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From: venuestoday [venuestoday@mail.vresp.com]
Sent: Wednesday, July 16, 2008 7:29 PM
To: april@venuestoday.com
Subject: VT Pulse, July 16, 2008

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VT PULSE

A WEEKLY PUBLICATION FROM VENUES TODAY

July 16, 2008 • VOL. VII, Number 22 • ISSN 1547-4143

Quote of the Week

"When you see something that stinks of the Wild West with no sheriff, we see it as unfettered, uncontrolled commerce."

— Kevin Donnelly of the MTS Centre in Winnipeg, Alberta, on Canadian attitudes toward scalping.

Greetings April,

Welcome to VT Pulse, your weekly guide to the "News Behind the Headlines." A few of our staff members are a bit sleepy after watching Tuesday's marathon, 15-inning All Star Game. Regardless, we're plugging away on the August issue and preparing for our upcoming Women of Influence awards reception during IAAM. For more information, see our ad below the first story.

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VT NEWS

TICKETS RESALE OF ELTON JOHN TICKETS CAUSES A STIR IN CANADA

The MTS Centre in Winnipeg, Manitoba, was one of the venues to ask Ticketmaster to remove a link to TicketsNow for the resale of Elton John tickets.



Ticketmaster is running into opposition in Canada as it continues to integrate TicketsNow into its primary platform.

HELP WANTED**CONTACT VT PULSE****SHORT TAKES****>> FARM AID MOVES TO NEW ENGLAND—**

Farm Aid has been set for Sept. 20 and headliners will include Willie Nelson, Neil Young, Dave Matthews and John Cougar Mellencamp. Presented by Whole Foods Market and Horizon Organic, the event will be held at the Comcast Center in Mansfield, Mass., its first New England date. *Contact: Maria Enie, (202) 331-4323*

>>>SPECTRUM TO CLOSE NEXT YEAR

—The Wachovia Spectrum in Philadelphia will close its doors for good at the end of the 2008-09 hockey and soccer season. The decision was announced by Comcast-Spectacor Chairman Ed Snider. *Contact: Ike Richman, (215) 389-9552*

>>>OREGON ADDS GREEN EVENTS —

The Oregon Convention Center is slated to host more than 20 sustainability-focused trade shows and events from now to 2010. The events are expected to bring more than \$4 million in direct revenue to the Center. *Contact: Karen Totaro, (503) 731-7901*

>>NBA HOSTS ANNUAL SUMMER LEAGUE —

The National Basketball Association will go into the second year of hosting its 10-day summer league, consisting of 21 NBA teams playing at least four games per day. The event will be hosted at the

Two venue managers have already contacted Ticketmaster regarding the September Elton John tour and insisted they cease a program that links ticket buyers to the secondary marketplace once all available tickets have sold out.

“Some of our clients said they didn’t realize they were on a secondary site and paying a premium over face value for tickets,” said Ken Wood of the Credit Union Centre in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Wood said he asked Ticketmaster to remove the link as soon as he found out about it.

“We didn’t provide them permission and we feel it’s inappropriate that the practice be carried out,” Wood said.

So did Kevin Donnelly of the MTS Centre in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Just 24 hours after his June on sale, Donnelly was on the phone with Ticketmaster demanding they remove the link.

“Personally I’m not a fan of the reselling scenario and I don’t want to be facilitating it,” Donnelly said. “I told them to never link us to TicketsNow until they are instructed to do so by me.”

The controversy is at least the second time Ticketmaster’s use of TicketsNow has caused concern. In April, Ticketmaster made headlines when it was linking buyers to TicketsNow for sold-out Radiohead concerts in the United States.

When a consumer logs on to buy tickets from Ticketmaster, they go through the typical selection process to find a ticket. If tickets are sold out, the buyer is directed to a link that reads, “We couldn’t find the tickets to match your request,” followed by “Can’t find the tickets you want? Check our partner site TicketsNow for seats.”

Donnelly said that verbiage is misleading and many buyers don’t realize they’re being redirected to a resale site.

“I think more people here are opposed to it. Canada is used to more regulation, oversight and we have a lot more government control,” Donnelly said. “When you see something that stinks of the Wild West with no sheriff, we see it as unfettered, uncontrolled commerce.”

