

April Parnell

From: venuestoday [venuestoday@mail.vresp.com]
Sent: Wednesday, April 09, 2008 8:41 PM
To: april@venuestoday.com
Subject: VT Pulse, April 9, 2008

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A WEEKLY PUBLICATION FROM VENUES TODAY

April 9, 2008 • VOL. VII, Number 11 • ISSN 1547-4143

Quote of the Week

"We incorporated pain and suffering into the price tag, and I anticipate there will be a lot of pain and suffering."

— David Jollete of the Pepsi Center in Denver on pricing the rental agreement for the Democratic National Convention

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HELP WANTED

Greetings April,

Welcome to our newly redesigned VT Pulse. We've taken your advice and shortened the width of the e-mail to make it more user friendly. We've also eliminated the right column and moved the Hot Tickets section below VT News. Quote of the Week and Short Takes have been moved to the left. Let us know what you think of the changes. Send questions and comments to dave@venuestoday.com.

VT NEWS

PERFORMING ARTS CENTERS \$77 MIL LONG CENTER NETS \$500,000 OPENING WEEKEND

Outside the Long Center for the Performing Arts in Austin, Texas. (Photo: G. Russ Images)



Following almost a decade of planning and construction, the new Long Center for the Performing Arts in Austin, Texas, held a weekend-long gala March 28-29 to kick off its debut season.

According to Jack Bunning, the Long Center's director of marketing and development, the black tie grand opening on Friday evening included a dinner and concert performance hosted by Tony-winning Broadway star Tommy Tune, in addition to a performance by the venue's resident companies, the Austin Lyric Opera, Austin Symphony Orchestra and Ballet Austin.

On Saturday, a barbecue preceded the center's All Star Texas Tribute show. This included performances by renowned country singer/songwriters Willie Nelson, Lyle Lovett, Ray Benson and Rick Trevino as well as an appearance by Grammy-winning accordionist Flaco Jimenez.

Bunning said approximately 2,000 people attended each night's opening festivities. "It generated the attention we had expected. And because the gala was also a fundraiser for the center, we netted more than

CONTACT VT PULSE

SHORT
TAKES>> PRINCE
HEADLINES SECOND
NIGHT OF

COACHELLA — Prince has joined this year's line-up for the ninth Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival at the Empire Polo Field in Indio, Calif. as the headliner for the second night of the festival, promoted by AEG Live's Goldenvoice. Coachella will be the first outdoor festival for Prince in over 20 years. Other headliners include Roger Waters and Jack Johnson.
Contact: Michael Roth, (213) 742-7155

>> OVATIONS PICKS
UP FOOD SERVICE

AWARD — Ovations Food Services has captured a Gold Award at the Printing Industries Association for the company's branded lunch box design. The regional organization serving northern Kentucky and Ohio and more than 400 commercial printing companies and suppliers, chose the design as one of the area's best marketing and communication materials. Paper Products Company, of Cincinnati, printed the lunch boxes and submitted the design as a nomination for an award.
Contact: Ike Richman, (215) 389-9552

>> **SMG PUERTO RICO CHOSEN AS GREAT PLACE TO WORK —** SMG Puerto Rico was selected as one of Puerto Rico's 20 Best Employers in a study conducted by Hewitt Associates in association with

\$500,000 from this event," he said.

Unlike most performing arts centers of this type, no city, state or federal funds were used to create the new building. Instead, 4,700 donors contributed to the \$77 million capital campaign, the largest community arts fundraising project in Austin history, according to Long Center officials. "We opened on time and on budget. Our venue is fully paid for," Bunning said.

The new center began taking shape in November 1998, when the citizens of Austin voted to approve the city's lease of the Lester E. Palmer Auditorium to the nonprofit group Arts Center Stage for renovation into a community performing arts venue. In April 1999, Arts Center Stage received its lead gift of \$20 million from Joe R. and Teresa Lozano Long, and the Arts Center Stage project was renamed the Joe R. and Teresa Lozano Long Center for the Performing Arts.

