

**April Armbrust (Parnell)**

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### Quote of the Week

*"You can't manage what you can't measure."*

— Stephanie Graham of HOK Sport on the importance of tracking how environmental upgrades affect operational costs.

### In this Issue

#### THE NEWS

[Financial Crisis Means Uncertainty For Entertainment Industry](#)

[Convention Centers Pursue a Deeper Shade of Green](#)

[Warm Weather At L.A. Fair Not Enough For Cooling Economy](#)

#### HOT TICKETS

[Canadian Singer Still a Lean, Celine Fighting Machine](#)

#### THE BEAT

[Fairs & Festivals: Maryland State Fair, The Great Allentown Fair](#)

[Deals: Fort Worth \(Texas\) Convention Center](#)

[Naming Rights Report](#)

[DEPARTMENTS Short Takes](#)

[HELP WANTED](#)

[CONTACT VT PULSE](#)

### Greetings April,

Welcome to VT Pulse, your weekly guide to the "News Behind the Headlines." Don't forget to register for Sport, Entertainment and Venues Tomorrow, a new type of conference hosted by Venues Today and the University of South Carolina. For more information, visit [www.sevt.org](http://www.sevt.org).



### VT NEWS

#### ECONOMY FINANCIAL CRISIS MEANS UNCERTAINTY FOR ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY

*The Wachovia Center in Philadelphia, which faces uncertainty about its naming rights sponsor after the financial institution failed earlier this month.*



The credit crisis and unraveling of some of the nation's largest financial institutions has sent waves of panic through every corner of the U.S. economy, leaving many venue

operators wondering how their facilities will fare in very difficult economic situations.

While the axiom "people always want to be entertained" continues to shine hope on the industry, many facilities are beginning to see a decline in ticket sales. The consolidation of the nation's banking institutions has thrown sponsorship into flux, leading to a likely renaming of a half-dozen facilities and potentially weakening naming rights deals where banks, insurance companies and auto-makers have typically been leading categories.

Premium-suite renewals are dropping, according to Bill Dorsey of the Association of Luxury Suite Directors, and sponsorship agreements are slowing. Credit for both capital upgrades and venue construction is becoming increasingly difficult to obtain. With all this bad news, is there anything to be hopeful for?

"If you're a business that relies on a lot of upfront

## SHORT TAKES

**>> DALLAS PAC A YEAR OUT** — The Dallas Center for the Performing Arts announced it has raised \$334 million toward its goal of \$338 million and the grand opening is set for Oct. 12-18, 2009. The press conference to announce the news featured James Earl Jones. *Contact: Erin Finegold, (214) 954-9925*

**>> O2 HITS ANOTHER MILESTONE** — AEG is expecting its 10 millionth visitor at the O2 in London this week. Since it opened in June 2007, the O2 Arena has hosted almost 500 musical acts, including The Rolling Stones, Spice Girls, Linkin Park and Stevie Wonder. *Contact: Michael Roth, (213) 742-7155*



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capital and creative financing, then you might be facing some challenges," said Kevin Kimsa, CEO of Canadian-based ticket company Audienceview. "Of course, for those who don't spend a lot of money up front to acquire clients, this narrows the playing field a bit."

Whether it's ticketing contracts or sponsorship deals, Kimsa said he expects a wave of contract renegotiations and deal restructurings to wash over the market as companies struggle to secure financing and other firms step in to fill the void.

"Of course at this point, it's so early in the game that no one can really tell what the longterm impact is going to be."

Lawrence Rua, regional vice president for Centerplate, agreed, saying that the nature of the convention business means that more events are booked years in advance and it can be difficult to see the effects of a downturn until well after it has happened.

"It hasn't gotten to a point where people are canceling bookings, but yes we are very concerned about the future," he said. "Companies are hesitant to make orders that far in advance because of so much uncertainty about where they'll be in three-to-five years. We could have a situation where the economy dips, and then fully recovers, but our industry will be several years behind trying to play catch-up."

