 a.m. The Spice Girls crew arrived at 9 a.m., and it was ready to go at 5:30 p.m.

With two shows and a hockey game in between, they tore down twice, Zeidman said. The first tear-down took five hours, because they had to decide what could stay in place. The final move-out took four-and-a-half hours. "They had an excellent production crew working with us," Zeidman said.

Long rumored, the tour, announced in the summer and promoted by AEG Live, was originally slated to play eleven dates around the world. With glinting outfits designed by Robert Cavalli, multiple costume changes and solo spotlights for each of the Girls – Baby (Emma Bunton), Scary (Melanie Brown), Sporty (Melanie Chisholm), Posh (Victoria Beckham) and Ginger (Geri Halliwell), the show's staging has all the firepower and flash you'd expect from the one-time pop sensations. It also has the expected tie-ins, including a nearly \$10-million contract to use their name and image for the grocery chain Tesco in the UK, as well as a deal with Victoria's Secret lingerie shops, which is the only place fans can purchase the group's new greatest hits CD until mid-January.

The campy, pyrotechnic-fueled outing kicked off on Dec. 2 in Vancouver and with tickets snatched up in record time around the globe, another run of gigs was announced that included dates in Montreal, Detroit, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C. and Toronto. While most shows are one-offs, the tour will touch down for three shows at London's O2 in December – the AEG Live venue where they announced the tour on June 28 -- and return in January for a string of 14 gigs that are hotly anticipated on ground zero of Spiceman. Tickets for the first show at the O2 sold out in 38 seconds and a reported one million people signed up in the UK – and five million worldwide – for chances to get tickets through the group's website. With an announced capacity of around 14,500 for each show and an average ticket price of £65 (approximately \$130 U.S.), the projected gross ticket sales for the O2 run will be £16,022,500 (around \$32 million U.S.)

Caroline McNamara isn't just the head of sales for the O2, she's exactly the kind of person the Spice Girls were counting on to come to their reunion shows. "I think it's really exciting, being a fan as I was 10 years ago," McNamara said. All told, with recent production holds that were released, the O2 is looking at more than 255,000 tickets sold for the shows, which McNamara said are expected to all be sellouts before year's end. "When we were getting ready to open the O2, we said this was among our tours of choice...if it happened. And from what I can tell, it's a lot of people like myself who enjoyed them the first time who are interested in how they sound as a unit now and younger fans who can only think of them as separate artists." Tickets for the O2 show are priced between 55 and 75 pounds (approximately \$110-\$150 U.S. dollars).

How the tour does outside the London-New York-Los Angeles nexus will be a gauge of how strong the chances are for either an extension of the current outing or future Spice

tours. While indications are strong that demand could keep up, not all the shows have been instant sellouts. Around 14,000 tickets went on sale for the Feb. 19 show at the Wachovia Center in Philadelphia on Saturday (Dec. 8) and as of Tuesday (Dec. 11) the venue's COO, John Page, said half had been snatched up. "I think we did well," said Page. "I think we'll be right there at the end of the day and after the first of the year when the holidays are over, we're well positioned to do the business they expected." If the show isn't a complete sellout, Page predicted it would be very close. — Gil Kaufman

Interviewed for this story: Lee Zeidman, (213) 742-7273; Caroline McNamara, 44 (0) 20 7536 1625; John Page, (215) 389-9552

MARKETING

E-MAIL MARKETING MEANS ENGAGING CUSTOMERS ON THEIR TERMS

LAS VEGAS — Fairs and festivals are becoming more sophisticated at collecting e-mail addresses of patrons. From information retention through online ticket sales, to kiosks that collect email addresses, fairs are continually developing means of keeping in touch with patrons through the low-cost medium of email.

But once a fair captures an e-mail address, what do they do with it? "The days of blasting customers with mass e-mails is over. E-mail is the most personal advertising medium in history," said Richard Finstein, president and co-founder of CommPartners, which held a panel on e-marketing at the 117th annual International Association of Fairs and Expositions convention in Las Vegas. "If your e-mail isn't personal, it's broken."

Smart marketers recognize people's aversion to SPAM and have developed a core set of best practices to continue to hold the attention of fairgoers. Finstein offered the following seven tips during his presentation on ways to retain a customer's attention and send powerful marketing messages.

1.) Get Permission

"E-mail is one of the most powerful and yet one of the most dangerous mediums of communication," Finstein said. "Virtually everyone uses it; it's very inexpensive and it can easily be built into the existing marketing system. But of all media, it is the one where it's most critical that you have explicit permission."

Fair managers should be very clear about their intent when collecting fairgoers' e-mail addresses and explicitly ask for permission to send them e-mail marketing materials. Consider exchanging permission for a discount coupon to the fair or some type of promotional item, he said. Failing to correctly receive permission could lead to federal penalties and blacklisting by weary Internet Service Providers.