Like the U.S. market just 18 months ago, Canada’s 10 provinces and three territories have different laws in terms of resale. British Columbia essentially has no restriction on resale, which allows the Vancouver Canucks to operate the Prime Seat Club — a secondary marketplace where season-ticketholders can resell their tickets at any price.

The provinces of Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario — home to the popular Toronto Maple Leafs — ban the resale of tickets over face value. Yet, tickets are readily available on resale sites, often at inflated prices. A good seat at the Toronto Blue Jays matchup against the World Series Champion Boston Red Sox on Aug. 22 was retailing at \$73.25 on the Blue Jays’ web site. On TicketsNow, the ticket was going for \$161. On StubHub, a similar seat was selling as high as \$177.

“We advise the customers to do what’s right,” said Sean Pate, head of Corporate Communications for StubHub. “We don’t prohibit resale of anything for any price but our user regulations say that sellers should pay attention to local laws.”

For its part, Ticketmaster is actively lobbying the three Canadian provinces where scalping is outlawed.

“The challenge in Canada is that you’re working with a parliamentary government system where the lawmaking

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process is very different," Ticketmaster's Senior Vice President Assistant General Counsel Joe Freeman said. He noted that recent political changes in Alberta and Ontario have essentially forced Ticketmaster to restart "the process to get these archaic laws modernized."

As for the nation's attitude toward brokers, scalpers and resale markets, Pate said he expects the image to improve more large-scale secondary markets continue to grow.

"I think what you see there is that the (Canadians) are more on the conservative side, but there needs to be more market education and familiarity with the top companies," Pate said — Dave Brooks

Interviewed for this story: Kevin Donnelly, (204) 987-7825; Ken Wood, (306) 975-3155; Sean Pate, (415) 222-8442; Joe Freeman, (310) 360-2344

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 Influence winners in Anaheim during the IAAM/NAC convention.

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

What: Reception with awards drinks and hors d'oeuvres

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

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

Please join us.



FAIRS & FESTIVALS PRO GOLF EVENT BARELY SLOWS DEL MAR'S OLYMPIC SPIRIT

Opening Day at the San Diego County Fair at Del Mar, Calif. (left); Enjoying a sno-cone with Dad at the fair.



The San Diego County Fair at Del Mar, Calif., posted its second largest attendance during the recent June 14-July 6 fair, which pleased officials considering they gave up openi

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The Rocks, Sydney, Australia - Event Manager

Spurs Sports & Entertainment, San Antonio, Texas - Director of Finance

VEE Corporation, Minneapolis - Booking Manager

VenuWorks, Ames, Iowa - Director of Finance/Controllor

Kent (Wash.) Events Center/SMG - Box Office Manager

Hunter Region Sporting Venues Authority, Newcastle, Australia - CEO

Ticketek, Sydney, Australia - Account Manager

San Jose (Calif.) State University - Event Services Manager

Lakefront Arena, New Orleans, La. - Assistant to the Facilities Manager for Operations

Derwent Entertainment Centre, Glenorchy, Tasmania - Venue Manager

Tickets.com, Cincinnati, Ohio - Client Services Representative

ANZ Stadium, Sydney, Australia - Senior Manager, ANZ Stadium Club

Tickets.com, Sydney, Australia - Support Desk Ticketing Systems (2 positions)

White Stallion Productions, Orlando, Fla. - Booking Director

Australian Jockey Club, Randwick - Customer and Venue

day - shortening the event - because the U.S. Open was in town.

Attendance came in at 1,235,698, a 2.4 percent drop over last year's record 1,265,997 for the 21-day run.

Tim Fennell, the fair's CEO, said representatives from the city of San Diego, as well as the U.S. Open, which was held at Torrey Pines Golf Course, asked to meet with him a year ago in February to discuss possibly using 12,000 of the fairgrounds' parking spaces. The move would require the fair to postpone opening for three days.

"I said we could forego those three days and you could use our parking, but it will cost you \$800,000," Fennell said.

That deal would have allowed U.S. Open patrons to park at the fairgrounds for all seven days of the golf tournament - won by an injured Tiger Woods in his last competition for awhile - as the events overlapped just three days.

