

**Rob Ocampo**

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**Greetings Rob,**

Welcome to VT Pulse, the redesigned e-newsletter from Venues Today. After a long week of travel, we're back from conventions for INTIX, NICA and SMA. Look for our ongoing coverage of these conferences throughout the month. For further information or to subscribe, visit us at [www.venuestoday.com](http://www.venuestoday.com).

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## VT NEWS

### INTERNATIONAL

## SINGAPORE 'OUTSOURCES' \$1.25 BILLION SPORTS VENUE PROJECT TO CREATE NATIONAL SPORTS CULTURE

*Rendering of Singapore's Premier Park, including the 55,000-seat stadium*



Premier Park in Singapore, a \$1.25 billion sports hub, which includes a 55,000-seat stadium and is to open in

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## TRIBUTE TO A LEGEND

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2011, has set a new benchmark for public-private partnerships and national projects. On Jan. 30, the Singapore Sports Council announced it has selected The Singapore Sports Hub Consortium to finance, design, build, own and operate the venues in a hotly contested, international competition.

The designated preferred bidder is led by Dragages Singapore and includes Global Spectrum, a division of Comcast-Spectacor, and their Asia partner, Pico (facility operator), HSBC Infrastructure Fund (main equity partner) and United Premas Pte Ltd (real estate facility manager). Other partners to the project include World Sport Group, Arup Sport, DP Architects, ARM Asia, Shatec, Fraser Centrepoint, and Genting International. That group will pay all costs for 25 years. In return the government of Singapore has pledged to pay the consortium \$1.87 billion Singapore net present value over 25 years, a number that translates into about \$148 million a year. Those monies help pay for operation, maintenance and debt service. After 25 years, ownership reverts to the government.

The project is unusual in that it is not event- or team-driven. There is no soccer team looking for a home or legacy event like the Olympic Games in the offing. Instead, there is a strong desire on the part of the government of Singapore to encourage a sports culture.

“We had one chance to do it right,” said Oon Jin Tiek, director, Singapore Sports Council. Bid proposals came in from three highly qualified consortiums, all well funded and experienced.

It has been 33 years since Singapore last built a stadium, Oon pointed out. Their national stadium opened in 1973. “In hindsight, if we had to do it over again, we would again have a public-private partnership because we don’t have the knowledge or experience” to build and operate such an extensive project, Oon told *Venues Today*. “We are literally outsourcing the whole design.”

Mark Woodhams, director, HSBC, which has the largest stake in Premier Park with greater than 50 percent equity in the project, said this is the first such stadium funding for his financial institution, but he believes it is highly applicable to other government projects. “We will make a return on investment the same as any other investment

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we make,” Woodhams said, but “without that money from Singapore, it wouldn't be doable.”

A key to making this project viable is that Singapore sees Premier Park as “a national asset,” he said.

The selection process took two years and included consortiums that involved the two other major private management companies in the world, AEG Ogden, part of a consortium that also included architect HOK; and SMG, part of a group out of Austria.

The “cost of bidding” approached \$10 million, according to Mich Sauers, Comcast-Spectacor senior vice president of Business Development.

Once the papers are signed, Global Spectrum will immediately begin managing the existing Singapore Indoor Stadium, a 13,000-seat arena, Sauers said. That venue currently has 43 employees, many of whom are involved in projects outside the arena, such as advertising and ticketing.

Other Comcast-Spectacor companies will be involved in the ensuing build-out of the sports complex as consultants, including Ovations Food Services on concessions; Front Row Marketing on sponsorships and sale of the 80 suites; and New Era Tickets on ticketing. “The valuation recognized that we had these assets,” Sauers said.

As Oon said, programming was a key criteria, and Sauers was excited about the potential for what is essentially a community activity center and a commercial event center.

The architecture of the new stadium will be spectacular, Sauers said. The retractable roof is very thin, about 12 feet in depth, compared to 30 feet at the University of Phoenix Stadium in Glendale. And the panels in the roof are designed for acoustics and light. The operators will be able to project messages in lights on the outside of the roof, visible from Singapore's high rises, anything from “Elton John Tonight” to a Pepsi logo, for instance. Each panel is two feet by two feet and functions like a TV screen. “It's a nice feature.”

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April Parnell

J Parrish, architectural director, Arup Sport, also considers the Singapore Sports Hub special because it is being built to change the culture of Singapore.