Darren Davis of the Orleans Arena in Las Vegas said his facility is feeling the crunch of uncertainty, coinciding with a subsequent drop in Las Vegas home values, higher than average foreclosure rates and an increase in fuel costs.

"All of Las Vegas is really in a pinch right now," said Davis. "We especially saw it over Labor Day weekend with a nightclub event and several Spanish concerts, which had typically been a good weekend."

Davis said he's trying a number of creative options to bring people to events, including reduced ticket prices.

"For the shows we put on sale in the last few months, we've been scaling the house and pricing shows to simply break even," he said. "Tickets that last year moved at \$65 are down between \$50 to \$44. The mindset is to strategically price our shows where there's little profit margin and to continue to put out the inventory."

The catch 22 is that many artists aren't making the same adjustments, Davis said, adding that "many think that if they can get their fans in the door, then the same guarantees are going to be thrown around."

The other major issue making headlines is the collapse of Wachovia and Washington Mutual, both of which hold several naming rights deals in multiple markets. The Wachovia Center in Philadelphia and WaMu theaters at Madison Square Garden and in Seattle, along with a branded WaMu bar at the Greek Theatre are among the venues whose names face an uncertain future.

"I think it's going to be a top priority to get those names off the buildings," said Rob Vogel of the Bonham Group, which negotiates naming rights deals at facilities and estimated the cost of changing names to be near \$1 million. "Some of these companies are going to completely disappear from Wall Street altogether, and those that remain are going to have a difficult time explaining the situation to their shareholders," he said.

The other short-term impact of the down economy will be its affect on the stock price of publicly traded companies in the entertainment sector. Ticketmaster, which debuted at \$25 a share in late August, is currently trading at \$12.50 a share, compounded by bad news about increased competition from Live Nation. For its

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Executive Director

Prudential Center,  
Newark, NJ -  
Conversion Manager

part, Live Nation's stock has dropped from \$16.49 on Oct. 1, to close slightly below \$12.81 on Wednesday. — Dave Brooks

*Interviewed for this article: Kevin Kimsa, (416) 356-4121; Lawrence Rua, (972) 475-8967; Darren Davis, (702) 365-7469; Rob Vogel, (303) 592-4290*

**CONVENTION CENTERS  
CONVENTION CENTERS PURSUE A DEEPER SHADE OF GREEN**

*Rip Rippitoe; Tamara Kennedy Hill; Jeff Blosser; Kevin Mollay, Lancaster County Convention Center, Lancaster, Pa.; Stephanie Graham; and Brad Gessner. Right, Kevin Duvall, Georgia World Congress Center, Atlanta, riding the light rail. (VT Photos)*



PORTLAND, Ore. — Convention centers are at the forefront of the greening of the venue industry and to prove that point, attendees at IAAM's International Convention Center Conference here were encouraged to take the light rail from the airport to the hotel and to off-site conference events. The 180 attendees at the Sept. 25-27 conference were given take-home materials such as power point presentations on a flash drive rather than printed paper. And a panel on sustainability titled "Going Green — Where to Focus" drove the point home.

"Portland is the city that walks the talk," said Jeff Blosser, executive director, Oregon Convention Center, and host to this gathering. It has a good transportation system and is the number one biking city in the U.S. The city is currently into a "Deeper Shade of Green" marketing campaign, having been green for such a long time.

As part of that drive, The Oregon Convention Center is putting together a Green Meetings tool kit. In September, the venue also received its LEEDS silver certification.

Why green? Blosser asked rhetorically. It's our corporate social responsibility; it's a marketing tool; it creates operational efficiencies and saves money and it's the right thing to do, he explained.

"Clients want to see measured results," Blosser said.