2.) Build a Targeted Mailing List

"The very best way to get permission is to have your best customers and your biggest fans ask their friends to sign up," Finstein said. Follow up with ticket buyers and include a subscribe link in the mailing so readers have a means of signing up if their friends by forwarding them the e-mail.

3.) Adopt a Strategy of Persistence

"They used to say it takes something like 7.3 impacts to make an impression with an ad, and that was long before the Internet. I believe today it's approaching 20 imprints

before you can make an impression," Finstein said. "So if you aren't touching your clients in some way at least once a month, chances are you're going to lose their interest."

Successful e-mails begin with a story and use the e-mail to "drip that story until it gradually unfolds," he said. That means constantly thinking about the next move and the next contact, whether it be inviting them to a presale or sending out specialized content detailing an upcoming fair event."

4.) Tell A Story

One of the biggest mistakes fairs and events make is blasting out nondescript e-mails every time a new event books the fairgrounds or a new event goes on sale.

"You need to include relevant information that will entice people to read your e-mail and not get the feeling you're just trying to sell them something," he said. "Fortunately, fairgrounds are full of great stories and community knowledge. Entice your customers with local stories of fair exhibitors, or maybe a tip or recipe from one of the competitors. As a fair manager, you truly have an infinite number of stories to tell."

5.) Let Your Patrons Drive the Design

Since there's no such thing as guaranteed delivery in the e-mail business, marketing departments have to be cognizant of design. Filters often block out logos, graphics and flash animation, determining whether or not your customer or prospects see your message.

"Filters are extremely thorough," Finstein said. "If you're not careful, they'll block out your legitimate message."

He recommends using flat text with links to your website — high-resolution graphics should be saved for your website. Patrons who read their e-mails on Blackberrys and other PDAs often can't download the graphics, he said. Many fairs and big festivals are beginning to offer both rich text and plain formats so patrons can determine how they want their mail delivered.

6.) Have An Exit Strategy

"People who gave you their e-mail address did so because they want to hear from you, but that could change," Finstein said. "If people don't respond to you, chances are they're either not interested in your content or they're no longer getting your e-mails."

"In either case, we recommend you define a set number of non-response messages and then stop sending them e-mails. It sends a negative brand message and it doesn't do anything to help reestablish your relationship with them," he said.

7.) Define Your Own Best Practices

The key to maintaining a set of successful best practices is to know what you want from your program and be prepared to change those priorities as the event's needs change, Finstein said.

"Identify what you will use them for, the goal of your communications and how you'll define the success of your campaign," he said. "The most important element in any kind of successful e-mail marketing is understanding and defining what your realistic strategy should be." – Dave Brooks

Interviewed for this story: Richard Finstein, (877) 297-0926

CONCESSIONS

ARAMARK WINS PHOENIX CONVENTION CENTER RENEWAL...AGAIN

Aramark, the incumbent, has won the bid again for the Phoenix Convention Center concessions and catering contract. The original renewal was contested by Centerplate following an extremely close race, which precipitated a follow-up hearing and auxiliary judgment, but the award was confirmed Dec. 10 as having no bias. Today, the final document was to go before the City Council for approval.

Jay Green, convention center director, said he believes the competitive level of this contract negotiation is a sign of the times for North America's greatly expanded convention centers. The value of these contracts has risen exponentially and the food service companies have taken a much more aggressive stance in bidding.

Aramark has provided food service for the Phoenix Convention Center for 35 years, Green said. Four companies bid for the contract this time, including Ovations Food Services and Savor, Catering by SMG. Aramark scored 1,008 points to Centerplate's 1,004 out of a possible 1,225, Green said.

The panel evaluated the bids Nov. 7-8. Green was notified the panel recommended Aramark on Nov. 13. Centerplate filed a protest Nov. 19. On Dec. 5, a hearing officer, a retired State Supreme Court Justice, heard the case, 7.5 hours of testimony, and Dec. 7, he issued his report concurring with the panel recommendation. Aramark has been operating with interim contracts since Sept. 28, when the old deal expired.

Part of the new contract is a client-based advisory panel, which will review food operations and performance. That, too, is a sign of the times, Green suggested.

A willingness to invest was part of the process. Green said Aramark has been investing since day one, since the Phoenix Convention Center was doing business as the Civic Plaza in the mid-80's, but now the ante is upped.

The new contract is for five years plus one five-year option. The option is subject to approval of both parties.

The commission structure is much improved for the convention center this round. Green said there are six levels to the commission plan, but basically Aramark pays the venue 30 percent on 0-\$6 million in sales up to 40 percent of \$14 million or more. Alcohol is 36 percent of 0-\$6 million up to 38 percent of \$14 million or more. Concessions is 28 percent to 34 percent.

