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VT PULSE

A WEEKLY PUBLICATION FROM VENUES TODAY

July 9, 2008 • VOL. VII, Number 21 • ISSN 1547-4143

Quote of the Week

"When the announcement of the Sonics' move was made, we had a call center set up. In the first 24 hours, there were 11,000 inquiries."

— Gary Desjardins, general manager of the SMG-managed Ford Center in Oklahoma City, the new home to the Seattle Sonics

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Greetings April,

Welcome to VT Pulse, your weekly guide to the "News Behind the Headlines." August is our [green issue](#) and we want to hear what your building is doing to protect the environment. Write to dave@venuestoday.com and tell us your success stories.



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VT NEWS

BOOKINGS
KEYARENA BACK ON THE MARKET FOLLOWING SONICS BREAKUP

KeyArena, Seattle

SHORT TAKES

>>HONDA CENTER EXTENDS DEAL WITH PEPSI —Pepsi-Cola has signed a three-year extension with the Anaheim (Calif.) Ducks and the Anaheim Arena Management, LLC, the management company of the Honda Center. Pepsi-Cola will provide exclusive entertainment elements for fans at the Honda Center.
Contact: Tracy Richmond, (714) 704-2988

>>USI ADDS ONTO WORLD HEADQUARTERS — Ungerboeck Systems International has added a 25,000 sq. ft. complex to its world headquarters in Dardenne Prairie, Mo. Dubbed Ungerboeck Park, the grand opening celebration coincided with the company's employee appreciation day.
Contact: Justin Ungerboeck (636) 688-2000

>>ART CENTER GOES GREEN WITH ONLINE AD — The Mesa (Ariz.) Art Center, in an attempt to be environmentally friendly, has chosen to make its 2008-09 brochure available online. The interactive brochure features video clips and audio clips of performers and is even integrated into MySpace and Facebook.
Contact: Sarah Moran (480) 644-6620



The KeyArena is single and ready to mingle after ending its 41-year relationship with the Seattle SuperSonics of the National Basketball Association. City spokesperson Deborah Daust said the facility will offset the team's July 3 announcement that it is moving to the Oklahoma City's Ford Center by opening up KeyArena's calendar for more concerts.

"Our group sales staff is pretty excited because the potential is there and there's quite a bit of optimism about what this opens up for the building," she said.

Seattle's loss has become Oklahoma City's gain, as the city celebrates its new long-term relationship beginning with the 2008-2009 season. In March, the city passed a one-percent sales tax increase to raise \$120 million to convert the Ford Center into an NBA facility.

"When the announcement of the Sonics' move was made, we had a call center set up. In the first 24 hours, there were 11,000 inquiries," said Gary Desjardins, general manager of the SMG-managed facility. "We haven't set ticket prices yet. Right now we're just collecting the data."

With the Sonics gone, KeyArena is free from September to June, which had been blocked out in its entirety per NBA rules that govern availability prior to the release of the official league schedule.

Realistically, the team is working with 80-100 newly opened dates, counting the Sonics' 41 home games, two months of playoffs (although the Sonics have made the post-season only twice in 10 years), along with about 35 games from the Seattle Thunderbirds of the Canadian Hockey League. That team is relocating to the nearby Kent (Wash.) Events Center when the facility opens in January 2009.

With annual grosses near \$11.6 million, losing the Thunderbirds only amounts to about \$10,000 a year, estimated Daust, while the Sonics earned the city \$1 million a year in rent. That's about \$27,000 a game, plus a complex split on revenues for suites, club seats and concourse advertising which grossed \$3.75 million for the team and the city.

Tack on KeyArena's \$1 million operational deficit for 2007, and its annual debt service payment of \$6.5 million and it starts to become very difficult to calculate how much the city needs to bring in from concerts to make up for losing the Sonics. Besides, Daust points out, the city will have to renegotiate its concessions contract with Aramark (the team had gotten 100 percent of concessions sales), as well as its naming rights deal with KeyBank, which has the right to leave its \$1 million-a-year contract, set to expire in 2010, since the team has relocated.

