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Quote of the Week

"Barry Diller made an acquisition of a top-notch executive who has tremendous experience in the promotion of events, management of artists, merchandising end of the business and other facets. I think it's a brilliant move and as we all know, Irving will stir the pot."

— Peter Luukko,
 president of Comcast-Spectacor of Irving Azoff's new ties with Ticketmaster

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Greetings April,

Welcome to VT Pulse, your weekly guide to the "News Behind the Headlines." Linda, April and Dave are on assignment at the University of South Carolina, preparing for the first annual Sport, Entertainment and Venues Tomorrow Conference. We'll keep you posted about our innovative think-tank approach to our growing industry.

AND THE 2008 VENUES TODAY HALL OF HEADLINES WINNERS ARE...

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SEVT KICKS OFF AT GOVERNOR'S MANSION



The Sport, Entertainment and Venues Tomorrow conference kicked off today (Nov. 5) with a dazzling reception at the Governor's Mansion in Columbia, S.C. (Left) University of South Carolina Professor Frank Roach talks with Jacob Sheaffer and Austin Johnson of Slippery Rock (Pa.) University, two of over 130 students in attendance at this year's conference. Pictured with the trio is Hootie and the Blowfish drummer (and USC grad) Jim Sonefeld.

[Fair](#)

[Deals: Global Spectrum Europe Signs New Arena In Croatia: AEG Facilities Adds 'Key' Account](#)

DEPARTMENTS[Short Takes](#)[HELP WANTED](#)[CONTACT VT PULSE](#)**SHORT TAKES****>> FORUM RESPONDS TO YOUNG**

CANCELLATION – The Forum in Inglewood, Calif., is speaking out against a cancelled Neil Young concert. The performer called off a concert to honor a union picket line, but the Forum is fighting back, arguing that the National Labor Relations Board has ruled the Forum has not violated any labor laws and the dispute has been misrepresented. Contact: Karen Lewis, (310) 380-8000

>>LIVE NATION SIGNS WITH SAVOR AND ARAMARK – Two months after SMG signed on with Live Nation Ticketing, Live Nation Inc. said Monday that it has signed a five-year, \$100 million deal with Aramark Corp. and SMG-Savor to manage food and beverage concessions at 34 of its amphitheaters. Company officials have estimated concessions at the amphitheaters bring in \$100 million per year and hopes the deal boosts food sales by 20 percent. Contact: John Vlautin, (310) 867-7127

(Right) Ticketing professionals Charlie Williams of Evertec talks shop with StubHub Spokesman Sean Pate.



SEVT is more than a gathering of professionals – it's also a meeting of the minds. (Left) Pictured above are professors Greg Letter of Adelphia University in New York and Jaime Orejan of Winston-Salem (N.C.) University; (Right) The fabulous Claire Rothman is being honored with the lifetime achievement award. She's pictured here with longtime partner Ed Hill.

VT NEWS**FAIRS & FESTIVALS****RAIN HALTS LONE STAR STATE RACE TO RECORD**

The iconic Big Tex greets visitors at the State Fair of Texas; enjoying this year's midway treat – chicken-fried bacon.



The State Fair of Texas posted its second-best year, following last year's all-time high of \$29 million gross for food and rides with \$28.6 million in 2008.

One rainy day probably prevented the Dallas-based fair, held Sept. 26-Oct. 19, from setting a new record, said Sue Gooding, vice president of Public Relations.

"I actually think the weather was it," Gooding said. "We lost one whole day to a very heavy rain. Otherwise, being that close to last year's, we would have surpassed it."

Fair officials do not calculate attendance numbers but estimate it to be in excess of 3 million fairgoers, which would make it North America's best-attended fair.

In spite of the rainy weather, Gooding attributes the successful numbers to patrons who were sticking close to home because of the economy and therefore spending more time - and money - at the fair.

"We really felt that the 'staycation' worked on our side this year," she said.

"There's a tradition of attending the State Fair of Texas. We draw most of our visitors from 60 to 80 miles from the fairgrounds, which definitely gives people the ability to make it a one-day trip."