"Food is one you should try to do; it's some of the low hanging fruit" when it comes to sustainability. Using local produce, recycling, composting and donating food to the hungry are among the center's initiatives, he said. They have set up a "Sustainability Station" where trash is separated as the show goes on and that is used as an educational opportunity with attendees as well, he said. "There is a cost to do it."

It does translate into business. The Biomath show has two pages about environmental concerns in its contract, Blosser said. "We're seeing a lot more RFPs like that."

The next step for Blosser is solar energy, an initiative also being undertaken at the San Diego Convention Center, said Brad Gessner, assistant manager. There is no direct cost to the Oregon Convention Center, Blosser said, and the solar cells on the roof will be visible from the freeway.

Both venues are using a Power Purchase Agent. Gessner explained that a solar firm comes in, assesses the site and locks the convention center into a power usage rate,

carbonhouse, inc.,  
Charlotte, N.C. -  
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usually in a 20-year deal. The solar company then installs the solar panels at its own cost. The convention center is guaranteed a lesser power rate for the period, so it costs nothing.

“Our show managers, our customers, are requiring green,” Gessner reiterated. He noted that a typical five-day conference like Microsoft with 8,500 attendees and no trade show will consume 210,000 plates, 255,000 cups and glasses, 306,000 cans or bottles, and 308,477 gallons of water, and generate over 24 tons of trash.

Gessner admits to being among the first on a very informal Green Team 20 years ago at the San Diego building. It’s always been a personal concern and to effectively make it a corporate concern he recommends forming a formal Green Team. San Diego even formed a Solar Program Council to oversee that initiative.

This year, the San Diego Convention Center diverted 240 tons of trash to landfills to be turned into compost, Gessner said. The goal is to remove all garbage disposals at the plant, he said. They make every effort to reduce use of paper, filing electronic reports to the board and the media. Replacing old chillers resulted in a \$450,000 rebate from the government. “We saved \$60,000 last year on our energy bills,” he added.

The SDCC also reimburses all employees 100 percent who ride mass transit. “We encourage show managers to limit the amount of shuttles from points that have a decent light rail. They also manage an extensive donation program, recycling 500,000 sq. ft. of fresh produce to food banks and rescue missions last year.

Stephanie Graham, HOK, Kansas City, emphasized venue managers should not think just about the building but also how it integrates into the community. Kansas City has been all about urban revitalization, which is a form of going green, she noted. The Minnesota Twins put a light rail station in the ballpark, which is not uncommon anymore.

She cautioned that “you can’t manage what you can’t measure,” so install meters, purchase the cleanest energy possible and use environmentally preferable materials in construction. The Phoenix Convention Center has its silver LEED certification and the numbers are coming in - like a 40 percent energy cost reduction and a 42 percent water use reduction, she said.

Tamara Kennedy Hill of the Green Meeting Industry Council admitted that the challenge is that there is no standard. “We’re working with APEX to develop standards worldwide,” she said. By April 2009, there will be some standards and benchmarks to go by, she said.

Rip Rippitoe, Rippitoe Solution Group, said the areas of environmental responsibility being employed by convention centers is multiplying, like carpet and padding recycling programs, Energy Star lighting, more soya and water based ink for graphics, table covers that are 100 percent recyclable, bio degradable and non toxic cleaning supplies, AV technologies to communicate directions and agendas, and flash drives for power points and attendee lists. The International Association of Assembly Managers, which sponsored this conference, has put together a Sustainability Task Force to explore and communicate the relevant initiatives, Rippitoe said.

Meanwhile, individual venues can designate their own committee. The Oregon Convention Center is taking it the next step. “We will have a Green Sustainability coordinator on board next month,” Blosser said. — Linda Deckard

*Interviewed for this story: Jeff Blosser, (503) 235-7575; Brad Gessner, (619) 525-5000; Rip Rippitoe, (702) 683-1114; Tamara Kennedy Hill, (503) 332-5739; Stephanie Graham, (816) 221-1500*

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### FAIRS & FESTIVALS

#### WARM WEATHER AT L.A. FAIR NOT ENOUGH FOR COOLING ECONOMY

*A vendor offers an ear of corn on the midway of the L.A. County Fair*



The L.A. County Fair, Pomona, Calif., is becoming a five-week affair, hoping to draw in Labor Day crowds and boost attendance after a flat year, said V.P. of Sales, Marketing and Creative Programming Dale Coleman.

