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VT PULSE

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Quote of the Week

"We're operators. We acquire things, we grow our businesses, but we don't sell anything."

— Kenneth Feld on his company's acquisition of Live Nation Motor Sports.

Greetings April,

Welcome to VT Pulse, your weekly guide to the "News Behind the Headlines." September is a busy month for our staff. Linda Deckard visited Tulsa, Okla. for the grand opening of the BOK Center and spent a day at the California State Fair in Sacramento this month, while writer Dave Brooks is preparing to travel to Kansas City, Mo. to attend the Arena Managers Conference. He'll file his report on the conference in next week's VT Pulse.

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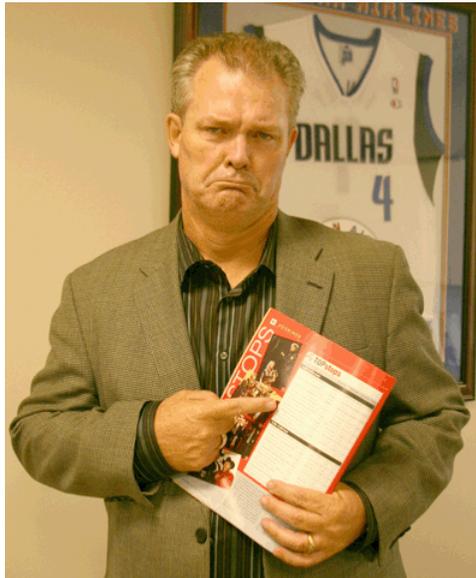
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VT NEWS

DEALS

[FELD REVVED UP OVER GLOBAL POTENTIAL OF MOTO DEAL](#)

SHORT TAKES

>> ARENA AUTHORITY COMPLETES FINANCING – The Louisville (Ky.) Arena Authority has completed a deal to sell \$349.2 million in bonds to fund a new home for the University of Louisville basketball Cardinals. The financing keeps the arena, expected to be a new downtown activity center with sports, concerts and other events, on track to open in Fall 2010.
Contact: Jim Host, (502) 583-2188

MOTÖRHEAD ROCKS WWE'S UNFORGIVEN – Hard rock legends Motörhead have been enlisted to provide their new song "Rock Out" as the official theme music for World Wrestling Entertainment's Sept. 7 pay-per-view event, Unforgiven. "Rock Out" is the lead track off Motörhead's new album, Motörizer.
Contact: Jennifer McIntosh, (203) 359-5131



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Dave Brooks

Only Kenneth Feld could unite Grave Digger with these two circus stars. The legendary promoter has acquired Monster Jam's parent company Live Nation Motor Sports in a \$200 million deal.



With the purchase of Live Nation Motor Sports, henceforth known as Feld Entertainment Motor Sports, Kenneth Feld, president and CEO of Feld Entertainment, expanded his family entertainment empire by about 20 percent in terms of fan base. More significantly, it's an international fan base.

"What I really like about it is you don't have to understand a [spoken] word, it's a total adrenaline rush so you can do it anywhere in the world. It has great international appeal," Feld told Venues Today.

Feld acquired Live Nation's Motor Sports division for an aggregate purchase price of \$205 million, consisting of \$175 million in cash, plus a performance based earn out of up to \$30 million. The deal, in the works since February according to Feld, was finalized Sept. 9 after the stock market closed.

The deal marks the sale of Live Nation final non-music property, and the publicly traded company will use the net proceeds to pay creditors and invest in its core music business.

"The acquisition of our division for our 208 employees is like winning the lottery," said Charlie Mancuso, president of the Motor Sports Division. "Being owned by Live Nation was an enjoyable experience, but it's been no secret that when Michael Rapino took over in 2005, he was looking to sell our division."

This latest purchase marks the seventh time the motorsports property has changed hands. Formed in 1965 as Pace Motorsports, the company was first partially sold to SRO Entertainment, and then sold to Madison Square Garden Entertainment before being bought back by Pace in 1996. A year later the company was sold to Bob Sillerman's SFX, which was then sold to Clear Channel and eventually spun off to Live Nation.

"Our new associates in the motor sports division should have a sense of stability because the one thing is, I've never sold anything," Feld said. "We're operators. We acquire things, we grow our businesses, but we don't sell anything."

The plan is to retain all the motor sports division personnel, including Mancuso, and maintain the offices in Aurora, Ill. "They are actually pretty similar cultures," Feld said.

Mancuso said he's looking forward to working for a privately held company, while Feld noted his next step is to "learn the business, go to all the events, see what it is. We think it's a great opportunity for our company. It's more family entertainment, it's what we know. It's good; it's wholesome. If you go to those events and look at the fans, they're like our customers, families. It skews a little more male, that's the biggest difference."