The Ford Center will also have an opportunity to renegotiate its naming rights deal — a clause in the contract gives the automaker first right of refusal if an NBA tenant moves into the building. Desjardins said the

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Sonics will pay the building \$40,000 per game, plus 40-percent of concession grosses and 25 percent of suite sales, each adjusted on a sliding scale.

KeyArena will also find itself competing in a very crowded concert market, with at least 10 large-scale venues in the greater Seattle-area, said Kim Bedier of the Comcast Arena at the Everett (Wash.) Events Center.

"We're waiting to see what the crystal ball has in store for our market," she said. "We're north enough from Seattle to play family shows, but we haven't been able to convince anyone it's a two-play market."

Bedier said Everett hosts about 10 concerts a year, while KeyArena reported nine concerts to Venues Today Hot Tickets from Jan. 1, 2007 to July 8, 2008, grossing \$5.74 million, all booked by AEG or Live Nation. Continuing those relationships will be critical for the KeyArena, she said, noting that the city-owned facility is not in the position to do any self-promotes or co-promotes.

Seattle's concert market is already a divided landscape. Live Nation's Northwest Division currently books the Gorge Amphitheatre in George, Wash.; the White River Amphitheatre in Auburn, Wash.; and the Amphitheater at Clark County in Ridgefield Wash. AEG owns Seattle's two Showbox clubs, and books WaMu Theater at the Qwest Field Event Center and the Grandstand concerts at the Puyallup Fair, as well as participation in the Bumbershoot Arts and Music Festival.

AEG might try to route KeyArena shows through the recently-signed Rose Quarter arena in Portland, Ore, although Alex Kochan, vice president of AEG Live's northwest regional office, was mum on any of the details.

"Now that there's availability that opened at Seattle, what will happen is that the talent will see that availability and they'll respond to it in whichever way they want to," he said.

Desjardins said he didn't expect the Ford Center to lose too many dates. Last year his facility booked about 25 concerts and he believes he will be able to schedule some NBA-season events after the final schedule is released. — Dave Brooks

Interviewed for this story: Deborah Daust, (206) 661-4007; Gary Desjardins, (405) 602-8700; Kim Bedier, (425) 322-2611; Alex Kochan, (206) 920-8017

A SPECIAL INVITATION



Venues Today, Ticketmaster, American Airlines Center and Turnkey invite YOU to help congratulate and honor the 2007 and 2008 Venues Today Women of Influence winners in Anaheim during the IAAM/NAC convention.

Who: The 2007 honor roll: Donna Dowless, Barbara Hubbard, Robyn Williams, Kim Bedier and Carol Wallace and 2008 honor roll: Jane Kleinberger, Claire Rothman, Peggy Daidakis, Brenda Tinnen and Shura Lindgren.



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Manager

Madison Square
Garden, New York -
Vice President,
Executive
Producer

Fed Square,
Melbourne,
Australia - Regular
Events Coordinator

VIEW THE FULL LISTINGS

What: Reception with awards, drinks and hors d'oeuvres

When: Sunday, July 27, 2008 5-7 p.m. Awards ceremony to begin at 6:15 p.m.

Where: The Pulse nightclub at the Hilton Anaheim, 777 Convention Way, Anaheim, Calif

Please join us.



FAIRS & FESTIVALS RED RIVER VALLEY FAIR OVERCOMES ADVERSITY, ECONOMY

The Demolition Derby at the Red River Valley Fair, West Fargo, N.D. (Photo Credit: Todd Torfin)



Attendance at the Red River Valley Fair in West Fargo, N.D., was about on par with previous numbers at about 100,000. However, considering several days of bad weather, a canceled Travis Tritt concert and the re-implementation of a gate fee, officials are pleased with the event. The fair ran from June 13-21.

"Weather was a big factor," said Bryan Schulz, general manager since January and the fourth in three years. "The first Friday was tough weather, and then on Saturday we had major bad weather."

The weather that day was so bad that the concert by Tritt, one of two headliners booked for the fair, had to be canceled. That was a \$75,000 loss for the fair, Schulz said.