“This is a genuine tropical design,” Parrish said. The most innovative feature will be air movement from multiple sources that can be directed to “the layer people are in, individual cooling per seat,” and plenty of shade and shelter from the sun. And it’s being done in a sustainable way, Parrish said, noting the Singapore government wanted to protect the environment as well as promote sports.

The Sports Hub will be “alive every day of the year,” he said. — Linda Deckard

*Interviewed for this story: J Parrish, 44-2077-55-5500; Mich Sauers, (727) 456-1171; Oon Jin Tiek, 65-9752-4297; Mark Woodhams, 44-2079-918888*

### BOOKINGS

## MAYHEM FESTIVAL LINKS LIVE NATION AND LYMAN

*As I Lay Dying at last year's Vans Warped Tour*



Sometimes the punks and the corporate suits can get along.

Vans Warped Tour co-founder, Kevin Lyman has partnered with Live Nation to launch the first ever Rockstar Energy Mayhem Festival, a touring heavy metal summer outing that could instantly leapfrog the diminishing OzzFest tour in the minds of America’s metal-heads.

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**Olympia Entertainment, Mich.** - Director of Group Sales

**AEG Ogden, Australia** - Quality Assurance Manager - Group

**ANZ Stadium, NSW, Aus.** - Coordinator, Stadiums Operations

**Subiaco (Western Aus.) Oval** - Event Manager

**Kiefer UNO Lakefront Arena, New Orleans** - Assistant Box Office Manager

[VIEW THE FULL](#)

Lyman said he sees the new tour as an extension of the Taste of Chaos tour he has put into arenas every winter since 2004, which features a mix of punk, emo and metal bands and also has Rockstar as a title sponsor. “We weren’t looking to do another summer tour,” said Lyman. But at the end of the 2007 Warped tour outing, he said he noticed that the album from one of the tour’s more metal-edged bands, *As I Lay Dying*, debuted at #7 on the *Billboard* charts and he started getting calls from heavy metal-focused labels Metal Blade and Roadrunner Records, both asking about how they could get some of their acts on Warped in 2008.

“At the time, I was trying to do less bands on Warped, instead of adding more,” he said. “But then Rockstar was also saying they needed a summer tour and they knew they couldn’t do Warped because we already have a deal with Monster Energy Drinks. And then Daryl [Eaton] at CAA called and said Slipknot and Disturbed are looking to do something a bit different.”

In keeping with the stars lining up, Live Nation CEO of North American Music, Jason Garner, had been looking to do a project with Lyman and Eaton for some time. Garner said given the proven track record of Lyman, Eaton and CAA’s John Reese with Warped and Taste of Chaos, the marriage was an easy one. “We’ve worked with them closely for years on those tours and have always hoped to expand the relationship,” Garner said.

Lyman said he chose to partner with Live Nation and go into amphitheaters because Gardner made a commitment to 25-30 shows in the company’s venues, which allowed the Warped boss to make offers to bands that were attractive. Lyman was adamant that many could have gotten more upfront from other promoters, but that they chose to take a pay cut for the sake of helping to build the metal scene. Lyman said the budget was modest enough that, “if it’s not successful, it won’t hurt any individual too much. But if it is successful, everyone will benefit - Live Nation, ourselves and the artists - by the way the deal is structured.”

The tour will be headlined by veteran contemporary metal acts, Slipknot and Disturbed, who will take the stage beginning on July 9 at the White River

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Amphitheatre in Seattle for the 30-date tour hitting U.S. and Canadian cities. Also on the main stage are a pair of modern metal bands whose influence continues to grow, Mastodon and Dragonforce, but Lyman said his real excitement is with the acts on the two secondary stages, sponsored by Jagermeister and an as-yet-unannounced sponsor. Those stages will feature a mix of veteran acts and some of the most promising new metal bands, including: Sevendust, Airbourne, Five Finger Death Punch, 36 Crazy Fists, Machine Head, Black Tide, Suicide Silence, The Red Chord and Walls of Jericho.

As on the Warped tour, the smaller bands will have their own merch tents and will not have to match the bigger acts for pricing. But, unlike the punk festival, which plays amphitheaters but splits the main stage up into two smaller stages for up-and-coming acts, the Mayhem festival will do a full production for the headliners on the main stage after offering general admission to the main stage area during the day.