For arena and stadium managers, this simply means "now Feld Entertainment is going to bring more attractions than ever before. It's another chunk of stability in their annual schedule they can count on," Feld said. "They know we stand behind quality and we run good events. It's security."

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**Melbourne
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Company** -
Technical Team

**Santa Cruz (Calif.)
Civic Auditorium** -
Box Office
Representative

**Papermill
Playhouse,
Millburn, N.J.** -
Manager Ticketing

Feld Entertainment shows had been playing to 25 million people a year. With the new acquisition, that number jumps to something over 30 million a year, Feld said.

In Venues Today's 2008 Family Show Producers chart (Venues Today, June 2008), Feld Entertainment, founded in 1967, was listed as operating with an average ticket price of \$24.50, producing 1,700 shows in the U.S. and 1,000 internationally, with 18 units touring, including Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey, Disney on Ice, Disney Live!, High School Musical: The Ice Tour and Doodlebops. Feld predicted that within two years, 50 percent of his product would perform overseas.

Live Nation Motor Sports, founded in 1965, listed an average ticket price of \$43.50, producing 250 shows and 600 performances. They had 12 units touring, including Monster Energy AMA Supercross; U.S. Open Supercross; Monster Jam; Thunder Nationals; Toyota AMA Arenacross Series; Freestyle Motocross; International Hot Rod Association (IHRA) sanctioned events, including Knoll Gas Nitro Jam, Thunder Jam and Street Warriorz; Professional Bull Riders Built Ford Tough Series and Professional Bull Riders Enterprise Series. The company's growth also emphasized international shows.

Comparing the two properties, Feld noted they are very similar businesses, entertaining families and encompassing major logistics moving equipment and people from city to city, playing arenas and stadiums. "You have a consumer product. A big difference is there's a huge sponsorship piece for motor sports and also the television aspect. They produce over 100 hours of television each year on CBS and the Speed Channel."

With the sale of its Motor Sports division, Live Nation has sold assets with a total aggregate sale price of over \$465 million since 2006. In addition to Motor Sports, the company has sold substantially all of its North American theatrical business, substantially all of its sports representation business, its San Francisco office building and a number of non-core venues in the United Kingdom and the United States.

For the acquisition of Live Nation Motor Sports, Deutsche Bank Securities Inc. acted as financial advisor, and Fulbright & Jaworski, L.L.P. served as outside legal counsel to Feld Entertainment. In addition, Bank of America, N.A. led a group of seven banks to provide financing to Feld Entertainment in connection with the transaction. — Linda Deckard and Dave Brooks

*Interviewed for this story: Kenneth Feld, (703) 448-4045;
Charlie Mancuso, (630) 566-6100*



**ARENAS
BOK CENTER PERFORMANCE LIVES UP TO ITS ICONIC
LOOK**

John Bolton, general manager for SMG, tours BOK Center, Tulsa, Okla., just hours before the opening Eagles concert. By 7 p.m., they were lined up in that same lobby for food, drink and merchandise. (VT Photos)

Services

Colorado Ballet,
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Greater Richmond
(Va.) Convention
Center - Director of
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Greater Richmond
(Va.) Convention
Center - Director of
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VenuWorks,
Inc./Fairfield (Iowa)
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Convention Center
- Executive Director

[VIEW THE FULL
LISTINGS](#)



TULSA, Okla. — The grand opening of the iconic, \$200 million, 18,000-seat BOK Center was a dream come true for the visionaries and operators of the new arena that dominates the downtown landscape here, fulfilling its role as landmark architecture per Cesar Pelli's design.

The first major public concert, the Eagles' 13-truck, six-bus, sold out show on Sept. 6, went off without a hitch. "It's functional," declared John Bolton, general manager here for SMG.

The operating budget for BOK Center is \$3 million, with a projected \$200,000 net. Bolton anticipates 100 major events, including 40 sports events and 16 concerts. The venue is expected to break even.

Though the building has no parking under its control, the 4,500 spaces in the immediate vicinity seemed to suffice. There were no noticeable traffic issues and the crowd was in the building in plenty of time to line up for food, drink and merchandise.

Danny Eaton, AEG Live South, who promoted the Eagles concert, said he always goes into an arena opening date expecting a glitch and doubled up on staff (three total) in preparation.

It wasn't necessary. "It's a fine place; the staff couldn't have been better," Eaton drawled. "They sold every ticket in 20 minutes." The paid count was about 14,000, he said.

Bolton said the food and beverage per cap for the Eagles concert was \$12.38. Savor SMG is the concessionaire. Merchandise sales set a tour record for the Eagles 2008 outing, he said.