Chicago's Skidmore, Owings & Merrill were hired as project architects to develop the building's schematic design in November 1999. By August 2002, the Long Center had raised over \$61 million of its proposed \$110 million goal. In December 2003, the Board of Trustees approved TeamHaas Architects, in conjunction with Ziedler Partnerships, as lead architects; Fisher Dachs Associates for theatre planning and design; and Jaffe Holden Acoustics, Inc., as acoustician.

A change in the original plans for a four-theatre venue was unveiled in October of 2003, which broke the project down into three phases. This first phase includes the 2,300-seat Michael & Susan Dell Hall and community theater, in addition to the 240-seat Debra & Kevin Rollins Studio Theatre. The next two phases are still in development.

Abatement and deconstruction of the old Palmer Auditorium took place between May 2005 and October 2005, with new construction for the Long Center starting in November 2005. — Lisa White

Interviewed for this story: Jack Bunning, (512) 457-5100

CONVENTIONS
SPECTER OF DNC HANGS OVER IAAM DISTRICT
MEETING

David Jollette of the Pepsi Center in Denver speaks about the facility's greening efforts leading up to the Democratic National Convention; (below) David Meek is hosting the 2008 IAAM convention at the Anaheim (Calif.) Convention Center. He's pictured here with IAAM Second Vice President Shura Lindgren of the St. Charles (Mo.) Convention Center.



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PriceWaterhouseCoopers and El Nuevo Día, the island's largest daily newspaper. This was SMG's first year of eligibility for the award. SMG Puerto Rico currently has more than 120 full-time and more than 300 part-time employees. Contact: Bill Gennaro, (215) 592-6697



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DENVER — The excitement and buzz for the upcoming Democratic National Convention was slowly extinguished after a gloomy presentation by David Jollette of the Pepsi Center.

“Will it bring some added attention to the facility? Probably. But will it make any difference in helping me book the Nine Inch Nails for their next concert. I doubt it,” Jollette told the approximately 120 attendees at this year's District VI and VII meeting.



Jollette said any excitement about the convention was overshadowed by the amount of work that lies ahead for the massive event. Beginning on July 7, the facility will undergo \$65 million in construction to prepare the convention for its Aug. 25-28 run. That includes creating an outdoor security perimeter to control

entry into the Pepsi Center, creating media stations for the 15,000 journalists expected to attend the event, and refitting the suite level into a broadcast area with individual suites transformed into mini-television studios.

“We incorporated pain and suffering into the price tag, and I anticipate there will be a lot of pain and suffering,” Jollette said.

The construction project is a joint effort with Turner Construction and HOK Architects and will include a 15-day reconstruction following the event. Jollette said a separate budget was set aside for the rebuild and each expense was accounted for in an escrow account.

While most of the temporary Pepsi Center staff will be displaced during the event, Jollette said the facility's 300 full-time employees will remain on site up until the beginning of the convention.

“I still haven't seen any construction documents detailing how any of this is going to work,” said Jollette, who estimated he's given organizers approximately 200 tours of the facility and is working with 10 law enforcement agencies to coordinate the DNC.

When asked by one attendee to describe the positive sides of hosting the DNC, Jollette looked puzzled and said none came to mind.

The presentation concluded with a reception at the Lexus Club by Levy Restaurants, just one of three dazzling receptions presented by concessions companies that also included an Aramark event at the Red Rocks Amphitheatre and a Centerplate event at the Ellie Caulkins Opera House.

Chef Tom Coohill from Levy's Pepsi Center presentation told the gathering that this year's DNC was being planned as the “greenest” political convention in history, coinciding with the event's 100-year anniversary return to Denver. Coohill said his group had planned a number of sustainable cuisine items for the menu.