Eventually, tournament officials declined Fennell's offer but did ask him to postpone the fair's opening by one day. Traffic gridlock, widely predicted in the local press, did not materialize.

In the end, the tournament paid the fair \$50,000 - a sum Fennell does not consider sufficient - and so the fair opened on a Saturday instead of Friday.

"In the big scheme of things, if we did open (on time) I think the press would have been very negative," Fennell said. "So we took the high ground."

Kina Paegert, the fair's information officer, added that traffic that weekend was lighter than usual. "Our guests were like, 'Wow, that was awesome' of what turned out to be a relatively short drive to the fair," she said.

Officials paid \$270,000 for Fergie, the highest ever for a musical act. The previous high was about \$225,000 for Van Halen. Fennell called the fee "worth it" but both he and Paegert noted that Sugarland actually was the top money-maker this year.

"They beat out Fergie in ticket sales," Paegert said.

Sugarland drew about 6,600 while about 5,600 attended the Fergie show, said Becky Bartling, the fair's COO and deputy general manager, who books entertainment.

Because of the Olympics, Paegert said, officials chose "Summer of Sports," which allowed them to book appearances by sports celebrities such as Tony Gwynn of the San Diego Padres and Shawne Merriman from the San Diego Chargers.

"It turned out to be a great theme that pulled everyone in the community together," Paegert said.

The fair's independent midway featured 82 rides, including the Skyride that took patrons from the main midway to the kiddieland, as well as the Fun Zone Area that featured extreme attractions including a bungee ride.

The top 10 rides were: Crazy Mouse (owned by S&J Enterprises); Magnum (Wood Enterprises); Grand Wheel and Hi Miler (Ray Cammack Shows); Fast Trax (State Fair Amusements); Sky Flyer and Tango (Bishop Amusements); and Speed, Skyride and Hydroslide (Ray Cammack Shows).

Fennell said he expected the ride gross - along with the food gross - each to be up a few points.

For the second year in a row, the fair held the "Two Dollar Taste of the Fair," which allowed patrons to sample offerings from concessionaires for \$2 each.

Services Manager

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[VIEW THE FULL
LISTINGS](#)

"Vendors liked it and guests liked it," Paegert said. "It provided people the opportunity to taste more. They could get three or four and share with the family."

The top 10 food booths were: Wood Pit BBQ (owned by Golden West Concessions); Juicy's and Juicy's Outlaw Grill (Juicy LLC); Chicken Charlie Rotisserie (Chicken Charlie's); Chuckwagon BBQ (Chuckwagon Concessionaires); Australian Battered Potatoes (Australian Foods); the Fruit Caboose; Chicken Charlie's Broasted Chicken (Chicken Charlie's); 299 Texas Donuts (Brander Enterprises); and Tasti Chips (Lori's Concessions).

The gate admission remained the same as last year at \$12 for adults and \$6 for ages 6-12 and 62 and up. Fennell expects gate revenues to be on par with last year.

Officials built on last year's offer of ring tones to patrons via the fair's Web site - including animal and roller coaster noises - by adding sport-themed tones such as "Take Me Out to the Ballgame," Paegert said.

Also, employees agreed to have their cars shrink-wrapped with the fair's logo, turning their automobiles into moving billboards when they drove around during fair time. "People could follow them to the fair, and they had programs to give out," Paegert said.

Next year's dates have not been confirmed, Bartling said, although the fair will end on July 5 because the Fourth of July falls on a Saturday. - Mary Wade Burnside

Interviewed for this story: Tim Fennell, Becky Bartling and Kina Paegert, (858) 755-1161

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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 24, 2008.