The Savor menu basics included: large soda, \$4; regular soda, \$2.75; bottled water, \$3; soft drinks, \$3.50; milk, \$2; large draft beer, \$6.50; regular draft, \$5.50; microbrew draft, \$6; jumbo hot dog, brat or Polish dog, \$4; super nachos, \$6; popcorn, \$3.50; jumbo soft pretzel, \$2.75; chips, \$2; and ice cream, \$3. Savor also sublets several spaces to local restaurateurs such as Village on the Square, In the Raw sushi, Mezzio's Pizza and Oklahoma Style BBQ.

The grand opening week involved 11 events, all geared to attracting a different portion of the local populace. One event drew 30,000. The operating and production budget for opening events was \$150,000, Bolton said.

In addition, SMG staff has spoken at or participated in over 10,000 meetings throughout the city and region over the past

year promoting the BOK Center, said Tim Vogt, operations director.

The plan is to have free concerts before every major concert going forward. SMG has set aside a budget of \$25,000 for those festivities, with sponsors covering part of the cost. "It will grow," Bolton said. He has 10 scheduled this fall, weather permitting. Admiral Twin played outdoors before the Eagles concert.

Tickets.com has the ticketing deal. Glenn Ezell is the third party merchandiser.

The venue has 38 suites and 20 loge terraces (\$17,500 for four seats, every event), and 681 club seats, all sold out. Last Wednesday, they added a new offering, 40 loge seats, which are bar stools along the back counter of the loge terrace. They were priced \$3,500 per seat, good for 25 events a year, not sports, which are selected by the building, and sold on a three, five or seven-year basis. That brought in an additional \$140,000, Bolton said.

It was obvious from the start the public wanted to be involved. Suites sold in seven days; loge boxes in two hours; club seats in two-three days, Bolton said.

The iconic stature of the arena helped to loosen sponsor dollars, added Vogt. "It's not a cookie cutter arena," Vogt said. "Everyone wants to be associated with it." Sponsorships total \$28 million and counting.

Vision 2025 paid for the venue with an incremental sales tax. The next project for Vision 2025 is to invest \$50 million in the Tulsa Convention Center, adding a 32,000 square foot ballroom and 12 meeting rooms, and new video boards, scoreboards and dressing rooms for the convention center arena.

The Central Hockey League team kicks off its season Oct. 25 with hopes of averaging 5,600 attendance. The af2 team in Tulsa has been the most successful in the league, previously drawing in excess of 5,500 at the convention center arena, Vogt said. Conference USA is scheduled for next year, with the possibility of both men's and women's games, the latter to be hosted at the convention center arena.

SMG took over operation of the Tulsa Convention Center on July 1 last year and was able to bring it in \$1 million under the \$3 million operating budget. Bolton and Vogt said the cost savings was largely in labor and utilities. Energy conservation was huge and fulltime employees went from 45 at its highest level to 25. Overall, between the two venues, SMG now has 75 full timers.

Bolton arrived on the scene in March 2007. Vogt arrived in June 2007. The fact SMG was operating the existing venue made it possible to staff up and build a team well in advance of opening BOK Center, Bolton said.

The arena was slightly outside the LEEDs certification bubble, having been designed before that was high on the architectural agenda. SMG and the city are doing what they can, including using electric or propane powered carts inside the building, which means plug-ins have to be scheduled, and corn syrup plates and bowls and any other recyclable Savor can incorporate. They also have recycling bins for the public, which worked better than anticipated.

"This is a custom building, from basement to roof," Vogt said. Back of house is "like walking into your living room, it's so easy to access." The venue has no corners and the exterior walls slope in at a 10-degree angle.

Is anything lacking? "I'd like more storage," Vogt said. — Linda Deckard

Interviewed for this story: John Bolton and Tim Vogt, (918) 894-4210; Danny Eaton, (972) 343-2424

BOOKINGS

NY STATE FAIR LIAISON WITH LIVE NATION A SUCCESS

The Jonas Brothers performed a sold-out concert at the New York State Fair as part of an agreement with Live Nation.



When Joe LaGuardia retired last fall as marketing director and entertainment booker at the New York State Fair in Syracuse, officials decided to replace his concert duties with events conglomerate Live Nation as opposed to an in-house booker.

“There were a couple of issues,” said Jessica Chittenden, director of communications for the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, which produces the fair. “No. 1 was timing. We needed to act quickly to find somebody or an entity to be able to bring concerts to the New York State Fair.”

Plus, the state of New York already had contracts with Live Nation for two other venues - the Jones Beach Concert Series at the Jones Beach Amphitheater and Park, and the Saratoga Performing Arts Center in Saratoga Springs.

Going by the numbers, the decision appears to have been a good one. The 2008 New York State Fair grandstand line-up had three sell-outs, sold 90,000 tickets compared to last year’s 66,000 and grossed more than \$1 million more than the previous year while spending slightly less on acts.