Gooding heard mixed reactions from vendors about whether or not numbers were up, although most accounts were positive.

"We saw great numbers on food and ride sales," Gooding said. "We were hearing different stories from vendors. Each vendor will have to take a look at how their product did in this economy."

Vendors who will not have to second-guess their products are the ones who won the Big Tex Choice Award, a contest held three weeks prior to the fair that has gotten the fair a lot of nationwide media exposure for the deep-fried delicacies that the cooks come up with.

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Chicken-fried bacon won for best taste and a fried banana split won for most creative, Gooding said.

On the Chevrolet Main Stage, patrons could hear free concerts by Jessica Simpson, A.B. Quintanilla and Kellie Pickler of "American Idol," the three best-attended concerts, as well as Disney's Demi Lovato, Bell Biv DeVoe, Kevin Fowler and Rodney Atkins.

On the independent midway, the top 10 rides included the Texas Star Ferris wheel, owned by BLB Panorama; Texas Skyway, State Fair of Texas; Crazy Mouse roller coaster, Steve Vandervorst; Fast Track Superslide, State Fair Spectaculars/Mary Talley; Love Bug Himalaya, State Fair of Texas; log ride, State Fair of Texas; Starship 2000, Laser Faire; Bubble House funhouse, Amusements Inc.; Pirate Ship, Tenn-Tex Attractions Inc.; and Extreme No. 10, Mike Demas Enterprises Inc.

"We felt the economy a little bit," said Rusty Fitzgerald, director of operations and special projects. "Also, our football games were pushed back a week, so the schedule was different. But it was the second-best fair we ever had. We didn't hit what we did last year. A lot of it may be economy-related, but we were close."

New rides this year included a Viper ride and a new Zamperla kiddie drop tower, both of which did well.

"We didn't have that many new rides on the midway," Fitzgerald said.

General admission was the same as last year at \$14 or \$10 for children 48 inches or shorter. Ages 60 and over also paid \$10.

In marketing, Gooding said, the fair has started to incorporate a lot of online advertising, including e-mail blasts as well as ads on media Web sites such as the Dallas Morning News. She also sends out a newsletter every three or four days of the fair to "fair friends" - patrons whose e-mail addresses she possesses - highlighting a variety of events going on at the fair.

Otherwise, because of the fair's huge sponsorship program with 60 members, the fair practically advertises itself, Gooding said.

"I have a small budget to spend on advertising," Gooding said. "We're very fortunate that we have so many sponsors, and all of those sponsors are out promoting the fair."

Next year's dates are Sept. 25-Oct. 18. - Mary Wade Burnside

Interviewed for this story: Sue Gooding and Rusty Fitzgerald, (214) 565-9931



BOOKINGS SPRINGFIELD CC ROLLS THE DICE ON COOPERATIVE COUNTRY-FEST

Brian Oaks and his staff at Prairie Capital Convention Center in Springfield, Ill., have found a country kick for the winter blahs. The venue is hosting "Ya'll"apalooza Springfield, a 14-act country music extravaganza, Jan. 16-17. This is the first time the convention center has undertaken such a large festival.

Oaks, who is general manager, said he was asking for cooperation among the acts. Friday's lineup is set with

Nicole Sorenson
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HELP WANTED

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**Comcast Arena at
Everett** - Chief
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**Sydney (Australia)
Showground** - Event
Coordinator

**International
Ticketing
Association, Inc.
(INTIX), New York** -
President

**The Edge, New
Zealand** - Senior
Producer

VIEW THE FULL LISTINGS

LeAnn Rimes, Phil Vassar, Trent Tomlinson, Jonathan Singleton and Whitney Duncan. Oaks said he added Duncan after seeing her at last week's International Entertainment Buyers Association convention in Nashville.

Jason Aldean, Joe Nichols, Keith Anderson, Julianne Hough, Lost Trailers, Chris Young and One Flew South round out the entertainment on Saturday.