Tickets for the tour will range from \$25 for the lawn to \$35 for seats and \$47 for a limited amount of tickets in the pit in front of the stage. Upstaging has the contract for the lighting and Rat Sound will handle the sound.

Lyman said all involved have “reasonable” expectations on grosses and he’s hoping for ticket sales in excess of 350,000, which he described as “right around break even.” Asked if LN was willing to absorb a loss in the first year if the tour appeared to have growth potential, Garner would say only, “You always win when you deliver a great experience to the fans.” – Gil Kaufman

*Contacted for this story: Jason Garner, (310) 867-7127; Kevin Lyman, (626) 799-7188.*

## DEALMAKERS

## AEG CLOSE TO WRAPPING DEAL FOR CHARLOTTE

*Charlotte (N.C.) Bobcats Arena*

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AEG is finalizing a multiyear deal that calls for the group to book and market events at the Charlotte (N.C.) Bobcats Arena. The agreement, approved unanimously by the Charlotte City Council on Jan. 28, is expected to be signed within the week.

Bobcats President Fred Whitfield said it is hard to make financial and concert estimates on the deal because “touring business varies from year to year.”

In any case, Whitfield said he thinks that AEG will help attract more “A-level” acts, including some that might not have stopped in Charlotte previously. Also, AEG will be “incentive-ized,” or rewarded, for bringing in quality events to the arena and for generating more revenue, he said.

“We’ve had a great working relationship” with AEG in bookings, Whitfield said. For example, AEG helped book a Bruce Springsteen concert to be held at Charlotte Bobcats Arena, even though Springsteen originally hadn’t planned on stopping through Charlotte. The arena can hold 19,000 people.

Also, Whitfield said, “We found out that AEG has been very successful in other markets” in terms of booking top-tier concerts and family shows.

“They’ve got a great relationship with Live Nation,” Whitfield said, adding that the Bobcats arena still plans to go after Live Nation shows.

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However, the arena will still continue to host many of its regular events, including high school graduations, Disney on Ice and a circus, according to Whitfield. Ideally the building will be utilized at least 200 days a year and will be accessible to everyone in the region who is looking for “great entertainment,” Whitfield said. In 2007 the arena hosted about 150 events.

Whitfield said that Bobcats staffers worked for a year to determine the best group to help manage and market events at the Bobcats arena, and once they realized that they liked AEG the best, it took about a month to hammer out the details of the agreement.

“We’re excited about the partnership,” and it will certainly help to make Charlotte Bobcats Arena more of a premier entertainment destination, Whitfield said.

Michael Roth, a spokesperson for AEG, who couldn’t comment on the deal until it was finalized, said of the Charlotte Bobcats Arena, “This is a world-class arena run by a great organization, and we’re looking for ways to become an asset to what’s already in place.” — Mary Susan Littlepage

*Interviewed for this article: Fred Whitfield, (704) 688-8815; Michael Roth, (213) 742-7155*

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## THE BEAT

### TRAVELOG

#### INTIX (INTERNATIONAL TICKETING ASSOCIATION) JAN. 29 – FEB. 1

*Derek Palmer of Tickets.com with Sara Guerre of the Wolf Trap Performing Arts Center during Tickets.com's party at McFadden Bar; Jack Lucas of TicketsWest gives a speech during the closing ceremony at the House of Blues, Chicago*



CHICAGO – A new player has emerged at this year’s INTIX conference, hoping to shake up the ticketing world with one of the first integrated primary and secondary platforms.

Flash Seats and Vertical Alliance are now Veritix, a primary and secondary ticketing platform owned by Dan Gilbert, chairman and founder of Quicken Loans and majority owner of the Cleveland Cavaliers and Quicken Loans Arena. Veritix CEO Sam Gerace said the new name was chosen after focus group testing.

“We felt it best conveyed the identity of this new entity, but we plan to continue to market the Flash Seats brand to consumers based on the popularity of that platform,” said Gerace.

Tickets.com and Ticketmaster also launched new products at this year’s conference at the Sheraton Hotel in Chicago, the largest since 2001 with 785 attendees and over 100 exhibitor representatives. Making an even larger presence were members of the secondary and ticket broker community including Gary Adler, general counsel for the National Association of Ticket Brokers (NATB). Adler and three brokers belonging to the NATB held a workshop on Tuesday to discuss their relationship with box office employees. Adler told the 100-plus box office managers who had gathered at the meeting that his organization continues to fight against fake tickets.

