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Greetings April,

Welcome to VT Pulse, the redesigned e-newsletter from Venues Today. We're celebrating our 10th VT Pulse this week and we are planning to make some changes to make the VT Pulse more reader-friendly. Keep your eye out for our newest new look.

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VT NEWS

CONVENTION CENTERS

PENNSYLVANIA CONVENTION CENTER GEARED UP TO SPEND \$700 MIL TO DOUBLE THE FUN

Renderings of the Pennsylvania Convention Center



Although the \$700 million Pennsylvania Convention Center expansion is currently underway, the horizontal expansion is not expected to cause disruptions for the conventions and tradeshows booked within the current center.

Joe Resta, project executive for the expansion, said the venue signed its agreement with the Philadelphia Building and Construction Trades Council and received its release from the Commonwealth last week. "We are now starting the bid cycle for our first two construction packages," he said.

Quote of the Week

"The thing that all of us should be doing is changing our advertising programs to what the audience members are viewing today... We've doubled and tripled the amount of money we're putting into that area. We advertised in movie theaters - we did that 25 years ago, but now that it's electronic it's easier."

— Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo CEO Leroy Shafer on marketing this year's event.

ANAHEIM IDOLIZES UNDERWOOD

HOTTickets

HOT TICKETS is a weekly summary of the top acts and ticket sales as reported to VT PULSE. Following are the top 20 concerts and events, the top 5 in each seating capacity category, which took place since **March 4, 2008**.

To submit reports, e-mail HotTickets@venuestoday.com or fax to (714) 378-0040.

15,001 or More Seats

1) **Bruce Springsteen & The E Street Band**
 Gross Sales: \$1,488,769; Venue: Nassau Veterans

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Dave Brooks
 Senior Writer &

According to Resta, the convention center expansion is a massive venture representing the largest public capital project in the history of Pennsylvania. "It is a very large project, the largest publicly-funded project in the Commonwealth," he said. "There has been a lot of work to get here, and we are excited that it is starting."

From a procurement perspective, the expansion's two packages include a superstructure package that focuses on major overhauls, including the foundations, slabs, steel, concrete and the building's skeleton; and the venue's exterior skin and interior construction package. A smaller vertical transportation package will include elevators and escalators.

According to Resta, the center will receive bids on the superstructure and vertical transportation packages in early May, and winning bids will be decided in early June. The project's completion date is slated for the end of 2010.

Because the venue is currently designed to hold two conventions simultaneously, and only one convention hall is expanding, the project is not expected to cause any problems or interruptions for conventions that will be held during construction. Although a connecting wall between the halls will be reconfigured during the project, a temporary wall will be put in place to minimize potential construction noise.

According to Jack Ferguson, executive vice president, convention division, at the Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau, "This expansion allows us to take care of conventions that have outgrown us and host shows that we couldn't take care of before due to our size limitations. It also gives us greater flexibility when two conventions are going on simultaneously."

Ferguson said the convention center currently has approximately \$1 billion worth of business booked after the expansion opens and another \$1 billion in convention business pending.

The convention center's expansion, which will nearly double the building's size, will increase meeting and exhibit space by nearly 60 percent. Along with expanding the saleable space to 1 million square feet, the project will create the largest contiguous exhibit space in the Northeast at 541,000 square feet and the largest convention center ballroom on the East Coast at 60,000 square feet.

The new center will consist of 87 meeting rooms along with a new main entrance on Broad Street. The expansion will allow two large tradeshows or two major conventions to be held simultaneously.

The Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau expects the enlarged convention center to bring in more than 280,000 additional room nights and more than \$140 million in economic impact annually. It also anticipates the creation of 2,000 hospitality-related jobs equaling more than \$150 million in economic impact.

Pennsylvania Governor Edward G. Rendell presented a \$16 million check to officials of the Pennsylvania Convention Center back in 2006, kicking off the first monetary installment of the building's expansion. The money was allocated to cover routine expenses associated with initial phases of expansion, including architectural renderings, construction documents, property acquisition and the development of a finance plan, a business plan and an operating plan.