"We are taking the headline act and trying to work the production off their needs. We are asking the rest of the acts to work with us off that same production setup. We will also do the same thing with catering riders," Oaks said

The venue doesn't have enough rooms for each artist to have a private dressing area so Oaks said they are working with the city to close off a couple of streets so the artists can park their buses close enough to use them as dressing rooms.

The event is being produced by Fun, Fairs & Festivals, Inc. out of Arlington Heights, Ill. Kimber Kinast, an independent contractor who is director of sponsorships and special events for the company, explained that the festival is being held the same weekend that the Illinois Fair Convention meets in Springfield.

"We thought it would be great to showcase these up and coming artists in the Midwest and holding it at the same time of the convention was a good way to do that," Kinast said. "It gives these fair buyers the opportunity to say, 'Wow, somebody brought this talent in for us to see.' We are sending out an invitation to everyone who will be in town for the convention to come over and see the great talent. We are also inviting other talent buyers from casinos and clubs to come by and check it out."

Oaks said they are working with a couple of artists who will go to the fair convention to showcase. He said they hope to offer tickets to fair buyers through the conference registration to make it easy for the attendees to receive them in their packages when they arrive in Springfield.

In addition to the music Oaks said the event will have a fan fest feel to it, including autograph sessions with the artists who agree to participate. There will also be multiple merchandise areas set up for the artists to sell their memorabilia. Kinast said doors will open before the show begins and fans can wander among a number of vendors.

Food concessions will be expanded to include rib eye steak sandwiches and pulled pork barbecue in addition to the regular menu of hot dogs, nachos, cotton candy and Dippin' Dots. Oaks said they will probably contract with an outside catering company that has one of the large smokers for the additional concessions. Miller Lite is one of the event sponsors so there will be beer trailers set up along with stands serving mixed drinks and soda.

Seating is festival style for the event. Fans will have standing room only tickets for the floor with a few risers scattered throughout. Fixed seating will be available in the mezzanine area as well as the balcony. Oaks said the venue can hold up to 8,000 people with this seating configuration.

Tickets go on sale Nov. 1 and are \$70 for the two days if purchased prior to Dec. 23. After that date they increase to \$80 for a two-day ticket. One-day tickets are available for \$50. — Vernell Hackett

*Interviewed for this story: Brian Oaks, (217) 788-8800;
Kimber Kinast, (815) 970-3456*

OPENINGS
AEG OPENS THIRD ARENA IN SOUTHERN

CALIFORNIA

AEG Live is developing an empire within an empire, adding another facility to its nationwide network of arenas. The AEG-managed Citizen's Business Bank Arena opened Oct. 18 in Ontario, Calif., bringing entertainment to the massive Inland Empire east of Los Angeles.

The city-owned facility was designed by Rossetti and built by Turner Construction with about \$130 million in construction. Steve Eckerson has been chosen to run the facility, leaving behind his post as the director of event sales and operations at Qwest Field, Qwest Field Event Center and the WaMu Theater in Seattle.

"The opening went extremely well," said Eckerson, describing the facility's first event, a preseason basketball game between the Los Angeles Lakers and the recently relocated Oklahoma City Thunder, formerly the Seattle Sonics, on Oct. 24.

"It was a technical sell out," he said of the game, which brought in 10,316 fans. Eckerson didn't release the gross ticket sales of the event, but said that per caps were slightly above \$12.

The next night, the facility was converted to a hockey arena for its tenant team, the Ontario Reign of the ECHL. Eckerson said that event was also a sellout, filling 8,800 seats with per caps at slightly over \$14. This year, the Reign will play 36 home games.

AEG Live hopes to route concerts through the facility, creating a network of Southwest buildings that includes the Staples Center in Los Angeles, the Jobing.com Arena in Phoenix and now the San Diego Sports Arena, which sold a controlling interest of its management contract to AEG in early September.

Eckerson said the facility will also route concerts with the smaller Nokia Theater at L.A. Live, which has a capacity of about 7,600.