“We don't have access to much locally grown produce, but this region is rich with sustainable livestock,” Coohill said. “We have agreements with a number of ranchers for grass-fed and open-range lamb and beef.”

During a luncheon on the second day of the meeting, Denver's own mayor John Hickenlooper spoke to attendees about his city's plans for the convention,



CONTACT US

To submit news or information, 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
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 (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 a Fair or Festival Listing for the VT Resource Guide, contact:

Nazarene Kahn
 Resource Guides Coordinator
 (714) 378-5400 ext. 25
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estimating that 100 percent of the energy used for the meeting will come from sustainable sources including wind and solar power. The convention will implement a single-stream recycling system for papers, plastics and aluminum, and in a first for the Pepsi Center, organizers will implement a composting system to process food scraps.

Other initiatives include the installation of solar panels to generate power on site, as well as the establishment of a no-idling zone near the entrance of the Pepsi Center to eliminate smog and emissions from parked diesel trucks.

"The goal is to show the 15,000 journalists in attendance that we are one of the greenest meeting sites in the U.S.," he said. "This is not just a Denver issue. We've spoken with Governor Bill Richardson of New Mexico and Colorado Governor Bill Ritter. Ultimately we will market the region as a green meeting destination."

That's an important distinction for event organizers, explained Jolette, who said more meeting planners are asking about green initiatives before they begin to book buildings.

"Attendees will go to an event whether it's green or not — it's the folks hosting and planning the events who are demanding more scrutiny," Jolette said. — Dave Brooks

Interviewed for this article: David Jolette, (303) 405-1100; Tom Coohill, (303) 405-1260; John Hickenlooper, (720) 865-9000

STADIUMS DELAWARE NORTH LOCKS IN EIGHT-YEAR DEAL FOR NEW TWINS BALLPARK

Chef Mark A. Angeles of Soldier Field in Chicago provides a sampling of Widmer's Cheddar Cheese Curds.



The Minnesota Twins and Delaware North Companies Sportservice announced yesterday an eight-year partnership that will provide food, beverage and retail merchandise services for the new Twins ballpark, which is currently under construction in downtown Minneapolis and is scheduled to open in Spring 2010.

Under the terms of the agreement, Sportservice will be the exclusive concessionaire, managing all concessions, gourmet catering and fine dining operations as well as retail stores and kiosks within the 40,000-seat ballpark.

"This is a real special time," Rick Abramson, president, Delaware North Companies Sportservice, said, after the noon press conference. "The Twins organization is the best of the best."

The Twins organization and Sportservice are in the process of collaborating on the design of the concessions and clubs. Even so, Abramson expects there to be 22 permanent concessions, and a Legends Club, Metropolitan Club and Champion Club. Specialty carts, action stations, buffets and suites will also be available.

"We are also working on making this a green stadium," Abramson said. "We are very conscientious of this as an

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Iowa - Director of
Finance/Controller

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organization. We already use biodegradable beer cups in locations. With us getting in on the get-go, we will work on making our operations green friendly."

Beyond the ballpark, the agreement also calls for Sportservice to manage operations of the Twins Pro Shop retail outlets located throughout the Twins Territory.

"We know how integral food is to the overall game day experience, and we look forward to working closely with Sportservice to bring fans not only affordable, traditional fare, but also new signature items, which will be revealed as we get closer to opening the new ballpark," said Twins President Dave St. Peter, during the press conference.

To add to the ambiance of the press conference, a diverse menu was served. Abramson said the "food was good." And, while none of the press conference items are officially on the menu, it was indicative of the types of foods that will be served. The Taste of 10,000 Lakes included walleye tacos, spicy Twins salsa, cilantro cream, roasted corn, and lime-scented tortilla crisp served with local hot sauces.

"We plan to find out what the Twins' fans want," Abramson said. "We will conduct surveys, have focus groups and, on the 24th of this month, we will have a caravan in the area to find out the best area foods."