“One of the biggest advantages Live Nation brought to the fair this year was the strength of our outdoor tours and the volume of talent that we buy throughout the summer that plays outdoor venues,” said John Huff, senior vice president of Live Nation’s northeast region, located in Saratoga Springs, N.Y.

Fred Pierce, who took over LaGuardia’s public relations duties at the New York State Fair, said officials were very pleased with the outcome of the grandstand, which featured three virtual sellouts with only single, obstructed-view seats remaining: Jonas Brothers, Rascal Flatts with Taylor Swift, and a triple bill of Journey, Heart and Cheap Trick.

The Mohegan Sun Grandstand seats about 17,000 concert-goers depending on configuration.

When Live Nation negotiated with the New York State Fair for a one-year contract, Live Nation officials originally wanted a percentage of the talent fee. However, agriculture department officials preferred to pay Live Nation \$6.50 per ticket sold, which should amount to approximately \$585,000 when all the numbers are added up. Live Nation also requested that the fair set aside \$15,000 per show for the TV and radio buys. Live Nation spent about \$3.5 million buying the acts, which Huff estimates to be about \$100,000 less than last year’s payouts.

“If we didn’t spend that money, they kept it,” Huff said. “It was not part of our fee. And we didn’t spend all the money. If they sold well or sold out without spending the full \$15,000, we didn’t need to. I think that’s attributable to our team to leverage those dollars to the best levels.”

Whether or not Live Nation will book the shows next year remains to be seen, Huff said.

Carey Harveycutter, president of the International Entertainment Buyers Assn. as well as executive director of

Civic Facilities in Salem, Va., said he has not heard a lot of discussion among members about replacing a fair's in-house talent booker with Live Nation.

"I think it could be a very interesting direction to go," Harveycutter said. "In some cases, you eliminate some of the fixed costs of having a person on staff. It may be an opportunity to secure talent you couldn't secure otherwise."

He noted that Live Nation would be able to route amphitheater tours into the New York State Fair. Huff agreed, saying that Live Nation had coordinated not only with the Saratoga Performing Arts Center but also the Darien Lake Performing Arts Center.

"That works well and brings the best talent to the fair," he said.

However, LaGuardia also had the ability to do some routing of his own, with the Great Allentown (Pa.) Fair and the Champlain Valley Exposition in Essex Junction, Vt. The three fairs often worked together to route acts during the strategically-placed, similarly-timed events.

"I am troubled and saddened to hear about some of the developments in Syracuse," said Champlain Valley Exposition GM David Grimm in a statement. "However, our relationship with Live Nation is good and we look forward to continuing this in the future."

Bonnie Brosious, marketing director and talent booker at the Great Allentown Fair, also said that the Live Nation officials "are aware that Allentown, Syracuse and Essex line up."

She also noted that few fairs employ someone like LaGuardia.

"Joe LaGuardia often quipped that we independent talent buyers are the dinosaurs of the industry because it gets increasingly more difficult to survive in the current climate of the conglomerates," she said in a statement. "Given this reference, I know that my fellow talent buyers would agree that Joe's experience and accomplishments made him the Tyrannosaurus Rex of our group. He loomed large in our ranks because he was so respected by all of the agents, managers and artists he worked with." - Mary Wade Burnside

Interviewed for this story: Jessica Chittenden, (518) 457-3136; John Huff, (518) 583-3045; Fred Pierce, (315) 487-7711; David Grimm, (802) 878-5545; Bonnie Brosious, (610) 433-7541.

STADIUMS INDY USHERS IN NEW ERA OF STADIUMS WITH LUCAS OIL OPENING

Inside Lucas Oil Stadium, Indianapolis



The Indianapolis Colts opened the Lucas Oil Stadium Sunday in a home game against the Chicago Bears — a rematch of the 2007 XLI Super Bowl in Miami. While the Bears were able to spoil the Colts' grand opening in a 29-13 pummeling, the new HKS-designed stadium, with its retractable roof and 137 spacious luxury suites, was the toast of the town.

The new stadium replaces the Colts RCA Dome and includes

seven locker rooms, exhibit space and a dual two-level club lounge. In 2010, the stadium will be connected to an expanded convention center, along with several hotels and entertainment destinations.

Lucas Oil Stadium is part of a new generation of facilities that will include the Dallas Cowboys new stadium, along with the new Meadowland Stadium in East Rutherford N.J., home to both the New York Jets and the New York Giants. With its retractable roof and giant sliding window in the North End Zone, Lucas Oil Field is joining its contemporaries in controlling how natural elements affect the game day experience.