CHESNEY AND HIS GANG OF PIRATES PILLAGE THE SOUTH

15,001 or More Seats	10,001-15,000 Seats	5,001-10,000 Seats	5,000 or Less Seats
<p>1) Kenny Chesney Gross Sales: \$3,251,084; Venue: LP Field, Nashville, Tenn.; Attendance: 50,422; Ticket Range: \$99.50-\$29.50; Promoter: AEG Live, The Messina Group; Dates: July 5; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p>1) Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers Gross Sales: \$963,612; Venue: Verizon Wireless Amphitheatre at Encore Park, Alpharetta, Ga.; Attendance: 11,865; Ticket Range: \$125-\$35; Promoter: AEG Live, Concerts West; Dates: July 9; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p>1) Widespread Panic Gross Sales: \$1,242,945; Venue: Red Rocks Amphitheatre, Denver; Attendance: 28,333; Ticket Range: \$45; Promoter: Bill Bass Concerts, Inc., Live Nation; Dates: June 27-29; No. of Shows: 3</p>	<p>1) Chicago, The Doobie Brothers Gross Sales: \$302,153; Venue: Bank of America Pavillion, Boston; Attendance: 4,868; Ticket Range: \$76-\$39.50; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: July 1; No. of Shows: 1</p>
<p>2) Kenny Chesney Gross Sales: \$2,934,831; Venue: Turner Field, Atlanta; Attendance: 42,832; Ticket Range: \$110-\$24; Promoter: AEG Live, The Messina Group; Dates: July 13; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p>2) American Idols Live! Gross Sales: \$535,103; Venue: San Diego Sports Arena; Attendance: 8,763; Ticket Range: \$68.50-\$39.50; Promoter: AEG Live; Dates: July 2; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p>2) 311 Gross Sales: \$434,388; Venue: Red Rocks Amphitheatre, Denver; Attendance: 9,145; Ticket Range: \$47.50; Promoter: Bill Bass Concerts, Inc., Live Nation; Dates: July 1; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p>2) Boston, Styx Gross Sales: \$298,167; Venue: Dodge Theatre, Phoenix; Attendance: 4,833; Ticket Range: \$122-\$42; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: June 27; No. of Shows: 1</p>
<p>3) Pearl Jam Gross Sales: \$2,193,228; Venue: Comcast Center for the Performing Arts, Mansfield, Mass.; Attendance: 39,800; Ticket Range: \$62-\$42; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: June 28, 30; No. of Shows: 2</p>	<p>3) Chicago, The Doobie Brothers Gross Sales: \$514,672; Venue: Nikon at Jones Beach Theater, Wantagh, N.Y.; Attendance: 8,522; Ticket Range: \$168.15-\$10; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: June 27; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p>3) True Colors Gross Sales: \$422,515; Venue: Greek Theatre, Los Angeles; Attendance: 4,800; Ticket Range: \$150-\$40; Promoter: Nederlander; Dates: June 28; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p>3) Mark Knopfler Gross Sales: \$290,799; Venue: Chicago Theatre; Attendance: 3,449; Ticket Range: \$106-\$51; Promoter: Jam Productions; Dates: July 13; No. of Shows: 1</p>
<p>4) Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers Gross Sales: \$1,479,811; Venue: Hollywood Bowl, Los Angeles; Attendance: 17,451; Ticket Range: \$250-\$40; Promoter: Andrew Hewitt, Live Nation; Dates: June 25; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p>4) Kenny Chesney Gross Sales: \$503,973; Venue: Roberts Stadium, Evansville, Ind.; Attendance: 8,091; Ticket Range: \$72.50-\$39.50; Promoter: AEG Live, Mischell Productions, The Messina Group; Dates: July 10; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p>4) Ringo Starr and His Allstar Band Gross Sales: \$377,285; Venue: Radio City Music Hall, New York; Attendance: 5,841; Ticket Range: \$80-\$40; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: June 24; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p>4) Robert Plant & Alison Krauss Gross Sales: \$279,888; Venue: Dodge Theatre, Phoenix; Attendance: 3,890; Ticket Range: \$122-\$42; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: July 1; No. of Shows: 1</p>
<p>5) Dave Matthews Band Gross Sales: \$1,382,756; Venue: HersheyPark Stadium,</p>	<p>5) So You Think You Can Dance Australia Gross Sales:</p>	<p>5) Boston, Styx Gross Sales: \$365,008; Venue: Gibson Amphitheatre at Universal CityWalk, Universal City, Calif.;</p>	<p>5) The OuternationalMusic Tour Gross Sales: \$273,685; Venue: Central Park SummerStage, New York; Attendance: 5,215; Ticket Range: \$65-\$59.50; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: June 26; No. of Shows: 1</p>

