

April Armbrust (Parnell)

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Quote of the Week

"We simply don't have the people, apparatus or the authority to go into markets and operate teams for the rest of the season."

— ECHL Commissioner Brian McKenna on the league's decision not to bail out the Augusta (Ga.) Lynx.

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Greetings April,

Welcome to VT Pulse, your weekly guide to the "News Behind the Headlines." Our December issue has mailed and you should be receiving your copies this week. We hope you have as much fun reading it as we did putting it together. Happy Holidays.

VT NEWS

SPORTS

ECHL PASSES ON LYNX BAILOUT, LEAVING AUGUSTA ARENA IN THE DARK

The Augusta (Ga.) Lynx's Brock Wilson squares up with the Mississippi Sea Wolves' Michael Couch during their March 22 match-up.



The Augusta (Ga.) Lynx are no more, becoming the first ECHL team to fold in the middle of the regular season.

That leaves the James Brown Arena with no tenant sports team and lots of available dates in 2009, explained building manager Monty Jones Jr. Global Spectrum took over management of the sports facility (which also includes the adjacent Bell Auditorium) in August and now has about 29 additional dates to fill, hopefully with concerts and family shows.

"We're going to be really aggressive about getting out there and booking those available dates," Jones added. "We have relationships with (Live Nation promoter) Wilson Howard, and we're going to leverage Global Spectrum's existing relationships to bring some shows to the building."

The Augusta Colts of the American Indoor Football Association also use the building, although the team has opted out of the 2009 season. Jones said the team has signed a lease with Global Spectrum to resume operations in 2010.

SHORT TAKES

>> NFL ANNOUNCES JOB CUTS IN FACE OF RECESSION

— Commissioner Roger Goodell announced he was cutting 150 jobs, or 14% of the staff, to help reduce league expenses by roughly \$50 million for 2009. The job cuts, to be implemented over the next two months, are said to be in places such as New York, New Jersey and Los Angeles, but would not affect the individual teams controlled by various clubs.
Contact: Paul Jackson, (212) 450-2000

>> TICKETMASTER HOSTS CHINESE DELEGATION —

Ticketmaster played host to a 17-member delegation of the National Youth League of China on Dec. 8. Lead by Li Erliang, publisher of China Profiles, the group met with Ticketmaster Entertainment's President, Sean Moriarty, as well as Ticketmaster's co-founder Albert Leffler. After the meeting, the group watched a Los Angeles Clippers game at the Staples Center.
Contact: Al Lopez, (310) 630-9569



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As for the Lynx, they won't be back — ever. Jones estimated that the Tampa Bay (Fla.) Lightning-affiliated team had lost about \$2.4 million during its 10 years at the James Brown Arena. The ownership group had appealed to the league for assistance on Dec. 2 and even returned their membership in an unsuccessful bid to convince the league to fork over \$200,000 to \$300,000 to take over operations and allow the team to finish the season. The league's Board of Governors rejected the request.

"We're a membership organization that depends on individual owners to own and operate their own teams," said ECHL Commissioner Brian McKenna. "We simply don't have the people, apparatus or the authority to go into markets and operate teams for the rest of the season. Whatever money the league has is the owners' money and when they weighed the status, the amount of time left in the season and the amount of money required to keep the team operating, versus the PR hit the league would take, the owner's decided it was best to cease operations."

McKenna said he was saddened by the "black eye" on the league and regretted that "this happened under my watch," but said the Lynx were a victim of the overall downturn in the economy. The team's ownership group included Augusta car dealers Dan Troutman, Robert Burch and Jan Hodges Burch, and "as we all know, that industry has fallen off a cliff since September," McKenna said. "They were funding a secondary business in their sports teams and the owners had to put their efforts into funding their primary business."

According to league reports, the Lynx were ranked 20th in league attendance, with about 1,600 fewer fans per game than the league average. McKenna said overall attendance was flat for 2008, but he said he expected the year to finish with revenues dropping five to 10 percent.

"It's not only our league, but all of minor league hockey," he said. "Teams that are well managed with multi-year sponsors and early season ticket sales seem to be doing well, while those who were slow to roll out ticket sales are having problems. We expect the next 12 to 18 months will be difficult, not just here but across all sports."