The state-funded project faced some delays along the way, most recently regarding a necessary agreement between the city, state and convention center authority that would relieve the city of its obligation to repay the original center's construction bonds, as well as the responsibilities of the parties funding and operating the center once expansion is completed. — Lisa White

Memorial Coliseum, Uniondale, N.Y.;
 Attendance: 16,518;
 Ticket Range:
 \$93.50-\$63.50;
 Promoter: Live Nation; Dates:
 March 10; No. of Shows: 1

2) Juanes
 Gross Sales:
 \$958,059; Venue:
Madison Square Garden Arena, New York; Attendance:
 10,144; Ticket Range:
 \$120.50-\$35;
 Promoter: AEG Live;
 Dates: March 6; No. of Shows: 1

3) Linkin Park
 Gross Sales:
 \$864,062; Venue:
Staples Center, Los Angeles; Attendance:
 16,232;
 Ticket Range: \$66-\$36;
 Promoter: AEG Live, Goldenvoice;
 Dates: March 4; No. of Shows: 1

4) Iron Maiden
 Gross Sales:
 \$823,954; Venue:
Coliseo de Puerto Rico, San Juan; Attendance:
 11,548;
 Ticket Range:
 \$97.50-\$40;
 Promoter: PRPC Events, Inc.; Dates:
 March 12; No. of Shows: 1

5) Carrie Underwood, Keith Urban
 Gross Sales:
 \$815,226; Venue:
Honda Center, Anaheim, Calif.; Attendance:
 10,700;
 Ticket Range:
 \$345.42-\$35;
 Promoter: AEG Live, Goldenvoice; Dates:
 March 13; No. of Shows: 1

10,001-15,000
 Seats

1) Walking With Dinosaurs
 Gross Sales:
 \$962,989; Venue: i
Wireless Center, Moline, Ill.; Attendance:
 26,401;
 Ticket Range: \$65-\$47.50;
 Promoter: In-house; Dates:
 March 5-9; No. of Shows: 7

2) Smashing

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**Sydney (Australia)
Opera House -
Producer & Project
Coordinator**

**VIEW THE FULL
LISTINGS**

*Interviewed for this story: Jack Ferguson, (215) 636-3310;
Joe Resta, (215) 418-4763.*

FAIRS & FESTIVALS HOUSTON WRAPS THE RODEO WITH BIG NUMBERS, READIES FOR NCAA

Miley Cyrus and her famous father Billy Ray perform at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo; (below) Bullriding during the rodeo.



Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo officials fear that losing the last Sunday of the event because of an early Easter would mean the event would take a hit were happily unfounded. The event posted the third highest attendance figures at 1,802,158, less than 4,000 down from last year, as well as record-breaking revenues.

"Our weekend days are always by far the biggest, and to lose one of those and to begin on a Monday (instead of a Tuesday), we were projecting in our budget that we might be down as much as 10 percent, not just for losing that day, but because we didn't know what effect it would have on the entire Easter weekend," said chief operating officer Leroy Shafer.

Of the 20 concerts that appeared after the rodeo performances, six were sell-outs, including Miley Cyrus as Hannah Montana, who beat her own record from last year for the all-time rodeo attendance, with 73,459 in attendance compared to last year's 73,291 in the 71,500-seat Reliant Stadium.

The other sell-outs included Brad Paisley at 73,003; Fergie at 72,777; Rascal Flatts at 72,051; Brooks & Dunn at 71,906; and Go Tejano Day with Los Horoscopos De Durango, which, at 71,164, set the all-time high for Go Tejano Day.

Brooks & Dunn also became the seventh act to be inducted into Rodeo Houston's Star Trail of Fame, along with Gene Autry, Roy Rogers, Elvis Presley, Charley Pride, George Strait and Reba McEntire. With the exception of Autry, Rogers and Presley, those artists have played to at least 1 million fans at the Houston Livestock Show.

Other entertainers at Rodeo Houston included Tim McGraw, Faith Hill, Alan Jackson, Martina McBride, Sugarland, Toby Keith, Clay Walker, Big & Rich, Dierks Bentley, John Fogerty and John Legend.

It was the first time in a while at Rodeo Houston that Fogerty was allowed to sing his own songs, Shafer said, because of legal problems. "He's only been able to do that for about three and a half years now," Shafer said.

R&B singer Legend represented a bit of a departure from Rodeo Houston's mostly-country line-up, and his show went over well. "That was just tremendous for us," he said. "That was a new genre for us. We hadn't had an equal for that in several years."