Mike Fox, stadium manager for the Marion County Capital Improvement Board, which owns the facility, said the venue was designed so that fans could see a striking view of downtown Indianapolis. While most roofs are designed with overlapping panels that trace the field, "we placed the paneling on the long side of the facility so they dramatically stack at the highest pitch."

But unlike Dallas or New York, Indianapolis is a small market and the \$720 million stadium will draw on one of the smallest population centers in the league. While team owner Jim Irsay has contributed \$100 million to the project, the bulk of construction was funded by taxpayers, and the Colts have agreed to stay in the city for 30 years as part of their lease agreement. The Colts also receive \$120 million from the naming rights deal with Lucas Oil, revenue from 13 naming rights sponsorships and all game-day revenue, with the city responsible for stadium operating and maintenance costs, including game-day expenses; and half of all revenue from non-Colts events, which could amount to up to a further US \$3.5 million a year.

"We're operating in a very challenging market size and the new stadium was a critical component to keep our team economically competitive by NFL standards," said Pete Ward, the Colts senior executive vice president. All 63,000 seats including the 7,100 club seats are sold out with season tickets, while the 26 mini-suites were booked at \$40,000 a season. The stadium's 98 luxury suites sold out at \$74,500 per season, while 10 mid-field super suites sold out at \$235,000.

While the retractable roof can close to give the facility an arena feel, the new stadium also includes a curtaining system allowing the building to change capacity between 63,000 and 41,000, said Fox. He added that the facility also offers a concert configuration that drops down to 15,000. Basketball games can be played in the round for 70,000 seats.

"In order for this concept to work, we needed to have a large amount of customizable premium space that we could configure for different events," he said, adding that Kenny Chesney will play the first concert on Sept. 13 for 54,000 people.

Lucas Oil hosts two 14,000+-sq.-ft. private-level lounges and two street-level restaurants of similar size. The stadium also boasts a 6,800-sq.-ft. team store on the street level, and a 1,400-sq.-ft. team store on the upper concourse.

Contemporary Services Corporation is providing security for the facility, while Centerplate has the food contract. Ticketmaster is the primary ticket provider.

Beyond football, the stadium has a contract with the NCAA to host the Final Four event every five years through 2039, and Indianapolis will be the site of the 2012 Super Bowl. - Dave Brooks

Interviewed for this article: Mike Fox, (317) 262-8600; Pete Ward, (317) 297-2658

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 Aug. 12, 2008.