The ECHL was already down three teams at the beginning of the 2008 season. The Pensacola (Fla.) Ice Pilots lost their membership in June after the team owners folded the team, while the Columbia (S.C.) Inferno have opted out of the current season while it awaits upgrades to the Carolina Coliseum. The Toledo (Ohio) Walleye have also put their season on hold until a new downtown arena is completed.

New to the league this season is the Ontario (Calif.) Reign, replacing the Texas Wildcatters of Beaumont. — Dave Brooks

Interviewed for this article: Monty Jones Jr., (706) 722-3521; Brian McKenna, (609) 452-0770



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Linda Deckard
 Publisher, Editor-in-
 chief
 (714) 378-5400, ext. 22
linda@venuestoday.com

Dave Brooks
 Senior Writer &
 Assignment Editor
 (714) 378-5400, ext. 24
dave@venuestoday.com

Rob Ocampo
 Hot Tickets/Top Stops
 Manager
 (714) 378-5400, ext. 21
rob@venuestoday.com

**For advertising
 information,
 contact:**

Sue Nichols
 Eastern U.S.
 (615) 662-0252
sue@venuestoday.com

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 Texas
 (615) 243-7883
pauline@venuestoday.com

Rich DiGiacomo
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 International
 (310) 429-3678
rich@venuestoday.com

April Armbrust
 Director of Marketing &
 Sales
 (714) 378-0056
april@venuestoday.com

**To update a Fair or
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 the VT Resource
 Guide, contact:**

Nazarene Kahn
 Resource Guides
 Coordinator
 (714) 378-5400 ext. 25
resourceguides@venuestoday.com

Nicole Sorenson
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BOOKINGS

CONCERT INDUSTRY BRACES FOR SHAKY 2009

The next 12 months for the concert business have never
 been more unsure as officials from both AEG and Live
 Nation brace for a lagging consumer economy.

Concert attendance is slated to grow by 10 percent this
 year, but there will be no additional growth in 2009 due
 to a weakened economy, Live Nation CEO Michael
 Rapino said during the Reuters media summit on Dec. 4.

"We expect next year to hold its own. I'm not going to
 predict a boom," he said, adding that concerts in early
 2009 would be mostly unaffected by the recession, and
 in some cases are up from previous years as more big
 acts finish out their tours. The big test will come in
 April when summer concert tickets are put on sale," he
 said.

The news brought a 1.9 percent drop to Live Nation's
 beleaguered stock, which closed at \$4.10 on Thursday.
 The stock has plunged nearly 60 percent in the past 30
 days, even as the company posts strong quarterly
 earnings. Rapino said he thought his business would be
 able to weather the storm since most fans only went to
 one or two concerts a year and they would continue to
 save up for their favorite acts, even under difficult
 economic circumstances.

"We're not going out there saying we will grow the
 business next year," he added. "If we can get through
 the economic crisis on a flat comparable basis on
 inventory that would be an incredible win."

As for ticket prices, Rapino said he was hoping to hold
 the line at a \$49 average and added that he didn't
 expect artists to raise their guarantees as fans faced
 more difficult times.

"I don't think you'll see 2009 being the year when
 artists or their promoters look to increase ticket prices,
 he said. "I think you'll see a lot of middlemen look to
 figure out how to reduce prices to drive sales," he
 added.

Carrollton -
Coliseum Director

[VIEW THE FULL LISTINGS](#)

Rapino wasn't available for further comment, but the company's new VP of Ticketing Nathan Hubbard said the company's plan to roll out their new ticketing platform in the coming weeks would give Live Nation a new means of generating revenue and marketing to returning customers.

"Our new platform is going to change the relationship our fans have with the artists and the concert purchasing experience," he said. "We fully expect to find new ways to generate revenue, and while we're not necessarily forecasting that we'll be able to overcome any attendance shortfalls, the system will put us into a strong position going forward."

Hubbard said the first two quarters of 2009 will be spent testing the new ticketing technology and "finding any of the bugs in the consumer interface." He said he hopes the new system would play a large role in marketing its summer concert series.