The average ticket price to see a rodeo and concert was \$28. Action seats on the sidelines cost \$77 and

Pumpkins
Gross Sales:
\$593,808; Venue:
Vector Arena,
Auckland, New
Zealand;
Attendance: 6,576;
Ticket Range:
\$96.18; Promoter:
Michael Coppel
Presents; Dates:
March 22; No. of
Shows: 1

3) Ozzy Osbourne
Gross Sales:
\$444,683; Venue:
Brisbane (Australia)
Entertainment
Centre; Attendance:
4,914; Ticket Range:
\$119.94-\$81.89;
Promoter: Chugg
Entertainment;
Dates: March 20;
No. of Shows: 1

4) Jonas Brothers
Gross Sales:
\$395,443; Venue:
Richmond (Va.)
Coliseum;
Attendance: 8,643;
Ticket Range: \$49-
\$29; Promoter: Live
Nation; Dates:
March 11; No. of
Shows: 1

5) Jonas Brothers
Gross Sales:
\$343,487; Venue:
Patriot Center,
Fairfax, Va.;
Attendance: 7,289;
Ticket Range:
\$49.50-\$29.50;
Promoter: Live
Nation; Dates:
March 14; No. of
Shows: 1

5,001-10,000 Seats

1) Bon Jovi
Gross Sales:
\$2,349,195; Venue:
Mohegan Sun
Arena, Uncasville,
Conn.; Attendance:
18,791; Ticket
Range: \$195-\$125;
Promoter: Live
Nation, In-house;
Dates: March 7-8;
No. of Shows: 2

2) Aventura
Gross Sales:
\$517,275; Venue:
Gibson
Amphitheatre at
Universal CityWalk,
Universal City,
Calif.; Attendance:
5,985; Ticket Range:
\$130-\$55; Promoter:
Live Nation; Dates:
March 7; No. of

included food and drink; and 180 chute seats cost \$200 or \$300 and also came with a chuckwagon dinner, a one-night membership to the Corral Club, a book of carnival ride coupons, the ability to go out on the dirt after the rodeo to see the concert as well as a chair, free parking and more.

Shafer did not have revenues figured out for 2008, but expected all streams to be up. Last year's revenues ended up exceeding \$81.6 million with an operating budget of \$51.2 million. This year's operating budget was estimated to be \$53 million. The gate admission fee went up \$1 from \$6 to \$7, but he did not believe this accounted for the revenue increase.

"That's really an insignificant amount with the understanding that your rodeo ticket is a combination and grounds admission is included in that. That's (the rodeo and concerts) by far our largest revenue source," Shafer said.

Shafer estimated the revenues just from the concerts and rodeo would be \$31 million, and paid rodeo attendance was up 2.55 percent over last year.

Laveen, Ariz.-based Ray Cammack shows placed 68 rides on the midway, said marketing director Tony Fiori, a few more than last year. The new Sky Ride that takes passengers across the grounds like a ski lift, was the most popular.

"It was a great event, a stellar event," said Fiori, noting that rides, food and game revenues all were up. "We had a stellar last five days."

The carnival does not sell pay-one-price wristbands but, instead, books of coupons. Books cost \$50 for 150 tickets or \$10 for 22 tickets.

Rodeo Houston tripled spending for advertising on the Internet and on electronic sources at outlets such as malls and supermarkets, to \$250,000, compared to \$90,000 in 2007, said Sarah Poole, manager of advertising and media.

"The thing that all of us should be doing is changing our advertising programs to what the audience members are viewing today," Shafer said. "We've doubled and tripled the amount of money we're putting into that area. We advertised in movie theaters - we did that 25 years ago, but now that it's electronic it's easier.

"There are lots of things we're trying to do to get the audiences not reading newspapers or listening to radio, and some are watching very little TV."

But, in a nod to the success the rodeo has had in recent years with Hilary Duff and, especially, Miley Cyrus, officials did work with Houston's Disney radio station.

Up next are the NCAA southern regional basketball games, giving Reliant Stadium its quickest turnaround time after the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. "It's amazing," Shafer said. "We literally had all of our pens, stalls, chutes and dirt out of Reliant Stadium by 6 a.m. (Easter) Sunday morning after the rodeo ended Saturday night. By (Sunday) afternoon, they already had taken out the LD systems and had it reconfigured so the sound was redirected to the floor. They retained the big screens that we hang for the show so there are eight of those screens dead over center court.