"We book ourselves, and AEG Live is our biggest client right now, but we're an open building and we're working with other promoters including a Live Nation concert for Metallica in December," Eckerson said. "We don't have anything on the books for Nederlander, but we anticipate that we'll be working them as well."

AEG's first concert at the building will be a sold-out Carrie Underwood concert on Nov. 9. The arena has three Sesame Street Live performances on Nov. 18-19, followed by an Alan Jackson and Trace Adkins concert on Nov. 23, and an HBO boxing event at the end of the month. Neil Diamond comes to the building on Jan. 4.

"I am very impressed with the ticket sales; people are really supporting the arena like it's their own," Eckerson said. "Over 4 million people live in the area and we're still 45 minutes from the Staples Center, or the Honda Center (in Anaheim, Calif.)."

Eckerson said he wants to book 150 events per year and is looking at bringing in an NBA Development League team. The Lakers' D-League team currently plays its games at the Staples Center, often prior to Lakers games, and tickets are often free.

"That's something we're definitely going to look into, certainly with the success of the Lakers game," said Eckerson. "We've had the highest attendance for a Lakers preseason game. There were lots of Lakers jerseys and hats, and the crowd was into it."

The city of Ontario has no debt service on the building, after purchasing the land over 10 years ago, which it later resold to developers and used the profits to develop the facility. The space around the building is set to be developed into an urban center. - Dave Brooks

Interviewed for this article: Steve Eckerson, (909) 244-5530

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 Oct. 7, 2008.