Abramson wouldn't disclose the amount of money Sportservice expects to invest in the stadium. He did say that it is "in the millions and is substantial."

The Twins club, which has been playing in the Metrodome, should have the new open-air facility completed by 2010. The entire project is costing \$412 million, with the Twins paying \$152 million, including the recently added \$22 million, and Hennepin County putting in \$260 million. Just like the Metrodome, the Twins facility will be county-controlled.

The Twins just upped the total cost because the organization decided to add upgrades. Those upgrades included more expensive stone in building the ballpark and covering the exposed framework of the canopies outside the facility.

The Twins also opted for a larger screen than originally planned. It was reported it will be a high-definition screen measuring 103-feet-by-57-feet.

Since the facility will be open-air, the Twins also opted to add comfort areas in the concourse that will allow fans to get warm on cold days or cool off during hot days. — Pam Sherborne

Interviewed for this article: Rick Abramson, (314) 469-3500; Dave St. Peter, (612) 642-7050

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 11, 2008.

WRESTLEMANIA BODYSLAMS ORLANDO

15,001 or More Seats	10,001-15,000 Seats	5,001-10,000 Seats	5,000 or Less Seats
1) WWE Wrestlemania XXIV Gross Sales: \$5,854,590; Venue: Citrus	1) Jay-Z, Mary J. Blige Gross Sales: \$1,185,584; Venue: 1st Mariner Arena,	1) Go, Diego, Go Live! The Great Jaguar Rescue Gross Sales: \$1,989,526; Venue: Radio City	1) Spamalot Gross Sales: \$1,242,724; Venue: Bob Carr Performing Arts Center, Orlando,

Bowl, Orlando, Fla.; Attendance: 74,635; Ticket Range: \$745-\$35; Promoter: World Wrestling Entertainment; Dates: March 30; No. of Shows: 1

2) March Madness - NCAA Men's Basketball
Gross Sales: \$3,744,000; Venue: **St. Pete Times Forum, Tampa, Fla.;** Attendance: 18,000; Ticket Range: \$208; Promoter: NCAA; Dates: March 21-23; No. of Shows: 6

3) Jay-Z, Mary J. Blige
Gross Sales: \$1,684,178; Venue: **Wachovia Complex, Philadelphia;** Attendance: 13,409; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: March 30; No. of Shows: 1

4) Jay-Z, Mary J. Blige
Gross Sales: \$1,419,569; Venue: **Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum, Uniondale, N.Y.;** Attendance: 11,798; Ticket Range: \$999-\$56.75; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: March 27; No. of Shows: 1

5) Jay-Z, Mary J. Blige
Gross Sales: \$1,292,064; Venue: **American Airlines Arena, Miami;** Attendance: 12,138; Ticket Range: \$297.25-\$47; Promoter: Live Nation, Al Haymon; Dates: March 22; No. of Shows: 1

Baltimore; Attendance: 10,945; Ticket Range: \$248-\$47.75; Promoter: Live Nation, Haymon Entertainment, Up Front Inc.; Dates: March 26; No. of Shows: 1

2) Atlantic 10 Men's Basketball
Gross Sales: \$893,565; Venue: **Atlantic City (N.J.) Boardwalk Hall ;** Attendance: 34,363; Ticket Range: \$40.65; Promoter: ACCVA; Dates: March 12-15; No. of Shows: 6

3) Split Enz
Gross Sales: \$877,222; Venue: **Vector Arena, Auckland, New Zealand;** Attendance: 10,524; Ticket Range: \$88.92; Promoter: Frontier Touring Company; Dates: March 28-29; No. of Shows: 2

4) John Fogerty
Gross Sales: \$802,623; Venue: **Brisbane (Australia) Entertainment Centre;** Attendance: 8,169; Ticket Range: \$128.48-\$91.40; Promoter: Chugg Entertainment; Dates: March 27; No. of Shows: 1