Gross sales in 2007 were \$7.5 million, but that number is expected to grow dramatically when the third phase of expansion opens in January 2009. Right now, the center has 300,000 gross square feet of space, which will grow to 880,000 in 2009. The expanded center will have three ballrooms, 660,000 square feet of exhibit space, a central food court and three kitchen areas.

Aramark will also invest in another new feature which is becoming standard in convention centers, a Chef's Tasting Room, Green said. The footprint is in the new building and the tasting room is budgeted to cost \$250,000-\$300,000. It has become an essential marketing tool in developing new business, he said. "It's a new trend, expansion of the sales and marketing spaces."

Aramark will also invest in service equipment, portables and table-top equipment, he

said.

For the convention center, average income from food and drink has been in the \$3 million to \$3.5 million range per year, Green said. They are projecting, conservatively, that that will grow to \$4 million to \$5 million with the expansion.

Green added that "green initiatives" were very much a part of this bidding process, but that was not the deciding factor. All the big concessions companies now have recycling programs, local food purchase and reduced transportation goals and water conservation written into standard operating procedure, he said. – Linda Deckard

Interviewed for this story: Jay Green, (602) 256-3567



The 2008 Fairs & Festivals Resource Guide is underway

This is our third edition of the Fairs & Festivals Resource Guide and it will be better than ever. Every edition has the most updated information possible and bonus features include such perennial favorites as the Top 50 Fairs in North America, a chart of equestrian center and fairground improvements under construction (all printed in the *Venues Today* magazine) and our unique Talking Points - which illuminates what makes movers and shakers in the industry tick.

New in the 2008 edition (as supplied to Venues Today):

- **Multiple contacts listed - such as General Manager, Director of Marketing and Talent Buyer
- **Carnival Company used by Fair or Festival
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SHORT TAKES

Lynn Carlotto, general manager of Arena at Harbor Yard, congratulates Vince McMahon, CEO of WWE, on the 15th Anniversary of Monday Night RAW by presenting him with a crystal elephant commemorating Bridgeport's early Mayor, PT Barnum



ARENA AT HARBOR YARD HOSTS TELEVISED WWE EVENT

The Arena at Harbor Yard in Bridgeport, Conn. was the venue selected to host the 15th Anniversary of Monday Night RAW on Dec. 10, a 3-hour special nationally televised live broadcast. The event generated \$225,167 with 6,668 tickets sold.

*Contact: Laura Giammattei-Andronaco,
(203) 345-2303*

ORLANDO UNVEILS NEW ARENA

Orlando civic leaders, the Orlando Magic and architects from HOK Sport Tuesday unveiled the design of the new Orlando Events Center. The Events Center, which is scheduled to open in the fall of 2010, will be home to the Orlando Magic and the Orlando Predators, and it will compete to host major national events, concerts and family shows. The City of Orlando will operate the new Events Center, while the community will own the facility. The facility will feature a modern mix of metal and glass exterior materials, as well a 120-foot glass tower visible from the I-4 highway.

Contact: Gina Leo, (816) 329-4409

FACES & PLACES: BRECKNER, FLOCO, CAMPANA MAKE CHANGES

Scott Breckner has been named director of the office of special events at **New Mexico State University**, Las Cruces, a post made famous by Barbara Hubbard and most recently held by Will Lofdahl who relocated to the Georgia Dome, Atlanta, in July. Breckner will oversee more than the Pan Am Center, the best known of the university facilities. He will also book some events for Aggie Stadium as well as at the downtown Rio Grande Theater, a 500-seat historic venue. Breckner had retired from his job as director of the Breslin Center at Michigan State University, East Lansing...**Global Entertainment Corporation** has named **Richard Floco** president of Encore Facility Management (Encore), and Global Entertainment Marketing Systems (GEMS), which handles sales and marketing services for Global managed events centers. He was

serving as president of Global Entertainment Ticketing (GetTix.Net) at the time of his appointment and will continue in that role. Floco's appointment combines under one executive position all areas of facility management, licensing and advertising, sales and marketing and exclusive ticketing services for events centers under management... Midwest Regional President **Mark Campana**, will relocate to the **Live Nation's** downtown Chicago office. He had split his time between the company's Detroit office and Live Nation's various Midwest offices. In Chicago Live Nation owns and/or operates Alpine Valley Music Theatre, First Midwest Bank Amphitheatre, Charter One Pavilion at Northerly Island and House of Blues and employs nearly 200 full time and 2,000 seasonal employees. Last year alone Live Nation produced more than 300 shows in the city.