"It's quite a production, from the rodeo to Thursday morning when there will be teams here practicing. It's the southern region that has Texas in it, so we're very, very fortunate that happened. It will boost ticket sales." Next year's dates: March 3-22. - Mary Wade Burnside

Interviewed for this story: Leroy Shafer and Sarah Poole, (832) 667-1000; Tony Fiori, (602) 237-2753

TICKETING

BRAVES LAUNCH NEW SEASON TICKET INITIATIVE

Shows: 1

3) Jill Scott

Gross Sales: \$366,622; Venue: The Liacouras Center, Philadelphia; Attendance: 7,412; Ticket Range: \$64-\$19.68; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: March 7; No. of Shows: 1

4) Jonas Brothers

Gross Sales: \$300,830; Venue: Sovereign Center, Reading, Pa.; Attendance: 6,657; Ticket Range: \$50-\$30; Promoter: Live Nation, In-house; Dates: March 13; No. of Shows: 1

5) Chris Rock

Gross Sales: \$280,600; Venue: Wells Fargo Theatre, Denver; Attendance: 5,021; Ticket Range: \$75.50-\$45.50; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: March 9; No. of Shows: 1

5,000 or Fewer Seats

1) Jersey Boys

Gross Sales: \$8,160,060; Venue: Tampa Bay (Fla.) Performing Arts Center; Attendance: 100,423; Ticket Range: \$150-\$24.50; Promoter: In-house; Dates: Feb. 13-March 15; No. of Shows: 40

2) Riverdance

Gross Sales: \$623,562; Venue: Civic Center of Greater Des Moines (Iowa); Attendance: 12,143; Ticket Range: \$65-\$30; Promoter: In-house; Dates: March 14-16; No. of Shows: 5

3) Twelve Angry Men

Gross Sales: \$526,927; Venue: Keller Auditorium, Portland, Ore.; Attendance: 14,092; Ticket Range: \$67.75-\$26.75; Promoter: Broadway Across America; Dates: March 11-16;

The Atlanta Braves of Major League Baseball have launched a new purchasing application to help fans split seats for season tickets.

Launched in 2008, the SplitSeason ticketing package allows buyers to create groups online to manage the sharing of an 81-game season ticket package. The team is the first to offer the program to new season-ticket holders – the San Francisco Giants currently offer the program only for existing season-ticket holders.

“It’s very similar to using the eVite application,” said Derek Schiller, the Braves VP of Sales and Marketing, describing a popular Internet application owned by InterActiveCorp that allows users to create online invitations for real-world events. Users of SplitSeason enter the names of the people who they want to share the tickets with and invite them to participate in a ticket draft – similar to those used by fantasy baseball – to choose their tickets for the season. During the draft, the tickets are allocated in a round-robin system with each person getting a turn to pick a game until all the tickets are drawn.

Users can indicate if they prefer tickets for certain days or against certain teams to create an automatic list to guide them through their draft picks – or they can use a program to automatically select tickets based on preference.

“Someone has to be the ‘Captain’ and handle the account transaction – it can’t be split among all the users,” said Schiller. The same goes for the distribution of the tickets, which are handed over to the account holder for reallocation. The SplitSeason package can be used for any number of tickets, Schiller added.

Schiller said the system was created independently of its ticketing provider Ticketmaster “and is free to use and doesn’t cost the group any money. This is something that the Atlanta Braves are funding.”

Although he wouldn’t release how many season-tickets have been sold through the system, Schiller said that over 1,000 people have signed up for the program – which will continue throughout the season, offering pro-rated tickets any time the user wishes to participate. – Dave Brooks

Interviewed for this article: Derek Schiller, (404) 614-1357

No. of Shows: 8

4) Chris Rock
Gross Sales:
\$513,825; Venue:
Fox Theatre,
Atlanta;
Attendance: 9,099;
Ticket Range:
\$75.50-\$45.50;
Promoter: Live
Nation; Dates:
March 21-22; No. of
Shows: 2