"We had two major storms, and one delayed the fair opening, and the second came as we were opening up our gates," Schulz said. "Then there was the threat of two tornadoes, so we canceled everything for that night. By the time we got everybody into a safe spot and everything passed, it was about 9 or 10 p.m."

The Travis Tritt concert was a washout, but the fair opened with 32 Below, a local country band "that has made its way to Nashville," Schulz said.

The other headlining act was a concert by Dokken, Slaughter and Blue Oyster Cult, and weather once again factored in. "We had rain prior to the event, and I think we probably had 4,000 to 4,500," Schulz said. "It was a little light."

Acts appear in the grandstand, which seats 8,500 as well as accommodates another 5,000 to 6,000 concert-goers who can stand.

Tickets for the events cost \$20 in advance, which included gate admission, or \$20 at the door plus \$5 to get into the fair. A three-pack also was available that allowed patrons to see all three concerts for \$45.

The fair once booked big-name entertainment for every night of the event but then scaled back because of the cost, according to Schulz. "In the past, we've had nine nights of concerts, and people really like that. But with the expenses, it's really very difficult bringing in a lot of big names," he said. "We're going to look at that and maybe go to three or four nights of concerts."

For the other six nights of this year's fair, officials booked six nights of dirt events, though a tractor pull was canceled. Other events included a demolition derby, two nights of professional bull riding and sprint car races.

Final budget figures had not come in as of the end of June, however, Schulz figured on about \$750,000 of income and \$600,000 in expenses. "We try to make \$100,000," he said.

He did not know how the canceled Travis Tritt concert would affect the budget.

Attendance was off slightly. "I don't know if that was their way of saying, 'We're not going to pay for it,' but we still had really good attendance," Schulz said.

Austin, Texas-based Mighty Thomas Carnival played the fair for the last time on its current contract. Next year, Tulsa, Okla.-based Murphy Bros. Exposition will take over, having inked a five-year contract.

"They came and sought us out," Schulz said. "Thomas also put in a bid for it but for what we were getting out of the deal, the bottom line was better with Murphy."

This year, Mighty Thomas Carnival placed about 35 rides on the midway, Schulz said. The midway gross was down about 8 percent, Schulz said, which was not bad considering that on the first rainy Saturday, they had expected a \$100,000 gross but made only \$58,000.

The price for the gate was \$5. Revenues are expected to be about \$175,000 to \$180,000, Schulz said.

Several fairs in North Dakota are having to go without a carnival this season after their California-based carnival decided the state was too far away to travel. However, the Red River Valley Fair did not have that problem, and sees rising prices as a double-edged sword.

"We do pay a gas diesel surcharge for the carnival, which was up about 25 percent from last year, which we understand," Schulz said. "But I also think people are looking for a way to stay around town. People we heard from said, 'We usually take a trip to Minnesota to go to the fair there, but we decided to stay home.' So on the other side of it, we saw more people coming in because it was closer."

Dates for next year's event might change back to July, which was when the fair was held until about eight years ago. Fair officials are still considering options, but said that a date change would work for Murphy Bros. Exposition. "They go from here up to Minot for the North Dakota State Fair," he said. - Mary Wade Burnside

Interviewed for this story: Bryan Schulz, (701) 282-2200

MARKETING KEEPING CLIENTS THE FOCUS OF MIAMI ALSD

Jennifer LeMaster, Ashley Boatman and Tammy Wall of the Georgia Dome in Atlanta with Stacey Greg of the San Diego Padres and guest Reina Moss; Amanda Horning with Joe Jerele of the Columbus (Ohio) Blue Jackets. (VT Photos)



Peter DiChristina of Madison Square Garden in New York with Wayne Wichlacz of the Green Bay Packers; Sasha Williams of the Orlando Magic with Sindi Schug of the Charlotte (N.C.) Bobcats. (VT Photos)



MIAMI – The Association of Luxury Suite Directors wrapped up its annual meeting on July 1 after a three-day meeting emphasizing suite renewals in a declining economy.

“R-O-I are the three most important letters in the alphabet this year,” said Joe Jerele from the Columbus (Ohio) Blue Jackets. “More than ever, companies are wanting data about how the spending on their suites and catering is driving their overall return on investment. It’s not just about entertaining clients any more – suite owners want to see the direct connection between the money they’re spending and what they’re getting out of it.”