AC/DC BRINGS HELLS BELLS TO ROSEMONT

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: \$3,113,778; Venue: General Motors Place, Vancouver, British Columbia; Attendance: 34,348; Ticket Range: \$171.42-\$56.41; Promoter: AEG Live, Concerts West; Dates: Oct. 20-21; No. of Shows: 2</p>	<p>1) Celine Dion Gross Sales: \$2,245,003; Venue: MTS Centre, Winnipeg, Manitoba; Attendance: 29,062; Ticket Range: \$169.69-\$56.41; Promoter: AEG Live, Concerts West; Dates: Oct. 27-28; No. of Shows: 2</p>	<p>1) Marco Antonio Solis Gross Sales: \$1,088,820; Venue: Nokia Theatre L.A. Live; Attendance: 11,866; Ticket Range: \$150-\$55; Promoter: AEG Live, Goldenvoice, Villaram; Dates: Oct. 17-18; No. of Shows: 2</p>	<p>1) Wicked Gross Sales: \$8,452,793; Venue: Fox Theatre, Atlanta; Attendance: 136,391; Ticket Range: \$125-\$29; Promoter: Broadway Across America; Dates: Oct. 8-Nov. 2; No. of Shows: 32</p>
<p>2) Celine Dion Gross Sales: \$2,695,629; Venue: Rexall Place, Edmond, Alberta; Attendance: 32,958; Ticket Range: \$169.69-\$56.41; Promoter: AEG Live, Concerts West; Dates: Oct. 24-25; No. of Shows: 2</p>	<p>2) Chris Brown, Rihanna Gross Sales: \$2,077,883; Venue: Brisbane (Australia) Entertainment Centre; Attendance: 21,488; Ticket Range: \$99.62-\$86.01; Promoter: Michael Coppel Presents; Dates: Oct. 31-Nov.1; No. of Shows: 2</p>	<p>2) The Allman Brothers Band Gross Sales: \$772,937; Venue: Chastain Park Amphitheatre, Atlanta; Attendance: 9,887; Ticket Range: \$93-\$38.50; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: Oct. 10-11; No. of Shows: 2</p>	<p>2) Bette Midler Gross Sales: \$5,615,988; Venue: The Colosseum at Caesars Palace, Las Vegas; Attendance: 36,726; Ticket Range: \$250-\$95; Promoter: AEG Live, Concerts West; Dates: Oct. 9-12, 14-15, 17-19; No. of Shows: 9</p>
<p>3) AC/DC Gross Sales: \$2,485,415; Venue: Allstate Arena, Rosemont, Ill.; Attendance: 27,770; Ticket Range: \$89.50; Promoter: Jam Productions; Dates: Oct.30, Nov.1; No. of Shows: 2</p>	<p>3) Chris Brown, Rihanna Gross Sales: \$1,416,460; Venue: Vector Arena, Auckland, New Zealand; Attendance: 20,772; Ticket Range: \$90.67-\$60.42; Promoter: Michael Coppel Presents; Dates: Oct. 27-28; No. of Shows: 2</p>	<p>3) Luis Miguel Gross Sales: \$511,275; Venue: Laredo (Texas) Entertainment Center; Attendance: 8,532; Ticket Range: \$85-\$35; Promoter: Live Nation, In-House; Dates: Oct. 11; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p>3) The Wizard of Oz Gross Sales: \$913,954; Venue: Tampa Bay (Fla.) Performing Arts Center ; Attendance: 15,259; Ticket Range: \$72.50-\$20; Promoter: In-House; Dates: Oct. 14-19; No. of Shows: 8</p>
<p>4) Celine Dion Gross Sales: \$1,765,386; Venue: Tacoma (Wash.) Dome; Attendance: 20,665; Ticket Range: \$126-\$50; Promoter: AEG Live, Concerts West; Dates: Oct. 18; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p>4) Stevie Wonder Gross Sales: \$907,498; Venue: Brisbane (Australia) Entertainment Centre; Attendance: 9,156; Ticket Range: \$130.36-\$63.68; Promoter: Dainty Consolidated Entertainment; Dates: Oct. 25; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p>4) Brad Paisley Gross Sales: \$338,995; Venue: Dodge Arena, Hidalgo, Texas; Attendance: 4,735; Ticket Range: \$175-\$65; Promoter: L&F Distributors, STARS; Dates: Oct. 16; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p>4) Jay-Z Gross Sales: \$578,400; Venue: Hollywood Palladium, Los Angeles; Attendance: 4,136; Ticket Range: \$250-\$150; Promoter: Goldenvoice, Live Nation; Dates: Oct. 15; No. of Shows: 1</p>
<p>5) Stevie Wonder Gross Sales: \$1,690,080; Venue: AcerArena, Sydney,</p>	<p>5) Michael Buble Gross Sales: \$319,796; Venue: Pensacola (Fla.) Civic Center; Attendance: 4,216; Ticket</p>	<p>5) Michael Buble Gross Sales: \$319,796; Venue: Pensacola (Fla.) Civic Center; Attendance: 4,216; Ticket</p>	<p>5) Madama</p>

<p>Australia; Attendance: 19,889; Ticket Range: \$119.78-\$59.56; Promoter: Dainty Consolidated Entertainment, Live Nation; Dates: Oct.22-23; No. of Shows: 2</p>	<p>5) Stevie Wonder Gross Sales: \$818,148; Venue: Vector Arena, Auckland, New Zealand; Attendance: 10,347; Ticket Range: \$120.37-\$59.88; Promoter: Dainty Consolidated Entertainment; Dates: Oct. 30; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p>Range: \$82.50-\$52.50; Promoter: Beaver Productions; Dates: Oct. 17; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p>Butterfly Gross Sales: \$570,050; Venue: Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre, Atlanta; Attendance: 9,074; Ticket Range: \$138.80-\$32.80; Promoter: The Atlanta Opera; Dates: Oct. 5,7,10,12; No. of Shows: 4</p>
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Compiled by Rob Ocampo and Nicole Sorenson. To submit reports, e-mail HotTickets@venuestoday.com or fax to (714) 378-0040.

THE BEAT

FACES & PLACES

IRVING AZOFF TO LEAD TICKETMASTER ENTERTAINMENT BRAND

Irving Azoff



On Oct. 31, Ticketmaster Entertainment, West Hollywood, Calif., completed acquisition of a controlling equity interest in Front Line Management Group, Inc., for \$123 million in cash. Ticketmaster Entertainment consists of both Ticketmaster, a ticketing and marketing company, and Front Line, an artist management company.