"In this economy right now, I don't think anyone can predict where we are going to go," said Lee Zeidman, GM and VP of Staples Center and the Nokia Theatre L.A. Live. "The ticket-buying public is going to take a long hard look at a myriad of things when buying entertainment, and some people may scale back to one or two shows. They will be more cognizant of what they're going to see and be more selective with their discretionary income."

Two events in early 2009 have Zeidman feeling optimistic — a pair of Britney Spears concerts in April, with one that already sold out and another that is selling strong. Presales for the Shane Mosely v. Antonio Margarito fight on Jan. 24 are also very strong, Zeidman said.

"The economy seems to be changing on a daily basis," he added. "Everyone from the promoter to the booking agent to the artist needs to be on the same page as to how we're going to market these events."

Other big concerts for 2009 include a Live Nation brokered reunion of British pop band Blur at Hyde Park in London. Paul McCartney has announced plans to launch one final massive world tour, while Steve Tyler of Aerosmith said his group is considering one more jaunt on the road. — Dave Brooks

Interviewed for this story: Nathan Hubbard, (310) 867-7000; Lee Zeidman, (213) 742-7255

RENOVATIONS HARD ROCK'S JOINT SET TO REOPEN IN APRIL

Artist rendering of The Joint, which replaces a smaller club at the Hard Rock in Las Vegas



Las Vegas' perennial rock room "The Joint" is closing after 13 years in operation, but Sin City's hard rock fans won't have to wait long for a replacement. Host property Hard Rock Hotel and Casino is planning to reopen the venue in April with a new rock club twice the size of the old room.

The new club doubles to 4,000 GA (3,000 theater

seating) and will include a new sound system, ceiling rig and a massive 60-foot-by-40-foot stage.

“We’ve also really focused on improving our back of house capabilities,” said GM Paul Davis, who said the new facility includes improved green rooms, production offices, dressing rooms, a three-truck loading dock and fully wired high-speed internet.

The \$45 million project is part of a \$700 million renovation at the hotel, which also includes 1,000 additional hotel rooms, ballrooms and an expanded parking garage. The new Joint is being built on the property’s east parking lot, which was occasionally used for outdoor performances by The Killers, Incubus and other big name acts.

“The old Joint is great and is a very simple room, but operating in the same space for 13 years in Vegas makes it practically ancient and we decided to move on to something else,” Davis said.

AEG will continue to exclusively book the venue through its promotions arm Concerts West.

“We like to think of ourselves as a mid-sized venue that books arena-sized bands,” he said, adding that The Joint has hosted legends like The Rolling Stones, The Who and The Foo Fighters. He plans to close the old Joint on Feb. 6 & 7 with back-to-back concerts by Motley Crue.

Davis acknowledged that the grand opening comes at a difficult time for Las Vegas as the city reels from a housing crisis and out-of-town visitors begin to wane. Still, Davis said he’s optimistic about the future.

“For the most part, it’s been healthy. On the booking side, we’ve been much more cautious and we’re not buying everything we can possibly buy. We’ve passed on a lot of stuff,” he said. “Tickets are selling great. It’s the marginal bands that have already played two or three shows in the area that are taking a hit.” — Dave Brooks

Interviewed for this article: Paul Davis, (702) 693-4099

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 Nov. 18, 2008.