Jerele said suite operators have to get creative when it comes to quantifying their clients’ business goals.

“We’re seeing a lot more meetings held before events, or tied to events, and subsequently, we need to make more meeting spaces available,” he said. “We’ve also come up with ways to reconfigure suites and common areas into product displays where suite holders can demo to potential clients prior to the game.”

ALSD Executive Director Bill Dorsey said his association has formed an Executive League, a new pre-convention summit to tackle the issue of declining renewals in suites. Dorsey said a number of factors are leading to the drop-off, including an unchecked increase in price. He pointed to the ALSD suiteholder focus group where most respondents indicated that pricing continued to be their top concern.

“You couple that with a weakening economy, and a ‘been there, done that’ customer attitude, and renewals become very difficult,” he said. “There’s also the issue of too much inventory on the market.”

Dorsey said the addition of the Executive League was a way for suite sales staff to learn how “to keep the customers a lot closer.” A major focus was on new software that allows the facilities, as well as the suite holders, to track who uses their suites.

“If you look at our trade show floor, you can see that suite operations are splitting off into multiple niche industries,” he said. “It’s becoming more important now than it’s ever been. There are more and more suites being built out than ever before and it’s taken on a lot more importance in terms of revenue.”

Dorsey said another growing segment of the suite industry will be secondary tickets. Besides marketplaces like TicketNetwork, StubHub and RazorGator – all which have had staff at ALSD – both Tickets.com and Ticketmaster sent representatives to this event.

“With suites becoming so expensive, suite-holders are looking for more options to sell inventory they can’t use,” ALSD President Pat McCaffrey said. “With the secondary market becoming more legitimate, we’re seeing a lot more teams willing to engage these groups as a means to provide services to their customers.”

In total, about 750 people attended this year’s conference, including 110 members of ALSD’s IT division, which tripled in size since being launched at last year’s conference. For the first time this year, ALSD handed out awards to three facilities for excelling in suite and guest services. This year’s winners were:

Best Idea – Pittsburgh Steelers

To show appreciation for its suite teams, the Steelers launched the “Dedication Equals Success” program. Employees who worked every single University of Pittsburgh and Steelers game, along with a Kenny Chesney concert, were invited to attend a themed party with a guest, where more than 60 prizes were given away. Of the staff’s 55 suite team members, 26 qualified for the program.

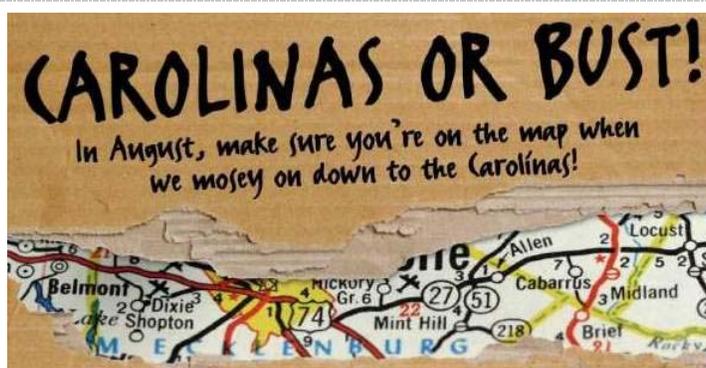
Best Experience – Nashville Predators

With 30 renewals coming up at the end of their 2007-2008 season, the Nashville Predators opted to reupholster seats in 45 of their 72 suites. The effort cost the team one-third of what it would have cost to replace the seats, and the entire project was completed in one month.

Best Overall – O2 Arena, London

The O2 has quickly become the highest grossing venue in the world, with suites increasing in value by 50 percent after one year and a renewal rate of 99 percent – all without having an anchor tenant. The facility includes a VIP Club Lounge, The Credit Suisse Chairman’s Club, luxury private concourses and access to London amenities including the David Beckham Academy and the King Tut exhibition. – Dave Brooks

Interviewed for this story: Joe Jerele, (614) 246-3368; Bill Dorsey, (513) 674-0555; Pat McCaffrey, (513) 765-7050



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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 June 10, 2008.