Sunny skies and virtually no rain brought about 1.3 million people

through the turnstiles during the 23-day run from Sept. 5-28 at the Fairplex, a three percent drop from last year, said spokesperson Wendy Talarico. The \$28-million, year-round operation is a non-profit agency and does not report total tickets sold, said Talarico, nor does it release food and beverage figures, although she did comment that overall sales were “pretty much in line with last year.” Despite the drop in attendance, corporate sponsorship was up this year, bringing in over \$3 million in revenue.

“Next year’s fair will begin a weekend earlier, running from Sept. 5 to Oct. 4.,” said Coleman. “The SoCal market is really weekend-based and with freeways and traffic, it’s hard to get people to participate in the fair during the week. It’s a time when people are looking for something to do, and we wouldn’t be doing it if it weren’t a holiday weekend.”

Coleman said he’s not worried about an overlap with the California State Fair in Sacramento – practically all of his vendors have agreed to participate in the expanded schedule.

The L.A. County Fair doesn’t typically choose an overall theme, although it does brand its exhibition halls. This year, the Flower and Garden Pavilion was dubbed “Escape to Hawaii” and staffed with Polynesian dancers, lei-making booths and a volcano that erupted at night. The Millard Sheets Center for the Arts’ main exhibit was “Hoofprints” paying tribute to the history of horses from early French cave drawings to a Trojan Horse contest which used scraps from a junk yard.

New at this year’s fair was the Bark Park, celebrating the life of man’s best friend with fancy dog houses, aromatherapy and a special pet vendors market. Patrons weren’t allowed to bring their dogs to the fair, but were treated to dog performances and puppy adoption events. The fair also hosted “A Pirate’s Life” exhibits featuring pirate-themed activities, coinciding with International Talk Like a Pirate Day on Sept. 19.

Ray Cammack Shows hosted this year’s midway, expanding its ticketless Fun Pass system to include all midway games – last year’s midway featured optional ticketless games. Talarico would not release the midway gross for this year’s event. Talarico said food sales were also flat, with new entries including deep fried Pop Tarts by Chicken Charlie; chocolate-covered bacon by Sippers & More and a colossal ice cream cone that held two pints of gelato and could feed an entire family, selling for \$16.

This year’s media buying was handled by Milner Butcher Media Group out of Los Angeles. The fairgrounds booked its own concerts in conjunction with Petaluma, Calif.-based Wilson Events for the 8,500-seat grandstand. Sugarland was the only concert to sell out, while groups like Jaguares, Lighthouse and Gavin Rossdale all made strong showings, as did the Doobie Brothers with Grand Funk Railroad.

“We ended up setting an all-time attendance record and box office sales record,” Talarico said.

This year’s biggest promotion was Wristband Wednesday, where patrons could purchase a ticket to the fair and a wristband for unlimited carnival rides for \$20 using a coupon they could pick up only at McDonalds. The fair also offered discount coupons at local AT&T stores.

The fairground’s racetrack netted a \$99.9 million handle, down about \$3 million from last year. — Dave Brooks

*Interviewed for this article: Wendy Talarico, (909) 228-9059; Dale Coleman, (909) 886-2363*

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 Sept. 9, 2008.