Hershey, Pa.;	\$380,452;	Attendance:
Attendance:	Venue: Brisbane	5,731; Ticket
25,015; Ticket	(Australia)	Range: \$79.50-
Range: \$70-	Entertainment	\$45; Promoter:
\$40.75;	Centre;	Live Nation;
Promoter: In-	Attendance:	Dates: July 1;
House, Live	6,852; Ticket	No. of Shows: 1
Nation; Dates:	Range: \$63.39-	
June 27; No. of	\$50.04;	
Shows: 1	Promoter:	
	Andrew McManus	
	Presents; Dates:	
	July 5; No. of	
	Shows: 2	

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

THE BEAT

DEALS

GLOBAL SPECTRUM SNAGS MIAMI BEACH; VENUWORKS SIGNS TWO; SMG CONSULTING IN YOUNGSTOWN

Venue: Miami Beach Convention Center

Management Company: Global Spectrum

Terms: Five years, commencing Oct. 31, with an out for either party in three years. Global Spectrum would receive a management fee of \$280,000 a year and incentives up to that much again based on increased revenue. Global Spectrum would invest several hundred thousand dollars from fees and in loans to the city, terms and amount to be negotiated.

This hotly contested deal culminated in a 5-2 decision this morning (July 16) when city commissioners rejected recommendations by the city staff and tourism leaders to retain SMG and voted to negotiate with Global Spectrum instead. SMG has managed the 1-million-sq.-ft. center since 1990.

It becomes the biggest convention center in the Global Spectrum family. Global Spectrum's ace in the hole was a strategic alliance with Messe-Schweiz, a Swiss exhibition firm, which operates two major venues in Europe and, most importantly, produces Art Basel Miami Beach, one of the largest, most upscale shows at the Miami Beach Convention Center. Miami Beach has a sister-city relationship with Basel, Switzerland, sharing shows and establishing intercontinental offices.

Messe-Schweiz is most definitely a strategic alliance, not a partner, in this management contract, said Frank Russo, senior VP for Global Spectrum. He, along with most of the top brass of Global Spectrum, sat alongside SMG's heavy hitters in the three-hour commission meeting that resulted in the 5-2 vote.

Russo called it one of the most open selection processes he's ever experienced, noting both Global Spectrum and SMG had access to the other's oral interviews, the evaluations and the rankings. On July 16, SMG and Global Spectrum each made a half hour presentation and then answered questions from the commission and others in attendance.

Messe-Schweiz has agreed to bring another show to Miami Beach, a high-end garden show, which debuts in 2010 and will mean \$250,000 net to the venue annually, Russo said. Discussions are ongoing about a third show, dubbed Millionaire's Row, which is a possibility, he added.

Patrick Hurley, FACC Board president, and Steve Peters, VenuWorks president



Venue: Fairfield (Iowa) Arts and Convention Center

Management Company: VenuWorks

Terms: Five years, management fee plus incentives based on number of events, financial performance and board satisfaction.

The complex includes the 522-seat Steven Sondheim Center, a 7,000 square-foot business pavilion, several meeting rooms, an executive conference suite, an art gallery, several informal meeting and performance areas, a full

commercial kitchen, administrative support spaces, and an outdoor plaza. It opened in December 2007, funded by a nonprofit organization.

VenuWorks moved in July 1. Tim Berry is on site and the search is on for an executive director, said Steve Peters, VenuWorks president.

Peters compared it to another VenuWorks client, the Hoyt Sherman Performing Arts Center, Des Moines. The board in Fairfield “knew of us and came to us,” he said of the process, which did not include an RFP.

He anticipates booking 120 event days. The theater is currently busy with in-house theater and dance groups. VenuWorks will also concentrate on booking non-theatrical events

Venue: Aransas Pass (Texas) Civic Center

Management Co.: VenuWorks

Terms: \$6,850 per month pre-opening consulting fee; \$7,850 per month operating fee. The deal was signed May 19.

The small, municipally owned conference center opens in December and is located in a town outside Corpus Christi. VenuWorks has sent Carl St. Clair to handle pre-opening services. A permanent manager will be hired within the next few months.