NEIL DIAMOND DELIVERS EIGHT BIG NIGHTS IN U.K.

15,001 or More Seats	10,001-15,000 Seats	5,001-10,000 Seats	5,000 or Less Seats
<p>1) Neil Diamond Gross Sales: \$9,389,508; Venue: Croke Park Stadium, Dublin, Ireland; Attendance: 51,185; Ticket Range: \$199.26-\$139.18; Promoter: MCD Productions; Dates: June 14; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p>1) Neil Diamond Gross Sales: \$2,893,323; Venue: The NIA, Birmingham, England; Attendance: 23,323; Ticket Range: \$139.45-\$99.61; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: June 10-11; No. of Shows: 2</p>	<p>1) Backyardigans Live! Tale of the Mighty Knights Gross Sales: \$1,089,177; Venue: The WaMu Theater at Madison Square Garden, New York; Attendance: 31,005; Ticket Range: \$70.50-\$24.50; Promoter: MSG Entertainment; Dates: June 13-15; No. of Shows: 7</p>	<p>1) Oklahoma Gross Sales: \$591,321; Venue: Fox Theatre, Atlanta; Attendance: 10,842; Ticket Range: \$63-\$25; Promoter: Theater of the Stars; Dates: June 24-29; No. of Shows: 8</p>
<p>2) Neil Diamond Gross Sales: \$5,948,338; Venue: The O2 Arena, London, England; Attendance: 46,174; Ticket Range: \$139.45-\$99.61; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: June 21, 23-24; No. of Shows: 3</p>	<p>2) Virgin Festival Calgary Gross Sales: \$1,789,334; Venue: Fort Calgary (Alberta) Historic Park; Attendance: 28,002; Ticket Range: \$123.70-\$74.71; Promoter: Union Events; Dates: June 21-22; No. of Shows: 2</p>	<p>2) Eddie Izzard Gross Sales: \$943,180; Venue: Radio City Music Hall, New York; Attendance: 18,038; Ticket Range: \$75-\$30; Promoter: MSG Entertainment, Westbeth Entertainment; Dates: June 27-29; No. of Shows: 3</p>	<p>2) Tom Waits Gross Sales: \$393,274; Venue: Fox Theatre, Atlanta; Attendance: 4,610; Ticket Range: \$105-\$65; Promoter: AC Entertainment; Dates: July 5; No. of Shows: 1</p>
<p>3) Pearl Jam Gross Sales: \$2,589,448; Venue: Susquehanna Bank Center, Camden, N.J.; Attendance: 48,829; Ticket Range: \$68-\$48; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: June 19-20; No. of Shows: 2</p>	<p>3) Neil Diamond Gross Sales: \$1,481,900; Venue: Wembley Arena, London, England; Attendance: 10,948; Ticket Range: \$139.45-\$99.61; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: June 27; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p>3) Robert Plant & Alison Krauss Gross Sales: \$770,935; Venue: Greek Theatre, Los Angeles; Attendance: 7,223; Ticket Range: \$125-\$49; Promoter: Nederlander; Dates: June 23-24; No. of Shows: 2</p>	<p>3) Jesus Christ Superstar Gross Sales: \$376,298; Venue: Bob Carr Performing Arts Center, Orlando, Fla.; Attendance: 7,258; Ticket Range: \$61-\$35; Promoter: PTG Florida; Dates: June 20-22; No. of Shows: 5</p>
<p>4) Dave Matthews Band Gross Sales: \$2,413,635; Venue: Comcast Center for the Performing Arts, Mansfield, Mass.; Attendance: 39,795; Ticket Range: \$75-\$40; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: June 24-25; No. of Shows: 2</p>	<p>4) James Taylor Gross Sales: \$1,250,605; Venue: Nikon at Jones Beach Theater, Wantagh, N.Y.; Attendance: 23,341; Ticket Range: \$79.50-\$26; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: June 21-22; No. of Shows: 2</p>	<p>4) Chicago, The Doobie Brothers Gross Sales: \$553,478; Venue: Chastain Park Amphitheatre, Atlanta; Attendance: 6,700; Ticket Range: \$89-\$39; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: June 24; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p>4) Robert Plant & Alison Krauss Gross Sales: \$325,997; Venue: Fox Theatre, Detroit; Attendance: 4,747; Ticket Range: \$125-\$35; Promoter: Live Nation, Olympia Entertainment; Dates: June 17; No. of Shows: 1</p>
<p>5) Neil Diamond Gross Sales: \$2,169,135; Venue: Millenium Stadium, Cardiff, Wales; Attendance:</p>	<p>5) Stevie Wonder Gross Sales: \$672,832; Venue: Nikon at Jones Beach Theater,</p>	<p>5) The Cure Gross Sales: \$474,447; Venue: Radio City Music Hall, New York; Attendance:</p>	<p>5) Stevie Nicks Gross Sales: \$316,185; Venue: Toledo (Ohio) Zoo Amphitheatre; Attendance: 4,537; Ticket Range: \$99.50-\$49.50; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: June 25; No. of Shows: 1</p>