### CANADIAN SINGER STILL A LEAN, CELINE FIGHTING MACHINE

15,001 or More Seats	10,001-15,000 Seats	5,001-10,000 Seats	5,000 or Less Seats
<p><b>1) Celine Dion</b> Gross Sales: \$4,476,480; Venue: <b>Madison Square Garden Arena, New York</b>; Attendance: 36,291; Ticket Range: \$189.50-\$59.50; Promoter: AEG Live, Concerts West; Dates: Sept. 15-16; No. of Shows: 2</p>	<p><b>1) Elton John</b> Gross Sales: \$3,410,507; Venue: <b>MTS Centre Winnipeg, Manitoba</b>; Attendance: 30,202; Ticket Range: \$137.90-\$63.92; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: Sept. 19-20; No. of Shows: 2</p>	<p><b>1) Elton John</b> Gross Sales: \$1,748,804; Venue: <b>Brandt Centre, Regina, Saskatchewan</b>; Attendance: 13,595; Ticket Range: \$137.90-\$91.62; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: Sept. 16-17; No. of Shows: 2</p>	<p><b>1) Les Miserables</b> Gross Sales: \$1,799,459; Venue: <b>Fox Theatre, Atlanta</b>; Attendance: 32,144; Ticket Range: \$68-\$25; Promoter: Theater of The Stars; Dates: Sept. 19-28; No. of Shows: 13</p>
<p><b>2) Celine Dion</b> Gross Sales: \$3,605,530; Venue: <b>Prudential Center, Newark, N.J.</b>; Attendance: 31,902; Ticket Range: \$188-\$49.50; Promoter: AEG Live, Concerts West; Dates: Sept. 10, 12; No. of Shows: 2</p>	<p><b>2) Celine Dion</b> Gross Sales: \$2,142,875; Venue: <b>Atlantic City (N.J.) Boardwalk Hall</b>; Attendance: 14,590; Ticket Range: \$225-\$55; Promoter: AEG Live, Concerts West; Dates: Sept. 20; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p><b>2) Journey</b> Gross Sales: \$997,895; Venue: <b>Greek Theatre, Los Angeles</b>; Attendance: 10,522; Ticket Range: \$110-\$55; Promoter: Nederlander; Dates: Sept. 28, 30; No. of Shows: 2</p>	<p><b>2) Mama Mia!</b> Gross Sales: \$695,539; Venue: <b>Wharton Center For Performing Arts, East Lansing, Mich.</b>; Attendance: 11,108; Ticket Range: \$73-\$23; Promoter: In-House; Dates: Sept. 30-Oct. 5; No. of Shows: 8</p>
<p><b>3) Celine Dion</b> Gross Sales: \$3,586,695; Venue: <b>Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum, Uniondale, N.Y.</b>; Attendance: 32,432; Ticket Range: \$188-\$49.50; Promoter: AEG Live, Concerts West; Dates: Sept. 13, 18; No. of Shows: 2</p>	<p><b>3) Alejandro Fernandez</b> Gross Sales: \$1,176,210; Venue: <b>Mandalay Bay Events Center, Las Vegas</b>; Attendance: 8,882; Ticket Range: \$200-\$75; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: Sept. 15; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p><b>3) WaveFest 2008</b> Gross Sales: \$567,623; Venue: <b>Greek Theatre, Los Angeles</b>; Attendance: 8,641; Ticket Range: \$129.75-\$29.75; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: Sept. 26-27; No. of Shows: 2</p>	<p><b>3) Robin Williams</b> Gross Sales: \$527,642; Venue: <b>Chicago Theatre</b>; Attendance: 7,086; Ticket Range: \$92-\$46.50; Promoter: Jam Productions; Dates: Sept. 26-27; No. of Shows: 2</p>
<p><b>4) Neil Diamond</b> Gross Sales: \$2,854,920; Venue: <b>Hollywood Bowl, Los Angeles</b>; Attendance: 32,514; Ticket Range: \$35-\$15; Promoter: Andrew Hewitt, Bill Silva Presents; Dates: Oct. 1-2; No. of Shows: 2</p>	<p><b>4) Janet Jackson</b> Gross Sales: \$1,027,602; Venue: <b>Mandalay Bay Events Center, Las Vegas</b>; Attendance: 8,085; Ticket Range: \$300.75-\$55.75; Promoter: Andrew Hewitt, In-House, Live Nation; Dates: Sept. 19; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p><b>4) Mr. Olympia Finals</b> Gross Sales: \$535,921; Venue: <b>Orleans Arena, Las Vegas</b>; Attendance: 3,219; Ticket Range: \$262.50-\$54.50; Promoter: American Media; Dates: Sept. 27; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p><b>4) Alicia Keys</b> Gross Sales: \$425,273; Venue: <b>Orpheum, Vancouver, British Columbia</b>; Attendance: 5,464; Ticket Range: \$117.61-\$46.57; Promoter: AEG Live, Atlanta Worldwide Touring; Dates: Sept. 21-22; No. of Shows: 2</p>
<p><b>5) Celine Dion</b> Gross Sales: \$2,300,748;</p>	<p><b>5) The Eagles</b> Gross Sales: \$777,820; Venue: <b>Resch Center, Green Bay, Wis.</b>; Attendance:</p>	<p><b>5) Fei Yu Ching</b> Gross Sales: \$372,582; Venue: <b>Event Center at San Jose (Calif.) State University</b>; Attendance: 3,626; Ticket Range: \$168-\$58; Promoter: USA Star Image; Dates: Oct. 4; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p><b>5) Alicia Keys</b> Gross Sales: \$391,733; Venue: <b>Santa Barbara (Calif.) Bowl</b>; Attendance: 4,357; Ticket Range: \$113-\$60; Promoter: AEG</p>