The venue includes conference, meeting and exhibition space.

Venue: Chevrolet Centre, Youngstown, Ohio

Consultant: SMG

Terms: This is a first for SMG, which will provide consulting services to a local management company, JAC Management Co. LLC. SMG will receive a flat fee, lower than usual, at \$80,000, plus incentives. In addition, SMG splits an incentive with JAC which includes 25 percent of operating profit after the first \$100,000, up to as much as 50 percent in increments of \$100,000.

The 7,000-seat arena opened in 2005 as part of the Global Entertainment management family, complete with a Central Hockey League franchise. That team is now on hiatus, but Bob Cavalieri, SMG senior VP, said he fully expects hockey to resume at Chevrolet Center by the 2009-2010 season. Global Entertainment and the city severed ties Oct. 31 after the facility lost \$254,388 during its second fiscal year.

Eric Ryan, president of JAC Development, won the right to manage the arena after the city failed to select one of several management firms that requested information. The preference was to establish local ties.

Cavalieri said SMG will provide all its usual services, including marketing, event booking, risk management and insurance, administration and finance, but without a local management. To date, the building has not shown an operating profit, but Cavalieri was optimistic about the potential.

“It’s a good size building,” he said of the way things are going in the concert business, where several tours are opting to play smaller venues closer to the fans. He predicted the arena would see 12-15 touring shows, similar to SMG’s arena in Reading, Pa., the Sovereign Center, which has been highly successful in a mid-size market.

Joe Mazur, SMG regional VP based in Cleveland, Ohio, will oversee this contract. — Linda Deckard

Interviewed for this story: Frank Russo, (860) 657-0634; Steve Peters, (515) 232-5151; Bob Cavalieri, (215) 592-6628

SUMMER FESTIVAL REPORT ROTHBURY SITE FACING FORECLOSURE; LIVE NATION ACQUIRES FRENCH EVENT

Crowd shot at the Rothbury (Mich.) Festival; Primus rocks Rothbury



Organizers of the [Rothbury Festival](#) are facing some disappointing news after wrapping up their first four-day outing in rural Michigan.

Owners of the 2,000-acre Double JJ Ranch where the festival was held could be days away from foreclosure, following two lawsuits totaling nearly \$22 million. A Michigan judge has already ordered that all income generated by the festival set to be paid to Double JJ be placed into a court-controlled escrow account. On Friday, U.S. District Judge Paul L. Maloney will consider a plan by BankFirst to appoint a receiver to manage and control the property owned by Double JJ Ranch.

What does that mean for the environmentally conscious Rothbury Festival, which sold about 40,000 tickets for the four-day festival featuring Dave Mathews Band, John Mayer and rapper Snoop Dogg? Organizers were mum on the details Monday, but were anxious to get one point across.

“There will be a Rothbury in 2009,” said Carrie Lombardi, publicist for promoter Don Strasburg of AEG’s Denver office. Beyond that, she couldn’t say where Rothbury might be held, or how long it might stretch. The festival is named after the small Michigan town where it’s hosted – so changing the name might prove difficult.

There’s also the possibility that AEG could work out a deal with Double JJ’s creditors, if the banks do in fact foreclose on the property – or possibly buy the property outright. In past interviews with *Venues Today*, Strauss said he envisioned a number of festivals at the site that could take advantage of the staging and fencing from Rothbury. AEG uses a similar model in Indio, Calif., for the Coachella and Stagecoach Festivals.

In the meantime, Ranch majority owner Robert Lipsitz is facing an \$18.7 million lawsuit from BankFirst after defaulting in February on a 2005 loan, according to a legal opinion released by Judge Maloney.

“[BankFirst] has demonstrated a strong likelihood of success on the merits” of its foreclosure lawsuit, Maloney wrote in his July 11 judgment putting Rothbury funds in the court account, which he said was done to avoid “irreparable harm” on behalf of the bank. The amount of money involved has not been disclosed.

The Double JJ ranch is also facing a lawsuit from SSB Mortgage for non-payment of a \$3.2 million loan.

On the other side of the Pond, Live Nation has acquired the [Main Square Festival](#) in France, bringing the promoter giant’s portfolio of festivals around the world to 30.