CELINE REIGNS AS QUEEN AFTER FIRST 12 GIGS PULL \$36M

15,001 or More Seats	10,001-15,000 Seats	5,001-10,000 Seats	5,000 or Less Seats
<p>1) Celine Dion Gross Sales: \$23,135,338; Venue: Bell Centre, Montreal, Quebec; Attendance: 167,957; Ticket Range: \$183.37-\$60.97; Promoter: AEG Live, Concerts West; Dates: Aug. 15-16, 19-20, 23, 25, 31, Sept. 1; No. of Shows: 8</p>	<p>1) Andrea Bocelli Gross Sales: \$1,636,208; Venue: Brisbane (Australia) Entertainment Centre; Attendance: 7,152; Ticket Range: \$774.96-\$118; Promoter: Serendipity Entertainment; Dates: Aug. 22; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p>1) Gipsy Kings Gross Sales: \$679,429; Venue: Greek Theatre, Los Angeles; Attendance: 8,403; Ticket Range: \$120.75-\$39.75; Promoter: Nederlander; Dates: Aug. 15-16; No. of Shows: 2</p> <p>2) Avril Lavigne Gross Sales: \$576,295; Venue: Mile One Centre, St. Johns, Newfoundland; Attendance: 11,475; Ticket Range: \$51.03-\$46.32; Promoter: Live Nation, Gillett Entertainment; Dates: Aug. 12-13; No. of Shows: 2</p> <p>3) Jenni Rivera Gross Sales: \$517,675; Venue: Nokia Theatre L.A. Live; Attendance: 6,882; Ticket Range: \$125-\$35; Promoter: AEG Live, Goldenvoice; Dates: Aug. 16; No. of Shows: 1</p> <p>4) The Allman Brothers Band, Ratdog Gross Sales: \$371,008; Venue: Charter One Pavilion, Chicago; Attendance: 7,290; Ticket Range: \$61-\$25.50; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: Aug. 28; No. of Shows: 1</p> <p>5) Disturbed Gross Sales: \$355,575; Venue: Hordern Pavillion, Sydney, Australia; Attendance: 5,301; Ticket Range: \$72.51; Promoter: Frontier Touring Company; Dates: Sept. 3; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p>1) Chris Rock Gross Sales: \$946,233; Venue: The Colosseum at Caesars Palace, Las Vegas; Attendance: 8,145; Ticket Range: \$175-\$95; Promoter: AEG Live, Concerts West; Dates: Aug. 29-30; No. of Shows: 2</p> <p>2) Mamma Mia! Gross Sales: \$817,279; Venue: Tampa (Fla.) Bay Performing Arts Center; Attendance: 12,584; Ticket Range: \$76.50-\$22.50; Promoter: In-House; Dates: Aug. 20-22; No. of Shows: 7</p> <p>3) Chris Rock Gross Sales: \$593,962; Venue: Orpheum, Vancouver, British Columbia; Attendance: 8,277; Ticket Range: \$79.98-\$55.65; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: Aug. 24-26; No. of Shows: 3</p> <p>4) Kathy Griffin Gross Sales: \$406,422; Venue: Fox Theatre, Atlanta; Attendance: 8,146; Ticket Range: \$47-\$37; Promoter: AEG Live; Dates: Sept. 5; No. of Shows: 2</p> <p>5) Bob Dylan Gross Sales: \$350,659; Venue: Santa Barbara (Calif.) Bowl; Attendance: 4,450; Ticket Range: \$98-\$56; Promoter: Nederlander; Dates: Sept. 7; No. of Shows: 1</p>
<p>2) Celine Dion Gross Sales: \$4,776,796; Venue: Air Canada Centre, Toronto, Ontario; Attendance: 36,122; Ticket Range: \$184.54-\$60.97; Promoter: AEG Live, Concerts West; Dates: Aug. 27-28; No. of Shows: 2</p>	<p>2) Andrea Bocelli Gross Sales: \$1,069,096; Venue: Vector Arena, Auckland, New Zealand; Attendance: 7,727; Ticket Range: \$529.35-\$105.87; Promoter: Serendipity Entertainment; Dates: Aug. 20; No. of Shows: 1</p> <p>3) Bruce Springsteen & The E Street Band Gross Sales: \$1,028,645; Venue: Jacksonville (Fla.) Veterans Memorial Arena; Attendance: 11,762; Ticket Range: \$95-\$29; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: Aug. 15; No. of Shows: 1</p>		
<p>3) Celine Dion Gross Sales: \$3,813,519; Venue: TD Banknorth Garden, Boston; Attendance: 32,493; Ticket Range: \$187.50-\$49.50; Promoter: AEG Live, Concerts West, Live Nation; Dates: Aug. 12-13; No. of Shows: 2</p>	<p>4) Kenny Chesney Gross Sales: \$802,899; Venue: Jacksonville (Fla.) Veterans Memorial Arena; Attendance: 12,262; Ticket Range: \$71.50-\$38.50; Promoter: AEG Live, Mischell Productions, The Messina Group; Dates: Aug. 30; No. of Shows: 1</p>		
<p>4) Neil Diamond Gross Sales: \$3,191,648; Venue: Fenway Park, Boston; Attendance: 35,748; Ticket Range: \$99.50-\$49.50; Promoter: AEG Live, Concerts West; Dates: Aug. 23; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p>5) Crue Fest Gross Sales: \$525,956; Venue: MTS Centre, Winnipeg, Manitoba; Attendance: 8,630; Ticket</p>		
<p>5) Dave Matthews Band Gross Sales: \$3,162,624; Venue: Gorge Amphitheatre, George, Wash.; Attendance: 59,142; Ticket</p>			

Range: \$70- Range: \$74.36-
 \$48.50; Promoter: \$36.95; Promoter:
 Live Nation; Live Nation;
 Dates: Aug. 28- Dates: Aug. 17;
 30; No. of Shows: No. of Shows: 1
 3

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THE BEAT

FAIRS & FESTIVALS

CAL EXPO BEATS THE HEAT AND THE STATE BUDGET DEADLOCK TO POST AN INCREASE

Norb Bartosik, manager of the California State Fair & Expo, Sacramento, presents Jessica Simpson with a Golden Bear; Cal Expo vendors include Tony Fiori, Ray Cammack Shows; Dan and Debbie Ginn; and Nick Nicora, Ovations Food



Services.

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Uncertainty dogged this year's California State Fair, Aug. 15-Sept. 1, as Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and the legislature continued to slog through budgeting without resolution in a government town and the heat rolled in triple digits, but the results are in on the fair — and it's all good.

Uncertainty however, is still in the air as Norb Bartosik, fair manager, awaits word on 2009 dates for the Orange County Fair, Costa Mesa, which precedes his fair and the Los Angeles County Fair, Pomona, which follows it, all three with Ray Cammack Shows on the midway. If those two fairs extend their dates, with Orange County going one more week and Pomona starting one week earlier, Bartosik might need to reconsider his dates and vendors, including the carnival, may have to set new priorities. The "route" may be disrupted. Steve Beazley, manager of the Orange County Fair, hoped to hear a decision at the Sept. 25 board meeting and noted his dates, even with another week, would not conflict with Sacramento, though the jump could be as little as five days.