MATERIAL GIRL ROCKS HOTLANTA

15,001 or More Seats	10,001-15,000 Seats	5,001-10,000 Seats	5,000 or Less Seats
1) Madonna Gross Sales: \$2,683,536; Venue: Philips Arena, Atlanta ; Attendance: 16,297; Ticket Range: \$352-\$57; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: Nov. 24; No. of Shows: 1	1) Radio City Christmas Spectacular Gross Sales: \$3,378,826; Venue: 1st Mariner Arena, Baltimore ; Attendance: 62,641; Ticket Range: \$81-\$31; Promoter: MSG Entertainment; Dates: Dec. 2-7; No. of Shows: 12	1) Radio City Christmas Spectacular Gross Sales: \$32,158,885; Venue: Radio City Music Hall, New York ; Attendance: 483,492; Ticket Range: \$90-\$42; Promoter: MSG Entertainment; Dates: Nov. 10, 12-16, 18-Dec. 7; No. of Shows: 14	1) Billy Joel Gross Sales: \$2,420,438; Venue: Brisbane (Australia) Convention Centre ; Attendance: 23,321; Ticket Range: \$227.01-\$62.41; Promoter: The Frontier Touring Company; Dates: Dec. 4, 6; No. of Shows: 2
2) Neil Diamond Gross Sales: \$1,559,385; Venue: Air Canada Centre, Toronto, Ontario ; Attendance:	2) Trans-Siberian Orchestra - East Gross Sales: \$724,081; Venue: Verizon Wireless	2) Cirque du Soleil "Wintuk" Gross Sales: \$4,672,215; Venue: The WaMu	2) The Comedy Festival Gross Sales: \$2,403,750;

- 26,339; Ticket Range: \$94.12-\$42.51; Promoter: AEG Live, Concerts West; Dates: Dec. 2-3; No. of Shows: 2
- 3) AC/DC**
Gross Sales: \$1,380,000; Venue: **Xcel Energy Center, Saint Paul, Minn.**; Attendance: 15,419; Ticket Range: \$89.50; Promoter: Jam Productions; Dates: Nov. 23; No. of Shows: 1
- 4) Trans Siberian Orchestra**
Gross Sales: \$1,348,762; Venue: **Wachovia Complex, Philadelphia;** Attendance: 23,444; Ticket Range: \$60.50-\$24.75; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: Nov. 29; No. of Shows: 2
- 5) Coldplay**
Gross Sales: \$1,308,580; Venue: **American Airlines Center, Dallas;** Attendance: 15,483; Ticket Range: \$97.50-\$39.50; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: Nov. 19; No. of Shows: 1
- Arena, Manchester, N.H.;** Attendance: 15,399; Ticket Range: \$57.50-\$21; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: Nov. 27; No. of Shows: 2
- 3) Trans-Siberian Orchestra - West**
Gross Sales: \$566,225; Venue: **UTEP/Don Haskins Center, El Paso, Texas;** Attendance: 19,375; Ticket Range: \$49.50-\$27.75; Promoter: Live Nation, StarDate; Dates: Nov. 26; No. of Shows: 2
- 4) Alicia Keys**
Gross Sales: \$428,039; Venue: **Vector Arena, Auckland, New Zealand;** Attendance: 9,013; Ticket Range: \$80.88-\$48.53; Promoter: Frontier Touring Company; Dates: Dec. 6; No. of Shows: 1
- 5) Sarah Brightman**
Gross Sales: \$392,280; Venue: **Gwinnett Arena, Duluth, Ga.;** Attendance: 4,242; Ticket Range: \$250-\$45; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: Nov. 18; No. of Shows: 1
- Theater at Madison Square Garden, New York;** Attendance: 69,601; Ticket Range: \$220-\$30; Promoter: BASE Entertainment, Cirque du Soleil, MSG Entertainment; Dates: Nov. 26-30, Dec. 3-7; No. of Shows: 24
- 3) Las Vegas Invitational**
Gross Sales: \$515,380; Venue: **Orleans Arena, Las Vegas;** Attendance: 7,815; Ticket Range: \$168-\$94; Promoter: Basketball Promotions Inc.; Dates: Nov. 28-29; No. of Shows: 2
- 4) Bloc Party**
Gross Sales: \$505,557; Venue: **Hordern Pavilion, Sydney, Australia;** Attendance: 10,576; Ticket Range: \$51.71; Promoter: Secret Sounds; Dates: Nov. 25-26; No. of Shows: 2
- 5) Global Gathering**
Gross Sales: \$498,443; Venue: **Hordern Pavilion, Sydney, Australia;** Attendance: 7,014; Ticket Range: \$80.90-\$64.39; Promoter: Future Tours, Ministry of Sound; Dates: Nov. 30; No. of Shows: 1
- Venue: The Colosseum at Caesars Palace, Las Vegas;** Attendance: 29,280; Ticket Range: \$175-\$45; Promoter: AEG Live, TBS, In-house; Dates: Nov. 20-22; No. of Shows: 20
- 3) Bette Midler**
Gross Sales: \$1,855,147; Venue: **The Colosseum at Caesars Palace, Las Vegas;** Attendance: 12,877; Ticket Range: \$250-\$95; Promoter: AEG Live, Concerts West; Dates: Nov. 25-30; No. of Shows: 6
- 4) The Lion King**
Gross Sales: \$1,379,549; Venue: **Murat Centre, Indianapolis;** Attendance: 23,550; Ticket Range: \$132-\$19.50; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: Nov. 20-27; No. of Shows: 10
- 5) Jerry Seinfeld**
Gross Sales: \$867,555; Venue: **The Colosseum at Caesars Palace, Las Vegas;** Attendance: 8,061; Ticket Range: \$150-\$75; Promoter: AEG Live, Concerts West, In-house; Dates: Nov. 21-22; No. of Shows: 2