Irving Azoff, founder and chief executive officer of Front Line, is now chief executive officer of Ticketmaster Entertainment. Additionally, Ticketmaster Entertainment includes: Sean Moriarty, president of Ticketmaster Entertainment, Inc. and chief executive officer of Ticketmaster; Terry

Barnes, chairman of Ticketmaster; Eric Korman, president of Ticketmaster; and Howard Kaufman, special advisor to Azoff.

Barry Diller, chairman of Ticketmaster, said in a statement, "While the Ticketmaster name has been synonymous with live entertainment for some time, today we took a significant step in solidifying our position in the music business. And, we will greatly benefit in having Irving Azoff lead Ticketmaster."

"Front Line and its artists have never had a better partner than Ticketmaster and Barry Diller," Azoff said in that same statement. "Now we have the opportunity to redefine the business at a time of great change and opportunity. Consumers, artists, teams and venues will all benefit from this exciting new Ticketmaster Entertainment platform going forward."

Industry reaction has been an optimistic wait-and-see so far. It's further evidence of the consolidation of the business and the concert industry had been the least consolidated, said Professor Frank Roach, University of South Carolina.

Bob Newman, COO of AEG Facilities, believes it is "truly exciting that the industry continues to reinvent itself. We're optimistic some good things will come from all aspects of that reinvention."

Peter Luukko, president of Comcast-Spectacor, called it a brilliant move by Barry Diller, hiring Azoff. "People have been heading in a certain direction by making acquisitions in terms of companies, and here Barry Diller made an acquisition of a top-notch executive who has tremendous experience in the promotion of events, management of artists, merchandising end of the business and other facets. I think it's a brilliant move and as we all know, Irving will stir the pot."

"Ticketmaster will have a direct link to artists, as does Live Nation, and you still have the real estate side where the building still will make that ticketing decision. It makes the Ticketmaster model more competitive," Luukko added.

Ticketmaster acquired the minority equity stake in Front Line that had been owned by Warner Music Group for approximately \$123 million in cash. In

connection with the transaction, Ticketmaster will issue restricted stock awards to Azoff representing approximately 4.5 percent of Ticketmaster's stock, and a portion of the equity stake in Front Line currently held by Azoff will be cancelled. Azoff will retain a sizable equity stake in Front Line and will continue to serve as its chief executive officer.

Under NASDAQ's inducement grant exception, Ticketmaster has agreed to grant to Azoff an award of Ticketmaster restricted equity in exchange for Front Line equity awards that he has agreed to forfeit. The grant includes \$35 million of restricted Ticketmaster preferred stock that is convertible at Azoff's election into 1.75 million shares of Ticketmaster common stock, and 1 million shares of restricted Ticketmaster common stock. The Ticketmaster equity awards generally vest on the five-year anniversary of the grant date, but may vest sooner upon certain qualifying terminations of employment. The Ticketmaster preferred stock votes on an as-converted basis with the Ticketmaster common stock and is mandatorily redeemable at face value plus accrued dividends on the five-year anniversary of the grant date. Ticketmaster has also agreed to grant Azoff options to purchase 2 million shares of Ticketmaster common stock at an exercise price of \$20 per share.

Ticketmaster operates in 20 global markets, providing ticket sales, ticket resale services, marketing and distribution through www.ticketmaster.com, one of the largest e-commerce sites on the Internet; approximately 6,700 retail outlets; and 19 worldwide call centers. Established in 1976, Ticketmaster boasts 10,000 clients worldwide and sold more than 141 million tickets valued at over \$8.3 billion on behalf of its clients in 2007.