“Brokers understand that if you sell a negative ticket, something bad will happen on both sides,” he said. “I have seen time and time again brokers try and do the right thing and even help catch counterfeiters.”

While the meeting did pave the way for an improved dialogue between box office workers and brokers, the issue of fake tickets and unsavory street scalpers persisted throughout the discussion. Adler insisted his association could only rein in credible members who operated a store-front operation and signed a code of ethics, and he stopped short of several concessions. Besides a drivers license, Adler said the brokers didn’t ask ticket-sellers how they acquired their inventory – and he wouldn’t take a stance against reseller’s purchasing tickets online using evasive

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*Dave Butler and Jane Kleinberger of Paciolan at the company's dinner at Rivas on the Navy Pier; Gary Adler (left) of the National Ticket Brokers Association talks tickets while INTIX's Jeffrey Laris (second from right interviews with Al Branch of TicketNews.com.*



Adler wasn't able to comment on a recent string of announcements shaking the industry, including Ticketmaster's plans to purchase TicketsNow (VT Pulse, Jan. 23). In light of the deal, Ticketmaster General Counsel Joe Freeman said his company is continuing to pursue state legislation to overturn anti-scalping legislation in most states and open up resale markets for its ticketing operations through TicketExchange and eventually TicketsNow. Freeman estimated that 25 active bills dealing with the secondary market were currently before lawmakers. Strict, anti-resale laws still exist in North Carolina, Arkansas, Massachusetts and New Jersey. The Colorado state legislature is currently considering a law that would make it illegal to use software to trick ticketing websites to sell more than the maximum number of tickets to events.

Tickets.com launched three new software products at this year's conference including ProVenue, a web-based ticketing platform for box office managers that took two-and-a-half years to develop. Tickets.com is beta-testing the software at six locations.

"It has a common use throughout and is very simplistic throughout," CEO Larry Witherspoon said. "Where we had training cycles that took weeks, we're now down to training cycles that take four-to-five hours. People are used to using a web browser, and this software is very intuitive."

This year's award winners included Rise Walter with the San Francisco Symphony, who took the Spirit Award. The Outstanding Box Office Award went to the Bryce Jordan Center at Penn State University and the Outstanding Ticketing Professional award was given to Teri McPherson from the San Diego Theatres, Inc. The Patricia G. Spira Lifetime Achievement Award went to Jennifer Staats-Moore from the Rialto Center for the Arts at Georgia State University in Atlanta. — Dave Brooks

*Teri McPherson of San Diego Theatres, Inc. accepts the Outstanding Ticketing Professional Award;*

*Jennifer Staats-Moore of the Rialto Center for Arts in Atlanta wins the Patricia G. Spira Lifetime Achievement Award*



*Interviewed for this article: Sam Gerace, (216) 466-8958; Gary Adler, (202) 625-0600; Joe Freeman, (310) 360-2344; Larry Witherspoon, (714) 327-5400*

## NAMING RIGHTS REPORT

### IEG SPONSORSHIP STUDY SHOWS INCREASES FOR SPORTS

Professional sports deals are expected to drive North American sponsorship spending to **\$16.78 billion** in 2008, according to the **IEG Sponsorship Report**, released Jan. 18.

Major sports deals are projected to make up more than half of the 12-percent projected jump, the biggest increase in eight years. Without sports, spending will grow just 4.2 percent, and some categories, like entertainment, tours and attractions, and festivals, fairs and annual events will lose market share to sports.

“Sports historically get the lion’s share of sponsorship spending,” said **William Chipps**, the report’s senior editor, said. “It’s more recession proof than the other properties.”

Chipps said people would watch sports whether the economy is good or bad, and media buyers see it as a safe place to park money during the writers’ strike.

Projected spending includes:

- \$11.6 billion for **sports**
- \$1.61 billion for **entertainment, tours and attractions** (up 2.9 percent)
- \$1.5 billion for **causes** (up 4.4 percent)
- \$832 million for **arts** (up 3.4 percent)
- \$754 million for **festivals, fairs and annual events** (up 7.7 percent)
- \$482 million for **associations and membership organizations** (up 4.6 percent)

**RECESSION:** The slowing economy is slowing deals, though Chipps said most of the properties he contacted had not had sponsors or prospects pull back from deals and

all had secured new partners for 2008.