Venue: **Air** 5,932; Ticket  
**Canada Centre,** Range: \$175-\$85;  
**Toronto;** Promoter: Jam  
Attendance: Productions;  
18,262; Ticket Dates: Sept. 29;  
Range: \$185.23- No. of Shows: 1  
\$61.19;  
Promoter: AEG  
Live, Concerts  
West; Dates:  
Sept. 27; No. of  
Shows: 1

Live, Atlanta  
Worldwide  
Touring; Dates:  
Sept. 26; No. of  
Shows: 1

Compiled by Rob Ocampo and Josh Huckabee. To submit reports, e-mail  
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## THE BEAT

### FAIRS & FESTIVALS MARYLAND STATE FAIR, TIMONIUM

*Swiftly Swine Racing Pigs; The Deggeller Attractions midway at the Maryland State Fair.*



**Dates:** Aug. 22–Sept. 1

**Attendance:** 388,090, down seven percent from 417,458 in 2007

Rain prompted a seven percent decrease in attendance at the Maryland State Fair, but a gate increase still gives officials a solid increase.

“I think gate revenues were up about 6 percent, mainly because we raised the price of admission by \$2 for adults,” said GM Max Mosner, which brought the price to \$8.

“Our electrical rates went up 50 percent right before the fair,” Mosner said. “We had a three-year rate locked in with the local energy company that expired, and we signed a new three-year lock-in, which was 50 percent higher.”

**Carnival:** Stuart, Fla.-based Deggeller Attractions placed 42 rides on the midway. Revenue was down less than 1 percent from 2007.

**Concerts:** James River Entertainment in Richmond, Va., which approached fair officials a couple of years ago and offered to take on all the risk of the concerts starting in 2007, presented three shows. The fair also went to a free concert format after doing hard ticket events booked by Dave Snowden of Triangle Talent.

Rain fell during two of the three events, although Foreigner and Travis Tritt each drew about 3,000 concert-goers, meeting the 3,000-to-4,000 capacity that officials aim for in the stage set up on the racetrack infield that in the past has accommodated 10,000 to 12,000 fans. The third show was “1964: A Beatles Tribute.”