Aside from 2009 dates, Bartosik had the numbers in for the 2008 fair, which was themed "The California State Fair Goes Hollywood."

Attendance: 795,624, up 56,000 from 2007, with 540,618 paid, up 18,118. The fair was 18 days long, compared to 16 in 2007, remaining open on Mondays and featuring the return of thoroughbred racing.

Revenues: \$4,256,711 from the gate; \$1,202,535 from parking. The food and drink gross, including vendors, the carnival and Ovations Food Services, was \$8,467,545. The fair's commissions on food totaled \$2,055,112. Commercial space sales brought in \$1,711,129. Sponsorships were one of the few downturns, but still brought in \$2,615,097.

Ray Cammack Shows: \$3,587,269 ride gross. The fair received \$1,160,212. The fair receives a flat foot rental on games, but RCS used its Fun Pass, rather than cash, on games for the first time this year and reported gross sales of \$1,129,361.

The last Sunday of the fair, when the weather broke and state workers did get paid despite threats of a rollback to minimum wage until a budget was approved, drew a record 103,000 and the carnival grossed \$459,384 that day alone, Bartosik said. He definitely saw people looking for bargains and there were plenty of ride and admission promotions to accommodate them. A highly successful one was \$5 admission before 5 p.m. and free parking Monday through Thursday.

The fair spent \$600,000 on name talent, about the same as last year. Bartosik books the shows. The line-up included Smash Mouth, Weird Al Yankovic, Air Supply, Jessica Simpson, Chicago, Grand Funk Railroad, The Doodlebops Live, The Fab Four, Vanessa Hudgens, The Low Rider Band, Al Jarreau, Cristian Castro, Natasha Beddingfield and Gary Allan. A small portion of tickets, 1,500 seats, dubbed the Golden Circle, sold for prices varying from \$10 to \$40, depending on the act. Bartosik said the fair recouped \$256,820 from those ducats.

The Salute to Hollywood theme was carried out throughout the fair, with red carpets, a 3/4th grade back lot built in house for \$100,000, and star-studded appearances, like Herbie the Car and the horse that played Seabiscuit in the movie. "The theme makes a

difference if you carry it through the fair," Bartosik believes.

The fair introduced print-at-home ticketing for the first time this year, which Bartosik said went very well.

The year-round operating budget for the fair is \$30 million. Fairtime is \$15-\$16 million. Another uncertainty on Bartosik's plate is the possibility an arena will be built at Cal Expo for the Sacramento Kings of the National Basketball Association. "We're halfway through 180 days of exclusive negotiations," he said. Arena reps attended this year's fair.

The fair occupies 345 acres. The arena would occupy a 20-acre footprint. The fair takes up 120-140 acres. - Linda Deckard

Interviewed for this story: Norb Bartosik, (916) 263-3247; Steve Beazley, (714) 708-1551

NY STATE FAIR REACHES BEYOND SYRACUSE WITH CONCERTS, ATTRACTIONS

Scenes from the NY State



Fair

Attendance dipped slightly at the New York State Fair, Syracuse, but increased spending and higher paid attendance helped make up for it, said Public Relations Director Fred Pierce.

Attendance: 927,871 at the Aug. 21-Sept. 1 fair, compared to last year's 936,399.

Revenues: A concerted effort to give fewer patrons a free pass resulted in a \$1,569,355 gate revenue over last year's \$1,495,376, with paid attendance rising from 518,415 last year to 521,949. Admission remained the same at \$10 at the gate and \$6 in advance.

"We've been tightening the controls on non-paid admission," Pierce said. "This is the second year (paid attendance) has gone up."

Advance paid attendance was up 5 percent and at the gate, 12 percent, he said.

"For example, elected officials and other guests who typically got in free, that number was cut over 37 percent this year," Pierce said. "Last year, 2,749 passes were given out, and this year, it was 1,724. You shouldn't have to know somebody or have some kind of connection to afford the fair."

Concerts: Officials also were pleased at three virtual concert sellouts in the 17,000-seat Mohegan Sun Grandstand, with the Jonas Brothers, Rascal Flatts with Taylor Swift and a triple bill of Journey, Heart and Cheap Trick filling all seats except single ones with an obstructed view.

Live Nation won a one-year contract to book the concerts after former in-house booker and public relations manager Joe LaGuardia retired, said Jessica Chittenden, director of communications for the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, which produces the fair.