5) Matchbox Twenty
Gross Sales: \$580,987; Venue: **Vector Arena, Auckland, New Zealand;** Attendance: 6,871; Ticket Range: \$95.66-\$79.70; Promoter: Michael Coppell Presents; Dates: April 8; No. of Shows: 1

Music Hall, New York; Attendance: 45,907; Ticket Range: \$74.50-\$24.50; Promoter: Diego Touring, LLC, MSG Entertainment; Dates: March 26-30; No. of Shows: 12

2) Aretha Franklin
Gross Sales: \$896,290; Venue: **Radio City Music Hall, New York;** Attendance: 11,918; Ticket Range: \$50.90; Promoter: Bowery Presents, MSG Entertainment; Dates: March 21-22; No. of Shows: 2

3) The Wiggles
Gross Sales: \$692,013; Venue: **Nokia Theatre L.A. Live;** Attendance: 19,379; Ticket Range: \$22.40; Promoter: AEG Live, Goldenvoice; Dates: March 29-30; No. of Shows: 4

4) Celtic Woman
Gross Sales: \$612,486; Venue: **Radio City Music Hall, New York;** Attendance: 10,349; Ticket Range: \$70.50-\$40.50; Promoter: Madstone Productions, MSG Entertainment; Dates: March 15-16; No. of Shows: 2

5) Riverdance
Gross Sales: \$565,560; Venue: **Nokia Theatre at Grand Prairie, Texas;** Attendance: 10,861; Ticket Range: \$65-\$15; Promoter: In-House; Dates: March 19-22; No. of Shows: 5

Fla.; Attendance: 18,662; Ticket Range: \$20.75; Promoter: PTG Florida; Dates: March 25-30; No. of Shows: 8

2) Avenue Q
Gross Sales: \$896,078; Venue: **Fox Theatre, Atlanta;** Attendance: 21,809; Ticket Range: \$55-\$19; Promoter: Broadway Across America; Dates: March 25-30; No. of Shows: 8

3) High School Musical
Gross Sales: \$740,131; Venue: **Civic Center of Greater Des Moines (Iowa);** Attendance: 15,695; Ticket Range: \$60-\$10; Promoter: In-House; Dates: March 25-30; No. of Shows: 8

4) Frankie Valli & The Four Seasons
Gross Sales: \$707,541; Venue: **Theatre at Westbury (N.Y.);** Attendance: 11,192; Ticket Range: \$71.50-\$61.50; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: March 27-30; No. of Shows: 4

5) Tyler Perry's "The Marriage Counselor"
Gross Sales: \$664,041; Venue: **For Theatre, Detroit;** Attendance: 14,840; Ticket Range: \$52-\$42; Promoter: ALW Entertainment; Dates: April 3-6; No. of Shows: 5

Compiled by Rob Ocampo and Josh Huckabee. To submit reports, e-mail HotTickets@venuestoday.com or fax to (714) 378-0040.

THE BEAT

FACES & PLACES

FRIEDMAN, LETOURNEAU ARE BID A FOND FAREWELL; BEAZLEY PROMOTED*Friedman*

J Lee Friedman, 92, the colorful show promoter who lived by the motto “there are no bad shows, only bad deals,” died March 28 in Atlanta. Last year, Friedman was inducted into the Event & Arena Marketing Conference Hall of Fame, where everyone in attendance wore a button bearing his famous motto and were mesmerized again by the promoter with the trademark bushy eyebrows.

He was actively promoting shows until the end of his days. During his legendary career, he promoted more than 6,000 events, from the circus and Sesame Street to WWE matches to rock and roll to Broadway shows. He earned an induction into the Georgia Music Hall of Fame in 1998.

His son Lynn, who worked many of those shows with and for his dad, recalled his dad got his start with Roller Derby in the 30s. He regaled the family and the industry with many stories about those days, perhaps a favorite being his brush with “the boys” in Kansas City when he sold a derby sponsorship to Mulebach Beer only to find “the boys in Chicago” were not happy.