Contacts: Scott Breckner, (505) 646-4413; Richard Floco, (480) 994-0772; John Vlautin, (310) 867-7127

DIRECT ENERGY CENTER EXPANSION APPROVED

The Toronto City Council approved redevelopment of the Direct Energy Centre, Exhibition Place. The 160,000 square foot Automotive Building, part of the complex, will undergo a \$47 million renovation to create a new conference center and is committed to achieving LEED Silver rating for green design. Construction begins March 2008, with an opening anticipated for April 2009. NORR Limited, Architects and Engineers, designed the project. It will be the first LEED Silver Conference Centre in Canada.

Contact: Laura Purdy, (416) 263-3020

LEXUS OWNERS PRIVILEGED AT WACHOVIA CENTER

Lexus drivers in the Greater Philadelphia Region will have priority parking at the Wachovia Center as part of a new three-years sponsorship package between Lexus and arena owner Comcast-Spectacor. Lexus drivers can park in a designated Lexus parking spot in either of two lots in the Wachovia Center both of which will feature Lexus advertising on the light poles. The deal also includes advertising signage inside the Wachovia Center where Lexus already owns the naming rights to the arena's private, exclusive courtside club. Lexus commercials will air during Philadelphia Flyers and 76ers broadcasts on Comcast SportsNet. Additionally, Comcast SportsNet will now air a Lexus sponsored "Sports \$ense" segment regarding the financial sports news.

Contact: Ike Richman, (215) 389-9552

LIVE NATION EXPANDS PRESENCE IN HONG KONG, CHINA

Live Nation has entered into an agreement with Chinese company Cosmedia Group to manage Hong Kong's brand new multi-purpose outdoor Pop TV Arena (Zhong Tian Di). The 10,000 capacity venue, situated in West Kowloon, will open in January 2008 with a series of concerts by China's superstar artist, Jackie Cheung commencing on Jan. 25. Live Nation also announced it has appointed Luke Hede in January 2008 to the position of director of Booking, Asia. Previously with Dainty Consolidated Entertainment, one of the leading promoters in Australia, Hede was responsible for ticketing and logistics liaising with DCE's touring team.

Contact: John Vlautin, (310) 867-7127

HELP WANTED

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

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW THE FULL EMPLOYMENT LISTINGS BELOW](#)

Telstra Stadium, Sydney - Various Positions - POSITION #1: Manager, Event & Venue Services (existing position). Reporting...

Ticketmaster, Brisbane, Australia - Box Office Supervisor - Ticketmaster is Australia's leading ticketing partner to a range of...

Nokia Theatre L.A. Live - Director - Events and Production - The NOKIA Theatre L.A. Live Director of Events and Production is...

Agganis Arena, Boston - Assistant General Manager - Boston University seeks a qualified candidate to be the Assistant...

Live Nation Ticketing, Los Angeles - Director of Client Services - This position acts as the direct liaison between the venue box...

Georgia Dome - Security Manager - Seeking a Security Manager who will be responsible for the overall...

Melbourne (Australia) & Olympic Parks - Safety Advisor - Package circa \$70,000 Event and Venue Environment. Melbourne & Olympic Parks is...

Burnsville (MN) Performing Arts Center /VenuWorks - Executive Director - VenuWorks, Inc., www.venuworks.com, a fast growing firm specializing in public assembly...

New Jersey Sports & Exposition Authority (IZOD & Giants Stadium) - Event Marketing Manager - The New Jersey Sports & Exposition Authority (Meadowlands Sports Complex) is seeking...

New NFL Stadium - Chief Executive Officer - Turnkey Sports & Entertainment seeks interested and qualified candidates to be the CEO...

City of Sydney (Australia) - Outdoor Event Coordinator - The City of Sydney is seeking an experienced Outdoor Event Coordinator to join the...

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW THE FULL EMPLOYMENT LISTINGS ABOVE](#)

To submit news or information to **Venues Today** contact:

Linda Deckard, Publisher, Editor-in-chief
(714) 378-5400, ext. 22
linda@venuestoday.com

Dave Brooks, Senior Writer & Assignment Editor
(714) 378-5400, ext. 24
dave@venuestoday.com

Rob Ocampo, Hot Tickets/Top Stops Manager
(714) 378-5400, ext. 21
rob@venuestoday.com

For advertising information, contact:

Sue Nichols, Eastern U.S.
(615) 662-0252
sue@venuestoday.com

Pauline Davis, Texas
(615) 243-7883
pauline@venuestoday.com

Rich DiGiacomo, Mid & Western U.S., International
(310) 429-3678
rich@venuestoday.com

April Parnell, Director of Marketing & Sales
(714) 378-0056
april@venuestoday.com

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

Nazarene Kahn, Resource Guides Coordinator
(714) 378-5400 ext. 25
resourceguides@venuestoday.com

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