20,341; Ticket Range: \$109.56-\$89.64; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: June 19; No. of Shows: 1	Wantagh, N.Y.; Attendance: 10,441; Ticket Range: \$125-\$10; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: June 18; No. of Shows: 1	5,961; Ticket Range: \$90.50-\$60.50; Promoter: AEG Live, MSG Entertainment; Dates: June 21; No. of Shows: 1
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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

STALLWORTH, DAVIS AND DENNIS SEE POSITIONS SHIFT



Steve Stallworth (left) and Darren Davis; Dean Dennis (lower)

Steve Stallworth went to work for his old boss, Michael Gaughan, in true déjà vu fashion in Vegas. Stallworth is now general manager of the **South Pointe Equestrian Complex & Arena**. The 4,400-seat arena is primarily for equestrian events, but Stallworth is

looking to host his first concert there, Huey Lewis & The News, as part of the Snap-On Tools convention being held at the South Pointe Hotel and Casino.

"It will be the first time dirt is out of that arena," Stallworth said. He claims to be managing the only equestrian center connected to a casino. It boasts 1,200 stalls, and two practice arenas, one indoors and one outdoors. Riders and owners can drive right into the stall area and unload a horse and tack while a bellman transports their luggage to their rooms. Most hopefully stop in the casino on the way to those rooms.

As Stallworth was hanging his hat at South Pointe, **Darren Davis** was moving up at the **Orleans Arena**, where Stallworth was last employed by Gaughan as general manager. Gaughan hired Stallworth from the Thomas & Mack Center, Las Vegas, to run the Orleans. When Coast Casinos, in which Gaughan was partnered, was sold to Boyd Gaming, Gaughan sold his stock in Coast Casinos and bought a portion of the project, which was South Coast. He renamed it South Pointe, retaining the equestrian center and regaining Stallworth.

Davis took Stallworth's old job, but with a change in title to executive director. Davis had been hired at the Orleans five years ago as event manager, followed by stints as director of operations and finally senior director of booking and events.

His June promotion created a ripple effect. He was able to promote three staffers: **Tayra Lagomarsino**, who was director of ticketing became director of sales and marketing; **Rex Berman**, production manager, became director of operations; and **Chris Engler**, event coordinator, became booking coordinator.

Davis said he will continue to do a lot of the booking of the 7,773-seat arena. Davis started in the business at Silver Dollar City, Branson, Mo., then worked at the City of Ft. Worth Convention Center, formerly the Tarrant County Convention Center, for five years before being recruited by Stallworth.

Meanwhile, **Dean Dennis** is returning to the **Pueblo (Colo.) Convention Center** as general manager for Global Spectrum. He had been in Global Spectrum's Philadelphia office as a vice president of development.

Dennis said he will continue to work in business development, particularly in some ongoing prospecting like Sioux Falls, S.D., which will be up for renewal soon. But his main job will be in Pueblo where he hopes to oversee an expansion of the venue he helped open in 1997.



Voters in Pueblo will decide whether to use the city's sales tax vendors fee to fund the expansion on the November ballot.