“Economic factors are more challenging. With a turbulent economy, and the sub-prime mortgage problems playing out, it’s hit financial services and the automotive industry - traditional sponsors. There aren’t as many marquee deals,” Chipps said. “When a company is making layoffs, it’s hard to justify multi-million dollar sponsorships.”

Richard Sherwood, president of Front Row Marketing, agreed that the sales cycle has gotten longer, but believes venues will be protected from downturn because sponsorship deals are handled regionally - it’s the regional automotive dealership groups, rather than the carmaker, inking the deal.

“Sponsors are looking for more serious negotiation, and added value,” Sherwood said.

Advancing technology makes this possible, as LED screens allow venues to sell the space many times over for a lower price.

**GO GREEN:** “As venues go down the green road, it opens up sponsorship opportunities. If they develop new programming - like recycling - they create a new asset to sell to a sponsor,” Chipps said.

And businesses that help individuals and companies reduce their energy consumption are turning to sponsorships as part of their marketing and branding strategy. One example is GreenLife Organization, LLC, which recently became the official “green solutions provider” of the NHL.

*Interviewed for this story: Bill Chipps, (312) 944-1727, Dick Sherwood (215) 218-7529*

## TRAVELOG

### **NATIONAL INDEPENDENT CONCESSIONAIRES ASSOCIATION 2008 FOOD SHOW AND BUSINESS EXPO, FEB. 4-6**

*Tim O’Brien, Ron Beckey, Jerry Hammer, and David Hurley, panelists at NICA.*



TAMPA, FLA. - Closer ties and communication were very much on the mind of attendees at the NICA show here Feb. 4-6 as several of the independent concessionaires in attendance were also setting up for the Florida State Fair which runs Feb. 7-18.

**Art Pokorny, B. Wilson Enterprises**, among many panelists during the NICA gathering, used a change in the fair's electrical requirements to illustrate the need for closer communication. "Don't surprise us when we get to the gate," he pleaded with fair managers. "Are there any new regulations at your fair this year?"

But in truth, fair managers are just as vulnerable to surprises. **Barney Cosner, Nebraska State Fair, Lincoln**, recalled three years ago when, two hours before opening on the first day, a new fire inspector declared 7 feet, six inches was not acceptable for a walkway in an exhibit building, despite the fact the hall had been laid out the same way for seven years.

Discussion veered toward what, if anything, NICA as an organization could do to improve communication between concessionaires and fair management. Cosner suggested concessionaires attend International Association of Fairs & Expositions zone meetings for more one-on-one time with state representatives.

On the promotions side, a panel consisting of **Jerry Hammer, Minnesota State Fair, St. Paul**; **Dave Hurley, Kitchen Craft International**; and **Tim O'Brien, O'Brien's Food Service**, and moderated by **Ron Beckey**, retired, Suches, Ga., discussed successful promotion ideas. Among the ideas:

- **A blue-ribbon bargain book.** The coupons are mostly for food and the book is quite popular with fair employees who are at the fair every day. The Minnesota State Fair sold 50,000 of the books in 2007 and sales have increased 40 percent since the book was introduced, Hammer said.
- **Family Day** – O’Brien first saw this promotion at the fair in Champaign, Ill. Concessionaires and others were asked to donate prizes, which varied from bicycles to \$100, and at a designated hour on family day, fairgoers streamed into the grandstand and the fair gave away the prizes.
- **Carload Day** – Offering admission for \$10 per carload used to be a big promotion and should be revived, O’Brien suggested. He also touted Dollar Day, a version of which worked so well at the Dade County Fair & Exposition in Miami for its 50th anniversary, that opening day attendance leapt from 17,000 to 87,000.
- **Bike Nights.** O’Brien rides a motorcycle. He suggested there are a lot of baby boomers who own bikes and are looking for places to go. “Most bikers are 60 years old,” he joked. “Give them a parade and a special place to park.”

“And put younger people on the fair board, just for ideas,” O’Brien advised. –  
Linda Deckard

*Interviewed for this story: Barney Cosner, (402) 473-4110; David Hurley, (352) 735-2850; Jerry Hammer, (651) 288-4400; Tim O’Brien (813) 649-0473; Art Pokorney, (813) 645-1019; Ron Beckey, (706) 747-2047*

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