John Huff, senior vice president for Live Nation's northeast region, headquartered in Saratoga Springs, N.Y., said about \$3.5 million was spent buying the acts. Pierce said the concert gross was at an all-time high of \$4,663,809, beating last year's \$3,576,660.

"The higher-priced tickets went very quickly," Pierce said. "We knew when they announced the line-up that this was a killer line-up. We were pleased with the caliber of talent they got. And ticket sales don't lie."

Other acts included Daughtry, Boston and Styx, Toby Keith, ZZ Top with Brooks & Dunn, the Goo Goo Dolls with Gavin DeGraw, Def Leppard and Vanessa Hudgens with Corbin Bleu. Tickets cost slightly less than last year, Pierce said, with Rascal Flatts tickets costing the most at \$66.50 and the Jonas Brothers commanding \$55 and \$45. The tickets also included fair admission.

Midway: Sales on the Strates Shows midway were up more than 15 percent, Pierce said,

although a slight increase in pay-one-price wristbands to cover increasing fuel costs accounted for part of that.

Wristbands cost \$25 but many patrons took advantage of a \$5 off coupon from a local car dealership, Pepsi and Coca-Cola on different days. There were 70 rides on the midway.

Marketing: The fair hired a new ad agency that Pierce said “injected a lot of energy into their whole campaign. The fair’s new slogan was “Fun Is In the Air” and played to the idea that having fun locally might be a good idea in the face of a bad economy.

Media also was concentrated more outside of Syracuse than in the past, rather than just in Syracuse. “If you are living within the county the fair happens, it already gets good media coverage and people know it’s in town,” Pierce said.

Parking: Cost \$5 and patrons were able to use their EZ Passes for tolls and other highway fees for the parking.

“It was a quick way for people to get in and out and it eliminates the time it takes to fumble for cash and talk to a human,” Pierce said. “They just flash their EZ Pass and it credits their account and you are in.

“It started last year and it was a success and it worked well again.”

Next year’s dates: Aug. 27-Sept. 7. -Mary Wade Burnside

Interviewed for this story: Jessica Chittenden, (518) 457-3136; John Huff, (518) 583-3045; Fred Pierce, (315) 487-7711.

DEALS

HOK GOES INDIE, AEG SIGNS SAN DIEGO SPORTS ARENA

HOK Sport Venue Event has announced plans to spin off from its parent company. The 13 senior principals of the HOK SVE outfit have agreed to buy out the HOK Group shareholders, separating the firms that had worked together for 25 years.

The Aug. 28 deal will have no impact on current clients or projects from either division, and both firms will continue to collaborate on projects, explained Joe Spear, senior principal of HOK Sport.

“We’re going to continue to operate out of the same office and represent the same clients,” he said. “There will be very little change from a client’s perspective.”

Spear wouldn’t say how much HOK paid to buy out its parent company, but added that HOK Sport reported \$154 million in 2007 billings, up 22 percent from \$126 million in 2006.

HOK SVE represents about 20 percent of the company’s total revenue, serving as the lead architect on the new New York Yankees Stadium, Washington Nationals Stadium, the O2 World Arena in Berlin and new arenas in Pittsburgh and Orlando.

HOK has retained a financial advisor and is expected to complete the buyout by the end of 2008. The next step in the process is for HOK SVE to develop a new name and logo.

“That will take place soon after the first of the year,” Spear said. “HOK owned the name HOK Sport and if we’re going to part ways, it’s only logical that we change the name.”

The San Diego Sports Arena



AEG will manage and book the **San Diego Sports Arena** after purchasing a controlling interest in **Arena Group 2000**, which holds the lease for the facility through 2017. As part of the deal, AEG will make an investment in the 42-year-old facility, which Venues Today ranked as the number five facility for its size in its July Mid-Year Top Stops report. With 32

reported events since the beginning of the year, the facility grossed \$8.2 million.

“The opportunity in San Diego is truly special. It’s one of the largest markets in the country with an appetite for sports and entertainment events,” said Bob Newman, AEG Facilities’ Chief Operating Officer. “Strategically, the San Diego market fits very well within our existing roster of venues and provides additional opportunities for shared opportunities and resources.”

The newly formed AEG Management San Diego LLC “will pool its resources to create a better customer experience and book more shows,” said AG 2000 Senior VP Ernie Hahn, who will continue to serve as the facility’s general manager.

More importantly, Hahn said he hopes AEG attracts a new naming rights sponsor after the facility’s previous naming partner, iPayOne, prematurely pulled out of its five-year deal in

April 2007.

Hahn said his facility will remain an open building, and he hopes to increase current bookings from 120 events per year to 130-140. — Dave Brooks

Interviewed for this article: Joe Spear, (816) 329-4400; Ernie Hahn (619) 884-4855; Bob Newman, (213) 742-7155