"It's nice to be back in an operator's role," Dennis said after his stint in the corporate office. He replaces Colin Holman, who left the center July 4. Christine McCarthy continues as assistant general manager. He is currently in and out of the Pueblo office, but expects to be there full time after the July 25-29 International Association of Assembly Managers convention in Anaheim (Calif.).

Dennis had been vice president of the Convention and Visitors Council for the Greater Pueblo Chamber of Commerce from 1992-1997 before being tapped by what was then Globe Facility Services to manage the convention center.

Interviewed for this story: Steve Stallworth, (702) 797-8005; Darren Davis, (702) 365-7469; Dean Dennis, (719) 583-4959

NAMING RIGHTS REPORT

Miller Lite Champions Plaza, New Dallas Cowboys Stadium

Date: May 27

Terms: 12 years, financial terms not disclosed

Tenant/Ownership: Dallas Cowboys/Jerry Jones

Comments: The Dallas Cowboys has extended its long-standing sponsorship with Miller Brewing Co. through 2020. The deal will cover some major milestones for the Cowboys - this year's closing of Texas Stadium, the 2009 opening of the new, as yet unnamed stadium, and hosting Super Bowl XLIV in 2010.

Miller will continue to be the exclusive beer sponsor to the team and will receive naming rights to the main entrance to the new stadium - the Miller Lite Champions Plaza - where 70 percent of ticket holders will enter or leave the stadium, and where much of the pre-game entertainment will occur. The deal also includes signage in the stadium bowl and sponsorship rights to approximately 200,000 square feet of the stadium, including a branded club on the event level of the stadium, two beer gardens on the concourses, and a seating and entertainment area on one of the end-zone platforms where VIPs will be able to watch players enter and exit the field.

In addition, there will be a media partnership that includes TV, radio and print advertising. Miller will have use of the Cowboys' team logo and markings on packaging and point-of-purchase displays.

"This segment is all about retail sales and shelf space," said Rob Vogel, president of Bonham Group. "This is an example of a larger, interactive partnership."

Vogel said traditionally the marketing push will be in the fourth quarter, but the selling cycle will push into the summer as well.

In a slowing economy, Vogel expects deals like this to get more scrutiny, but expects premium opportunities will continue to command good prices.

"It is about the property and the company getting creative about putting together sales opportunities for the partner," Vogel said. "It is more sophisticated, more tied to bottom line impact."

Miller has created a comprehensive marketing plan to celebrate the Cowboys' final season in Texas Stadium. It includes weekly giveaways of tickets, team merchandise and stadium collectibles, commemorative packaging and a point-of-sale campaign.

Contact: Rob Vogel, (303) 592-4290

Bud Light Bleachers, Batter's Eye Suite, Wrigley Field, Chicago

Date: July 3

Terms: 5 years, financial terms not disclosed

Tenant/Ownership: Chicago Cubs/Tribune Co.

Comments: Anheuser-Busch has been trying to make inroads into the Chicago market, which has been dominated by Miller Brewing Co.'s Miller Lite. Miller owns the exclusive marketing rights with two of Chicago sports teams, NFL's Bears and MLB's White Sox.

"Without a doubt, the Cubs are a great product to help [Anheuser-Busch] gain market share," Vogel said.

The five-year sponsorship deal gives A-B naming rights to the Batter's Eye Suite

in center field, and continues sponsorship of the Bud Light Bleachers. They will also be the exclusive malt beverage advertiser within Wrigley's seating bowl and bleachers, as well as during Cubs' broadcasts on Chicago's WGN. A-B will retain use of the Cubs' logo for marketing and promotion, including advertising, merchandising and retail point-of-sale materials.

The Cubs have been pursuing naming rights deals within the park - the Bud Lite Bleachers was its first - and some analysts see it is a way to increase revenue without changing the park's name, the latter an idea that's been met with rabid fan resistance.

"All teams are looking for different ways to create revenue and leverage marketing and partnerships," Vogel said

Budweiser and Bud Light are the official beer sponsors of Major League Baseball and 26 MLB teams. — Liz Boardman

Contact: Mike Bulthaus, (314) 577-9671