Front Line Management Group, founded by Azoff and Howard Kaufman in 2004, has nearly 200 clients and more than 80 executive managers. Front Line represents major artists, including the Eagles, Jimmy Buffett, Neil Diamond, Van Halen, Fleetwood Mac, Christina Aguilera, Stevie Nicks, Aerosmith, Steely Dan, Chicago, Journey, and Guns N' Roses. - Linda Deckard

Contact: Albert Lopez, (310) 360-2602; Larry Solters, (213) 639-6169; Bob Newman, (213) 763-5425; Peter Luukko, (215) 389-9530; Frank Roach, (803) 777-5214

FAIRS & FESTIVALS ECONOMIC WOES BRING DOUBLE-DIGIT DROP TO SWING-STATE FAIR

Plenty of fried food fare at this year's North Carolina State Fair; Biting into a big ear of corn.



Rainy and unseasonably cold weather - with a touch of a rough economy - led to a nearly 11 percent decline in attendance at the North Carolina State Fair, Raleigh.

Attendance at the Oct. 16-26 fair was 765,067, down 10.89 percent over last year's 858,611, said GM Wesley Wyatt.

"Last year was an all-time record," Wyatt said. "Our attendance this year was 20,000 less than in 2006."

Wyatt had no hard figures, but anecdotal evidence also pointed to the economy playing a role.

"I can't quantify it, but I'm sure there are some people who chose to hold onto to their money and not venture out to the fair. But I don't have a clear number on how many felt that way."

In its third year providing a carnival for the fair, North Carolina-based Powers Great American Midways placed 115 rides on the midway.

Charlie Belknap, the carnival's director of marketing and public relations, said the show was down but not too much, and that a good season overall will help offset the numbers.

"We've had a great year this year," he said. "Where we've had great weather, we've been up. Our whole year is better than last year, and last year was a record year."

Powers teamed up with Spring Hill, Fla.-based Wade Shows, and popular rides included the RC-48 roller coaster, the Vortex and the Fireball, Wyatt said.

Patrons could take advantage of pay-one-price wristbands only on the first day of the fair. Those cost \$25, Wyatt said.

"That's all we wanted to do," Wyatt said. "We have a strong advance sale program so we don't think it's necessary to have other promotions."

Gate admission cost \$7 for adults and \$2 for ages 6 to 12. In advance, those numbers drop to \$5 and \$1.

"We were down slightly on advance sales," Wyatt said. "I think maybe another aggravating reason was the prevalence of political advertising, which bumped some of our advertising off the air."

Mike Pleasant, assistant general manager, who oversees the musical acts, said this year's budget to buy talent was \$700,000. Last year, the fair saw five sell-outs to this year's one.

"The economy hurt us this year," Pleasant said, also citing anecdotal evidence from other fair officials who have told him the same thing about their concerts. "We're probably not going to make money. We're probably going to lose a little money."

Acts that drew at least half the house included Christian rock band Skillet w/Leeland; Lady Antebellum w/Heidi Newfield; Montgomery Gentry, and a cooking show featuring Iron Chef Bobby Flay from the Food Network.

"We have found that country and Christian music does best here," Pleasant said, although he might expand the bill next year. "It all depends. I will look at the situation and see who is available. I wouldn't mind signing some rock and roll next year if I can find something reasonable."

Tickets for the shows ranged from \$8 to \$31.50, with Montgomery Gentry tickets costing the most. Other acts included Jason Aldean, Josh Turner, Bucky Covington, Rodney Atkins and Joe Nichols.

The overall fair budget is \$5 million to \$6 million, Wyatt said. The marketing budget was about \$300,000 and while traditional forms of media such as newspapers, TV, radio and billboards were utilized, the fair also branched out into viral marketing.

"We did do Facebook, MySpace and Twitter," Wyatt said. "I think it went pretty good."

Next year's dates will be Oct. 15-25. - Mary Wade Burnside

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DEALS

GLOBAL SPECTRUM EUROPE SIGNS NEW ARENA IN CROATIA; AEG FACILITIES ADDS 'KEY' ACCOUNT



Back row: Troy Flynn, general manager, The Spaladium Arena, Split, Croatia; Todd Wickner, Ovations Food Services; Vice Dodig, Sportski Grad. Front row: Phil Mead, director of Arenas, The NEC Group; Andriano Petkovic, Sportski Grad; Verdrana Tudor, Sportski Grad; Mich Sauers, Global Spectrum Europe.