As Lynn recalled his dad’s telling of the story, he was forced to make an appearance before the local Mafia boss, complete with bookend escorts, alleyways and rollup doors, where he was advised the chosen Mafia beer at the time was Canadian Ace Ale and the “boys in Chicago” weren’t happy about the Mulebach deal. It took Friedman a few moments to realize the “boys in Chicago” were not Leo Seltzer and company, Roller Derby founders, after all. He made the necessary adjustments.

He was the kind of promoter who knew which way the wind blows, loved to keep his finger on the action, and worked without contracts or even official company cards. His company was named Ahnevant Attractions, though no one used the moniker. Lynn’s firm is the Gemini Agency, which is primarily an advertising firm though it uses some third-party marketing initiatives. Lynn said he continues to promote some shows for which his dad had long-standing deals. Friedman’s interest in show business dated back to the days he spent in his childhood at his dad’s Kentucky Hotel in Louisville, headquarters for a lot of celebrities during the Kentucky Derby and host to the touring shows of the day.

Survivors include another son Lee, Lynn’s twin, and a daughter, Cathy, all of Atlanta; and four grandchildren.

--

Letourneau

On the other side of the country, **Greg Letourneau**, born Dec. 13, 1957, died suddenly at his home in Las Vegas on April 1 following surgery and a brief hospitalization. He was the executive technical director of Entertainment at the **MGM** in Las Vegas.

Letourneau began his career in entertainment as a parking lot attendant at the Duluth (Minn.) Arena where Ice Capades rehearsed and built their show over a six-week period each year. He joined the show as a truck driver and rose through the ranks to become company manager.

During his 15 years with Ice Capades, he assisted in the operations of three touring ice show units, supervised a special three-month, five-city tour of China, an engagement in Kuwait, and the Torvill & Dean with The Russian Ice Stars 1- week tour of North America.

Letourneau is survived by his father Phil and sister Jean of Las Vegas, brothers Steve and Terry of Duluth, nephews Phil & Vernon and nieces Brittaney and Emily and extended family.

Noel Watson, along with husband Don, both formerly with Champions on Ice, are among that extended family. Noel Watson said several of the old Ice Capades cast and crew, including one-time president Dave Hauser, were expected in town for services which were held April 8.

--

Steve Beazley has been named CEO for the **Orange County Fair & Event Center**, Costa Mesa, Calif. He replaces Becky Bailey-Findley, who is retiring after this year's Orange County Fair July 11-Aug. 3.

Beazley is currently Chief Operating Officer and senior vice president of the OC Fair & Event Center (OCFEC). He was selected after a six-month recruitment process.

Bailey-Findley, who has served over 35 years with OCFEC, will work with Beazley and the staff and board until fall, when Beazley takes over. The fair theme this year is "Say Cheese." The 150-acre OC Fair & Event Center hosts more than 150 events and shows a year and attracts 4.3 million visitors annually. — Linda Deckard

Interviewed for this story: Lynn Friedman, (404) 843-0001 ext. 224; Sydney Greenblatt, (713) 774-3145; Becky Bailey-Findlay, (714) 708-1510

DEALS

GLOBAL SPECTRUM STEPS IN FOR MLSE IN OSHAWA; OVATIONS OPENS AT RFK STADIUM

General Motors Centre, Oshawa, Ont.

Two Comcast-Spectacor companies waltzed into contracts via the back door this month and both were re-visits.

Global Spectrum is within two months of finalizing a third Ontario contract, but not by the usual process. Assuming the city council of Oshawa approves the final deal, Global Spectrum will take over management of the two-year-old, 5,500-seat General Motors Centre from Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment (MLSE).