Live Nation bought the festival from French promoters Jackie Lombard, France Leduc and Herman Schueremans, who have agreed to stay on board to help run the event.

The three-year-old festival takes place on the first weekend of July, and usually runs for three days, averaging 25,000 people a day. This year’s headliners included Radiohead, Chemical Brothers and Mika.

“Festivals are going to be one of the largest growth areas for our international portfolio,” said Live Nation’s Alan Ridgeway. “Live Nation has decided that festivals are going to be one of the primary avenues to grow our presence and new ticketing platform throughout Europe.”

The acquisition also includes other events organized by France Leduc on the same site, which have already included a July 7 concert by Celine Dion and the Aug. 14 Rock En France Festival, headlined by Metallica. — Dave Brooks

Interviewed for this story: Carrie Lombardi, (303) 413-8308; Alan Ridgeway, (44) 20-7009-3274

TRAVELOG UNDERSTANDING THE GREAT PARADIGM SHIFT

ALSD Executive Director Bill Dorsey



MIAMI – The growth of the Association of Luxury Suite Directors parallels the overall growth of premium seating sales, explained ALSD executive director Bill Dorsey on July 2 at the annual gathering of luxury sales and service staff in a presentation titled “The Gathering Storm.”

ALSD was created in 1990, Dorsey explained, with only 13 members at a time when premium seats only accounted for three percent of building inventory. Now in 2008, ALSD has over 1,000 members and premium seats represent 20 percent of all inventory.

“Premium seating has become one of the fastest growing revenue sources in the U.S., with ticketing revenue often equaling between one-third and two-thirds of total revenue,” Dorsey explained.

But that growth comes with a cost, said Dorsey, who explained that premium sales staffs now face a greater challenge than ever.

“The business model we’ve established to pay for many of these privately financed facilities relies heavily on raising prices and we’re reaching a point where suite prices are higher than ever,” he said. Dorsey cited two new facilities coming online in the New York market: Yankees Stadium in New York, with top seats selling at \$2,500 per game, and the new Meadowlands in East Rutherford, N.J., with game-day suites going for \$1 million a pop. Suites for the Dallas Cowboys’ stadiums are also expected to break pricing records.

Couple that with increased premium inventory from soccer and minor league teams in the face of a shrinking economy and “we begin to see a situation that resembles the perfect storm for the premium street industry,” explained Dorsey.

What are the implications of a declining economy? Andy Dolich, COO of the San Francisco 49ers, said the first indicators come from rapidly declining renewal rates.

“In some cases, 70 percent of customers are not renewing, while others are asking for shorter lease terms,” Dolich said. “Just a few years back, the median contract was five years. Now most suite-holders are hesitant to lock into anything beyond three years.”

Dolich also cited a survey conducted by Turnkey Sports and Entertainment, where 70 percent of ALSD members responded they believed the economic downturn would have a negative overall impact on spending.

So what to do? Dorsey offered several solutions, the first starting with a re-imaging of the facility.

“A very common solution is to repurpose several empty suites into new spaces for your suite-level customers,” he said. The Miami Dolphins recently launched the Legends Club, a high-end bar overlooking the field. The Target Center in Minneapolis took several suites and created the Target Center Club Cambria, a restaurant and bar decorated with Cambria natural quartz countertops, bar tops, tabletops, wall cladding and tile.

“These new spaces create the opportunity to earn revenue through naming rights and food and beverage,” Dorsey said. “Your clients will appreciate the creation of a space where they can interact and enjoy your facility.”

Dorsey also warned against what he described as “fighting a war of attrition,” by avoiding making cuts to event day sales and service staff.

The other step ahead is embracing technology, Dorsey explained. More venues are emphasizing partnering with secondary markets to create an avenue for suiteholders to sell tickets they aren’t able to use. He also encouraged teams to invest in ROI software and database marketing techniques, which allow sales staff to more closely analyze how their clientele use the suites to make money and better understand who is using the premium spaces.

“And when all else fails, it helps to have a team that wins the World Series or a Super Bowl,” Dorsey said, “because there are some paradigms that never change.”
— Dave Brooks

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