A month after announcing the formation of **Global Spectrum Europe**, a joint venture between the NEC Group, Birmingham, England, and Global Spectrum of Philadelphia, the new management firm has announced its first contract. Global Spectrum Europe will manage the 12,000-seat **Spaladium** under construction in Split, Croatia. The Spaladium, which is scheduled to open on Dec. 27 with various national and local celebrity performances, features eight luxury suites, 500 club box seats, an additional practice facility and two club lounges.

Peter Luukko, president of Comcast-Spectacor and chairman of Global Spectrum, said this deal not only includes new contracts for two additional Comcast-Spectacor entities, sister companies to Global Spectrum, Ovations Food Services and Front Row Marketing Services, but will also offer some opportunities for the Philadelphia 76ers of the National Basketball Association. "What's neat, on the basketball side, we will have some relationships and tap into our resources," Luukko said.

Luukko was pleased with the NEC partnership. "They have an established presence in the U.K. and we thought it was a good way to enter that market. We had strategically stayed out of Europe to establish ourselves in North America, other than consulting. Split is our first foray." The partners have hired Richard Spencer to handle Global Spectrum Europe. The joint venture will approach each contract split deal by deal, depending on what services are used. NEC, though government owned, is very entrepreneurial, he added. "It's a great fit."

Mich Sauers, Comcast-Spectacor senior vice president and Global Spectrum Europe president, said this is a multi-year deal. Global Spectrum Europe's client, Sportski Grad TPN, a consortium consisting of two construction companies - Konstruktor and Dalekovod - and IGH, the civic engineering group, has a 30-year deal with local government to manage and develop the property, which will also include an office complex and parking garage in phase one.

It is similar to management contracts in the U.S., Sauers said, except other companies are part of the group and it is the first European contract for the joint venture. Troy Flynn, who had been assistant general manager at Sovereign Bank Arena, Trenton, N.J., is the on site manager for Global Spectrum Europe. He will be assisted by the NEC's Sonya Cox, sales manager, and Andrew Hendry, senior events manager. The city is a tourist destination and very scenic and upscale.

Sauers said they already have holds for family shows and concerts. Global Spectrum Europe is projecting 122 events in the first stabilized year, which will be year two. The basketball team plays 30-40 home games. There will be at least four major concerts and six minors, a lot of that booked through NEC's contacts with European promoters, Sauers said. The building also has plenty of floor space for trade and consumer shows.

Cost of construction was \$70 million for just the Split arena.

AEG Facilities has announced a one-year venue support and services agreement with the City of Seattle for **KeyArena**. Bob Newman, chief operating officer, AEG Facilities, likened the potential of the arena, which recently lost its National Basketball Association tenant, the SuperSonics, to that of another AEG venue, the Sprint Center, Kansas City, Mo., which also has no major league tenant. KeyArena is home to the WNBA Seattle Storm and Seattle University NCAA Division I men's basketball games.

AEG Facilities services will include management of sponsorships, advertising and premium seating sales and event-day operations. The firm was selected after an RFP and it helped that they already had a presence in Seattle, managing the WaMu Theater for the Seattle Seahawks, Newman said. Staff is already on the ground in Seattle, and will be supplemented as needed, he said.

"We are firm believers in the vibrancy of the Seattle market," Newman said. "Seattle Center has 10 million visitors a year already."

KeyArena seats 17,000 and, most important, is part of the Seattle Center Campus, which has numerous venues, including the Space Needle, and 74 acres available for events. Seattle Center was originally constructed for the 1962 Seattle World's Fair and was renovated in 1995.

This joint-venture partnership includes an option for a six-year extension pending approval by the Seattle City Council. — Linda Deckard

Interviewed for this story: Peter Luukko, (215) 389-9530; Mich Sauers, (727) 456-1171; Bob Newman, (213) 763-5425