MLSE saw the project through design/build and into its first year of operation in a 20-year contract, but opted out of the private management deal that does not include a MLSE-owned team, said Bob Hunter, executive vice-president of venues and entertainment for Maple Leaf Sports & Entertainment. MLSE continues to operate Air Canada Centre, home of its own NHL Toronto Maple Leafs, Ricoh Coliseum, home of the Toronto Marlies of the American Hockey League and BMO Field, home of the new Major League Soccer Toronto FC, Hunter said. But the politics of operating an arena in which they do not have a vested team interest proved daunting.

"It's all about managing expectations," said Global Spectrum's John Page of the private management world. It's best done by companies that have scores of clients of similar size and needs.

Oshawa Mayor John Gray praised MLSE for the design and functionality of the arena and said the decision to part company was theirs alone. The venue did not perform as well as expected, Gray admitted, but he expects Global Spectrum to change that. "They bring an array of facilities to the table, including three of similar size in Ontario, which might make it easier to route tours with promoters," Gray said.

The Original Terms: The city paid MLSE an annual management fee of \$250,000 and split any profit 90 percent to the city, 10 percent to MLSE, after operating costs. The city paid any losses.

The first year, the venue lost \$300,000, Gray said. It was expected to break even at least and host 100 events days. "We may have pushed 60-70 events," he said of year one. Global Spectrum is expected to at least show a turnaround with more event days at the get go.

Opened in November 2006, the General Motors Centre is home to the Ontario Hockey League's Oshawa Generals and Oshawa Sports Hall of Fame. The Generals have done well. Hunter estimated average attendance at more than 5,000, thanks in part to a strong finish.

But the concert tours have not materialized since the opening.

This decision “speaks volumes for MLSE and their leadership with a guy like Bob Hunter,” Page said. The decision to present the city with an alternative in Global Spectrum was a result of the similarities of the two sports organizations - Comcast-Spectacor which owns Global Spectrum, and MLSE - in the operation of NBA and NHL arenas and the long-term association between the principles.

This way, there is no interruption of service, noted Frank Russo, Global Spectrum senior vice president. Global Spectrum already manages the John Labatt Centre in London, Ont., two hours away, and WCFU Centre, Windsor, Ont., so this makes for a “triumvirate of South Ontario buildings,” Russo said.

He was not surprised by MLSE’s decision to devote more time to its core business and get out of private management for the sake of private management. “You have to have the infrastructure to do this,” Russo said.

Global Spectrum has a general manager candidate picked already pending city approval, Russo said. The firm will operate food and drink in house, as MLSE did, and will handle sponsorships. Russo said they will introduce another Comcast-Spectacor Company, Front Row Marketing, into the equation.

Global Spectrum had actually been one of the original three consortiums which bid on the Oshawa project three years ago, Gray recalled, so the city was already familiar with the firm and its principles.

As part of the assignment, MLSE will continue to bring one sports-related event to General Motors Centre for the next three years.

The request for assignment of the management agreement will undergo a due diligence process and the negotiation of the terms of the assignment will be undertaken with both MLSE and Global Spectrum. The assignment could occur as early as June 1.

Meanwhile, Ovation Food Services has secured a three-year contract to provide concessions and catering at RFK Stadium and the D.C. Armory, Washington, confirmed Ken Young, Ovation’s president.

The 56,000-seat stadium is home to the D.C. United of Major League Soccer. Ovations had already worked two events at the venue and was ready for the D.C. United’s home opener when VT interviewed Young.

“I’ve surveyed RFK Stadium three times over the years,” Young said of his interest in that contract. “When I walked it three weeks ago, I thought wow, it’s in better condition than I remember.” The city invested considerable monies into the stadium to accommodate the Washington Nationals baseball team before that team’s new stadium opened. “The Armory looked pretty good, too,” Young said, adding that the downside there is the Armory is not air-conditioned, so it’s practically closed from late May till fall.

Aramark had been concessionaire at RFK for baseball, but “vacated” the premises last November.