Tickets were \$20 general admission, bring your own seat or \$35 for Tritt and Foreigner and \$25 for the Beatles show for the 200 lawn seats called the Golden Circle. “It’s nothing but upsides since they pay for production and entertainment and provide us with a share of the revenue,” Mosner said. “We have no costs. It’s a win-win for us.”

**Marketing:** The budget was \$150,000. A new ad agency redesigned the fair’s Web site to be more interactive and user-friendly. Also, Baltimore’s ABC affiliate broadcast their news program from the grounds every day.

Sarah Quackenbush, director of account services and business development for Pivec Advertising, also in Timonium, handled the fair’s account. The new Web site went on-line July 2, and between that day and the end of the fair, received 143,600 unique visits, she said.

The fair has an overall budget of about \$7.2 million. Racing revenues fell 15

percent to 16 percent, which officials were expecting because of news they heard from other racing venues in Maryland. Plus, most states that border Maryland - Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Delaware included - now offer slot machines at their horseracing venues, which has taken some of the Maryland business away.

The fair also saw the opening of a new two-level, 10,000-square-foot, \$1.6 million 4-H and Department of Natural Resources building that has yet to be named. The building came about after a local House of Delegates member on the appropriations committee approached the fair about getting earmarks for a building.

The fair ended up spending \$1 million on the building, getting \$500,000 from the state and \$100,000 from Baltimore County.

2009 dates will be Aug. 28-Sept. 7, Mosner said. "We went from as early as it can be this year to as late as it can be next year." - Mary Wade Burnside

*Interviewed for this story: Max Mosner, (410) 252-0220; Sarah Quackenbush, (410) 453-9828.*

## THE GREAT ALLENTOWN (PA.) FAIR

*Face-painting with the Pa. Fair Queen; High-flying BMX tricks on the midway*



**Dates:** Aug. 26 - Sept. 1

**Attendance:** 570,000, down 2.5 percent from last year's 585,000

**Gate admission:** Remained \$6 for anyone 12 and older

**Midway:** Despite the drop, the fair saw a 41 percent increase in carnival revenues with a new midway provider, Rochester, N.Y.-based Powers Great American Midway, taking over for S&S Amusements, whose owner, Steve Swika, retired some of the carnival's larger dates after the death of his wife, Jackie.

In addition, the Allentown fair considers the first day of the Aug. 26-Sept. 1 to be a "preview night" with the carnival not obligated to have all rides up and inspected.

The preview night gave fairgoers the opportunity to ride all the rides for \$12. Otherwise, pay-one-price wristbands were available through Ticketmaster for the first time prior to the fair for \$15, and after that, the price rose to \$20.

That allowed the Ticketmaster staff to offer carnival tickets to anyone who called for concert tickets as well.

**Entertainment:** "We had record-setting revenues in concerts," said Bonnie Brosious, the fair's marketing director and talent booker.

The Jonas Brothers were a virtual sellout in the grandstand, with only obstructed-view seats left as 10,467 concert-goers packed the venue. The concert grossed \$707,780 with tickets that cost \$71, \$65 and \$55.

"We think that's pretty significant," Brosious said.

Toby Keith was also a big grandstand draw, coming in second to the sibling trio with a gross of \$567,183. The country singer filled the grandstand with 10,072 fans with tickets costing \$59 and \$49. Daughtry also did well, grossing \$380,928 with 8,420 concert-goers who paid \$49 and \$39 for tickets.

Coming in after that was a double bill of ZZ Top and Brooks & Dunn with James Otto, grossing \$305,229 with 5,494 concerts and tickets that cost \$65, \$55 and \$48.

"It was an excellent year," Brosious said. "Considering the economy and the concern we had about that, we're really happy. It seemed that people were resilient and came out. The staycation was in effect, and with us having Labor Day

weekend in our run, it was wonderful."

Fair officials paid \$2.15 million for grandstand entertainment, more than last year's \$1.9 million and 2006's \$1.3 million, but less than the \$2.3 million paid in 2005.