5) Van Morrison
Gross Sales:
\$468,130; Venue:
Ryman Auditorium,
Nashville, Tenn.;
Attendance: 2,362;
Ticket Range: \$200-
\$130; Promoter:
Live Nation, In-
house; Dates: March
13; No. of Shows: 1

*Compiled by Rob
Ocampo
HotTickets@venuestoday.com*

SHORT TAKES

>> **OVATIONS
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Springfield,
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in November. The
agreement, which
begins in June,
includes food
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Complex, which
features a 16,400-
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the 8,800-seat
Hammons Student
Center, and the
2,200-seat Juanita
K. Hammons
Performing Arts
Center.
*Contact: Ike
Richman, (215) 389-
9552*

>> **NEW NAME AND
LOGO FOR MORIAL
CONVENTION
CENTER** – For the
first time in 16
years, the Morial
Convention Center
has updated its
trade name and

THE BEAT

FACES AND PLACES

BEARD LOCKS INTO CROWN CENTER; CAPPELLETTI BOUNCES OVER TO BOUNCE; NATH HOPS TO HARTMAN ARENA

Paul Beard Jr.



After four months serving as interim CEO, **Paul Beard Jr.** has been hired on as permanent president and CEO of the **Crown Center** in Fayetteville, N.C., following a unanimous vote by the Cumberland County Civic Center Commission, which owns and operates the building.

Beard will be replacing Rick Reno who has taken a position to manage the Roanoke Rapids (N.C.) Theatre. Since taking over, Beard said he’s overseen some staff reorganization and is

launching a new marketing campaign to lure in soldiers from nearby Fort Bragg.

“We’re having a huge number of troops returning on a daily basis from Iraq and Afghanistan and many of them have a disposable income and are looking for a release,” Beard said.

The city is also expecting an influx of 40,000 military civilians and officers as the

Pentagon's Base Closure and Realignment Commission relocates several bases to the Fayetteville area.

"Even though the rest of the country is going through a housing crunch, we're expecting an influx of people and will weather the storm just fine," Beard said.

Beard said his building is looking to book more rock and country acts after successful sellouts with Three Doors Down, Reba McEntire and Kelly Clarkson; Kenny Rogers and a recent Country Music Television showcase. The Crown Center includes the 10,000-seat indoor Coliseum, a 5,000-seat arena, a 2,400-capacity theater and a small convention center and is home to the Southern Professional Hockey League Fayetteville FireAntZ and the American Indoor Football Association's Fayetteville Guard.

A lifelong Fayetteville resident, Beard joined the Crown Center in 1995, during the construction of the Coliseum. During his tenure, he has held the position of operations manager, director of operations, chief operating officer and general manager. He is an active member of IAAM and is a graduate of both its Public Assembly Facility Management School (PAFMS) and the academy's graduate program.

Carleen Cappelletti has been hired as president of **Bounce**, the Santa Monica-based marketing and special events producer owned by AEG that helps host the Grammys, MusiCares and corporate events.

Cappelletti comes to Bounce from Best Events, where she helped produce high-end events for clients including Paramount, Disney, Rolex and Louis Vuitton. She was one of the cofounders of the Al Gore-supported network Current TV and helped organize the March for Women's Lives in Washington D.C., which drew over 1.2 million attendees. Prior to working at Best Events, she served as an executive at Merv Griffin Productions, where she worked with current Bounce CEO Tim Swift.

The revitalization of downtown Los Angeles including the new Nokia Theatre at L.A. Live creates an opportunity for more special events downtown, she said, adding that her association with AEG gives the company more opportunities to draw on its live entertainment clientele.

"Just having a big open space to do events in downtown Los Angeles is exciting from an events perspective. That kind of open space doesn't exist elsewhere," she said, later adding, "I think we'll see more sports related corporate partnerships, but I'm also seeing more clients that want to directly work with the consumers. It used to be that you held inspirational events for VIPs and the consumer participated at a distance, but now there's more of desire to work directly with the consumer."

Cappelletti is currently in New York working on a Louis Vuitton fashion show with artist Takashi Murakami at the Brooklyn Art Museum. Rapper Kanye West is scheduled to perform at the event.

John W. Nath, has accepted the position of arena manager of the 5,000-7,000 seat **Hartman Arena** in Park City, Kan., effective April 2.