The Terms: Prior contracts had been on a profit and loss basis, but Ovations’ new deal is a management free plus incentives, Young said. Robert Garcia has returned to the Ovation’s fold as general manager for RFK Stadium.

Ovations opened its food service at the stadium three weeks ago with a D.C. United exhibition game, posting impressive per caps of \$8 from a crowd of 9,000-10,000, Young said. That was followed quickly by an El Salvador soccer match, which was expected to draw a similar crowd, but ended up attracting 30,000.

The D.C. Sports & Entertainment Commission, which operates the stadium, ended up selling upper level seats. Ovations hadn’t even been up there to prepare stands, so the per caps suffered, hitting between \$5.50 and \$6.

“The Commission has been very helpful,” Young said. He has learned some early lessons from his first soccer stadium food service experience. For instance, international matches each has a specific character. For some events, one side will be family, one side diehard soccer fans, Young said, and it’s important to learn to stock stands accordingly.

He is anticipating the stadium will host 35-38 events. There will be no soccer in July, because many MLS players are headed to Beijing for the Olympics to play for their countries. Besides soccer, the stadium is attracting some music events, he said.

Ovations was able to recruit staff from the Bowie Baysox and Frederick Keys baseball fields they serve nearby for early events. Now, with baseball underway, they are hiring locally, he said.

The contract is for three years, at which point it is believed the D.C. United will

have a new stadium. If not, it will be time to renegotiate. - Linda Deckard

Interviewed for this story: Mayor John Gray, (905) 436-5674; Bob Hunter, (416) 815-5790; John Page, (215) 389-9558; Frank Russo, (860) 657-0634; Ken Young, (757) 622-2222 X 104

ON THE MENU

NCAA FINAL FOUR, APRIL 5 & 7

Alamodome, San Antonio

Catering Entity: Aramark

Attendance: 90,000

The National Collegiate Athletic Association's Final Four is one of the biggest events in college sports and a chance for Aramark to launch several new food products for the 90,000 collegiate fans who came to the non-alcoholic event.



The Final Four was the debut of the center's Grab N' Go concept, which sold pre-wrapped Caesar Salads, chicken wraps, sandwiches and fruit cups, explained the Alamodome's General Manager of Concessions Terry Caven.

"It's very similar to what is already available at airports," he said. "Everything is prepared and wrapped in the morning and customers can grab the items out of cooler and pay for the food at the checkout stand."

Caven said the facility also test-launched garlic French fries and Panini sandwiches, both of which were a big hit. Although final sales figures were not released, Aramark said it planned to sell 8,500 hot dogs, 5,000 bags of popcorn, 4,000 bags of peanuts, 3,700 personal pizzas.

Over 20 Tex Mex and BBQ carts were spread out along the concourse, and Caven said his company presented three different types of hot dogs — San Antonio dogs, Chicago dogs and Mexican dogs.

To make up for a lack of alcohol sales, Aramark placed four espresso carts throughout the concourse and brewed over 800 gallons of coffee, along with 5,000 gallons of soda and 9,000 bottles of water.

Suites: Besides the Alamodome's 52 suites rented for the Final Four, Caven said he had to service a number of specialty events and compounds around the arena. Caven created a special catering service for broadcaster CBS, as well as press catering for the 700 journalists covering the tournament.

Caven also provided catering for the "Future Hosts" committee luncheon on the day of the tournament, as well as receptions for sponsors Coca-Cola as well as host school University of Texas, San Antonio.

Staff: Aramark brought together a team of five chefs and 10 cooks, who spent approximately 200 hours preparing the food for the concessions and suites. Aramark brought over staff from the AT&T Center, also in San Antonio and Minute Maid Park in Houston, along with Aramark's regional Vice President in Denver Rik Keasling. Aramark hired about 300 temporary employees to cover food operations

Caven estimated that his staff took about a month to prepare the facility for the event, and four days preparing ingredients. — Dave Brooks

Interviewed for this article: Terry Caven, (210) 207-3663