**Marketing:** Officials utilized the social networking sites MySpace and Facebook in an effort to reach out to younger demographics, but also still made media buys in traditional publications such as newspapers.

"We have an organization that runs the fair and if certain things aren't in the newspaper, they wonder what you are doing," Brosious said.

Next year's dates will be Sept. 1-7. - Mary Wade Burnside

*Interviewed for this article: Bonnie Brosious, (610) 433-7541; Charlie Belknap, (910) 259-8143.*

## DEALS

### FT. WORTH (TEXAS) CONVENTION CENTER

**Exclusive caterer and concessionaire:** Trinity Food and Beverage Services, a subsidiary of Omni Hotels

**Terms:** Effective Jan. 1, 2009, Trinity takes over concessions operations from Aramark and becomes the exclusive caterer in what had been an open building. The deal is for 10 years. Last year, catering grossed \$3.3 million and concessions another \$1.2 million.

The contract does not include the Will Rogers Memorial Coliseum, which is also run by the Ft. Worth Public Events department.

The food contract is tied to an agreement that saw Omni Hotels build a 607-room convention hotel that opens Jan. 12. This is the first time Omni Hotels has taken on the food service at a convention center, said James Horner, assistant director of the convention center. "Omni approached us," he said.

The overall agreement with Omni is an economic development deal, which leaves the county ownership of the land and offers Omni tax rebates to build. "It took 10 years to get it done," Horner said.

The Ft. Worth Convention Center, formerly known as the Tarrant County Convention Center, underwent an \$80 million renovation in 2003. It occupies 714,000 gross square feet, including a 182,000-square-foot main exhibit hall. It hosts about 500 events a year, Horner said.

The new Omni Hotel is the first major convention hotel that firm has built from scratch, Horner said. He said the hotel chain is in negotiations to build other convention hotels and he wouldn't be surprised if food and drink is in the negotiations. "It's one of the pieces of the pie," Horner said.

Trinity is a new subsidiary of Omni, developed for this project.

Lance Hamilton, who has been GM on site for Aramark, has accepted the same position with Trinity. — Linda Deckard

*Interviewed for this story: James Horner, (817) 392-2505*

## NAMING RIGHTS REPORT

### TARGET FIELD, MINNEAPOLIS

**Date:** Sept. 15

**Terms:** 25-year deal, terms not released.

**Buyer:** Target Corporation

**Tenant/Ownership:** Minnesota Twins/Minnesota Ballpark Authority

**Comments:** With a new ballpark scheduled to open in the spring of 2010, the Twins have announced a 25-year agreement with Minnesota-based Target Corporation, which will be their naming rights sponsor.

"We have worked with them over a number of years, so it made them familiar with us, and us with them," said Kevin Smith, executive director of public affairs for the Twins.

The deal still needs the approval of the Minnesota Ballpark Authority, but they were "kept in the loop" during the negotiations, and are likely to sign off on it, Smith said.

A co-branded logo is still being designed, and other activation details are being worked out, Smith said, but he expects signage will play an important part for Target, which has stores in 47 states. Retail opportunities in the stadium will also play a role, though Smith said there would not be an in-stadium Target store.

“Delaware North Sports Service has the contract for concessions and retail, and we have to work that out with them,” Smith said.

The Twins handled the negotiations themselves, working with guidelines established by top management, rather than contracting the job out. The guidelines required the sponsor to be Minnesota-based, consistent with the Twins’ family-friendly image, and to be known for “civic activation” and philanthropy.

Target already owns the naming rights to nearby Target Center, home of the Minnesota Timberwolves of the National Basketball Association, and Target Plaza, so the new deal creates a sort of Target Complex - at least until 2011, when the Target Center naming rights expire.

“They are separate, but Target Field does back up on Target Center and Target Plaza, which makes itself a complex,” said Lissa Reitz, director of communications for Target. “But we did not set out to tie it all together, necessarily. If it was across town, we would probably still do this.”

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