Nath was director of the Kansas Coliseum for more than 12 years and is a 30-year veteran of the arena industry. He is the third Kansas Coliseum staffer to move over to the new Hartman Arena.

Nath, who began his career at the Mellon Arena, has also served as the director of the Casper (Wyo.) Events Center and as the vice president and general manager of the U.S. Bank Arena in Cincinnati. — Dave Brooks

Interviewed for this article: Paul Beard Jr., (910) 428-4100; Carleen Cappelletti, (213) 742-7155

logo. The center's new trade name is "New Orleans Morial Convention Center." Tim Hemphill, VP of sales and marketing, has begun the task of changing name references to the convention center by business and consumer groups. *Contact: Tim Hemphill, (504) 582-3000*

>> **MSG LAUNCHES ANNUAL SPEAKER SERIES AT RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL** — MSG Entertainment titled the first of what will be yearly "Radio City Music Hall Speaker Series" bookings as "The Minds That Move the World." Over the course of three months, RCMH will host four special evenings with political leaders and pundits, including former U.S. President Bill Clinton; former U.S. VP Al Gore; and former NYC Mayor Rudy Giuliani. Melissa Miller Ormond, executive VP, Bookings, for MSG Entertainment, said the series is about "embracing the unique capacity of Radio City to serve as a destination for important cultural events." Tickets for the series packages start at \$200 and go on sale March 30. *Contact: Mikyl Cordova, (212) 631-4337*

>> **MURPHY BROS. CARNIVAL BUYS A THEME PARK** — Murphy Bros. Exposition has reportedly signed a \$2 million contract to buy the failed \$30-million Wild West World, Park City, Kan., out of bankruptcy through its Spectacular Midways division. Park founder Thomas Etheridge closed the park and filed for bankruptcy after two months of operation. Unless other bidders top

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the offer before May 8, it is scheduled to close May 31.
 Contact: Jerry Murphy, (918) 712-0011

>> AMERICAN AIRLINES FLYING HIGH WITH MAJOR LEAGUE SOCCER – American Airlines announced it is now the Official Airline of Major League Soccer in a multi-tired sponsorship and marketing agreement. The sponsorship includes SuperLiga, a tournament series between the Mexican First Division and Major League Soccer in July and August 2008.

Contact: Charley Wilson, (817) 967-1577

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS

FLORIDA STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL AND FAIR, PLANT CITY

Midway excitement at the Florida Strawberry Festival



Feb. 28-March 9

Bad weather prompted an attendance decline and effectively canceled the fair's second Friday night of Moonlight Magic carnival rides, which typically run from 11 p.m. to 3 a.m.

"We had heavy rain that also got into the 7:30 p.m. Trace Adkins show," said GM Patsy Brooks, adding that Adkins continued to play through the downpour, Brooks said.

"I understand they did sit in the rain and see the concert," she said. "It was just the last portion of the concert that it started raining."

Attendance: Brooks did not have attendance figures yet because for the first time, the fair sold tickets throughout the entire event at Sweetbay Supermarkets.

"People could get a \$2 discount at 83 stores until the end of the fair," she said.

Brooks does not know if the fair will be down from last year's 500,000.

Also, during the Billy Ray Cyrus/Neal McCoy concert, gusty winds prevented the fair from operating rides.

Entertainment: Two concert performers canceled at the last minute but fair officials found replacements. Marty Stuart and Connie Smith subbed for Travis Tritt.

"That really helped us out," Brooks said. "The people that had Travis Tritt tickets, the tickets were good for that show. A lot of them went to see that show and said it was one of the best shows they had seen."

Glen Campbell also canceled and Ronnie Milsap took his place on the Southern Chevy Dealers Soundstage. That cancellation happened in time so that the fair could advertise the situation on the radio.



“We only had less than 24 hours to try to replace Travis Tritt, so we just notified people on the PA system to let people know if they wanted a refund, they could get one and we got the ticket back and resold them.”

Brooks did not have final figures on how many concertgoers wanted refunds. They had until March 14 to turn the tickets in.

Most tickets cost \$10, but Sugarland cost \$35 and Alan Jackson was \$40, she said.

The fair used to have most artists play two shows a day but starting last year, they began featuring two artists in separate concerts each day.

“That’s been real successful for us,” she said. “The 3:30 show would be something more toward the established country star, and then we would do something for the younger crowd for the 7:30 show.”

Jason Aldean is an example of one of the younger artists. “A lot of people on the fairgrounds don’t know the younger artists like Jason Aldean,” she said. “We call them young country and then older country and both groups come to the fair.”

Midway: The Mighty Bluegrass Shows will be down because they lost the second Moonlight Magic night, where fairgoers can ride from 11 p.m. to 3 a.m. with a \$20 pay-one-price wristband.

Overall fair budget: \$4 million to \$6 million

Gate admission: \$8 in advance, \$10 at the gate.

“We combined gates 1 and 3 into one large gate,” Brooks said. “We spent \$550,000 on a new gate that has 16 ticket windows that funnel down to eight turnstiles.”

The new gate was on the north side of the fairgrounds, which has a heavier concentration of people entering, and it worked well for both the fairgoers and the employees.

“We were able to get people in quicker,” Brooks said. “We’re in a residential area on the edge of a city street, so it’s important to get them in so they don’t back up on the street.”

“And it was a nice change for the ladies and gentlemen that work as ticket sellers, because they had a nicer area to work in.”

Marketing: Digital billboards allowed the fair to change their advertising daily to reflect that day’s shows.

“We had six of those, one of them in the Orlando area, one in Brandon and one in Tampa Bay,” she said. “You could change those daily. We could get Ronnie Milsap replacing Glen Campbell. I think that’s been a help to us.”

Next year’s dates: Feb. 26-March 8. — Mary Wade Burnside

Contact: Patsy Brooks, (813) 752-9194

NAMING RIGHTS REPORT BRADLEY CENTER, MILWAUKEE

Date Announced: Feb. 22

Handling Naming Rights: Bonham Group

Tenant/Ownership: Milwaukee Bucks, Milwaukee Admirals, Marquette University Golden Eagles/Bradley Sports and Entertainment Corp.

Comments: The board of the Bradley Center, now the third oldest NBA arena in the country, has hired Bonham Group to explore sponsorship opportunities, including naming rights.

“Our objective is to maintain and extend the life of this facility,” said Evan Zeppos, spokesman for the Bradley Center. “No one is going to come forward with tax dollars, and we need to find ways to increase revenue.”

In the past few years, the Bradley Center has added premium seating, updated lounges, concession areas and team stores, all in an effort to boost revenues.

The next step is to sell naming rights. It is one of only six NBA stadiums without a corporate name.

“The board of the Bradley Center wrestled with this for quite a long time,” Zeppos said. “They knew it would not be a popular decision, but sometimes they have to make the tough decisions.”

The building was named after Harry Lynde Bradley, co-founder of Allen-Bradley Corporation and a Milwaukee philanthropist, in 1988, after a \$90 million gift from his daughter, Jane Bradley Pettit. Zeppos said the board turned to the Bonham Group after interviewing several sports marketing companies, and looking at many more.

“Bonham is the real top echelon in this field,” Zeppos said. “It struck us that Bonham was not only accomplished, but also understood the importance of the name.”

Zeppos said they do not have a specific time frame to find a deal, and are willing to wait for the right deal.

“Dean Bonham told us ‘sometimes it happens quickly and sometimes it takes awhile, but you’ll know when it’s right,’” Zeppos said.

Contact: Evan Zeppos, (414) 276-6237

FENWAY PARK, BOSTON, UPPER DECK SEATS

Date: March 3

Terms: Extends through 2017, financial terms not disclosed

Buyer: Coca-Cola

Tenant/Ownership: Boston Red Sox

Comments: Unwilling to lose the historic Fenway name, Red Sox management has instead turned to interior sponsorship deals to bring in revenue. Their latest – the 10th since 2002 – builds on a long-standing relationship with Coca-Cola that the Club believes dates back to 1912.

Coca-Cola will place a 43-by-12-foot sign that slowly spells out “Enjoy Coca-Cola” in 1058 LED bulbs above 400 new upper-deck seats on the left field line. The seats will sell for \$75 for a single game, with 20-game mini-plans also available. Coca-Cola will also brand a \$30-a-spot standing-room-only deck for 100, underneath the seats. – Liz Boardman

Contact: Susan Goodenow, (617) 267-9440

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