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

THE BEAT

DEALS

ROANOKE CIVIC CENTER HIRES GLOBAL SPECTRUM

Roanoke (Va.) Civic Center

Management Company: Global Spectrum

Terms: Effective Jan. 1, Global Spectrum will manage and operate the 10,000-seat, multi-purpose Roanoke (Va.) Civic Center. Chris Connolly is the new general



manager.

The agreement is for three years with a two-year renewal. Global Spectrum will receive a management fee of \$100,000 a year with a \$10,000 annual increase to a maximum of \$120,000.

In addition, the management firm will receive an incentive of 20 percent of gross revenues over \$2.5 million, escalating to \$3.2 million and up to \$45,000 in year one. Incentives also include another 10 percent of the potential or \$10,000 based on improved attendance numbers, calculated on an approved budget to be determined. Thirty-five percent of the incentive, which cannot exceed the base management fee, is qualitative, based on performance in marketing, maintenance and repair of the building.

Frank Russo, senior VP for Global Spectrum, said the contract zeroes in on what the client wants, a better functioning venue all around. It strikes a balance between revenues and customer service. "They got the results they want. It was a good, fair negotiation and both parties left the table feeling like we had a really good script for improving the performance of that building," Russo said.

In this particular instance, Ovations Food Services, also a Comcast-Spectacor company, was first in, having secured a concessions and catering contract in July 2007, said Robyn Schon, who had been interim director and will stay with the venue now as assistant general manager. "As the other three companies (also New Era Tickets and Front Row) establish themselves, especially Ovations, we are all Comcast-Spectacor Companies and we're always looking for that opportunity for our other companies," Russo added. Tickets.com handles ticketing in Roanoke.

Schon said SMG and VenuWorks also bid on the contract.

Connolly, a 10-year company veteran, will be in his new office in Roanoke Jan. 2. The building is closed Jan. 1. He is relocating to Roanoke from London, Ontario, Canada, where he served as assistant general manager at the Global Spectrum-managed John Labatt Centre, since 2005. He joined Global Spectrum as a Marketing and Hospitality coordinator at Wachovia Center, Philadelphia, after completing an internship there in the Premium Services Department in 1997.

In addition to the Roanoke Civic Center, Global Spectrum currently operates three other facilities in Virginia, including the Sandler Center for the Performing Arts in Virginia Beach; the Greater Richmond Convention Center; and the Ted F. Constant Convocation Center on the campus of Old Dominion University in Norfolk. - Linda Deckard

Interviewed for this story: Frank Russo, (860) 657-0634; Robyn Schon, (540) 853-6861

FACES AND PLACES

ROSNER DEPARTS TICKETSNOW FOR CHARITABLE PASTURES

Cheryl Rosner



Cheryl Rosner is out as CEO of TicketsNow, the company announced in a release Tuesday. Rosner said she had voluntarily decided to end her two-year tenure and plans to pursue a career in philanthropy.

"For me, I've decided that it's time to move on," she said in a brief telephone interview while attending meetings in Los Angeles. "I came on to do a specific job and the timing felt really good. Now that most of the transition work has been completed, I can move forward with a new chapter in my life."

After starting with the company in June 2007, Rosner oversaw the sale of TicketsNow to

Ticketmaster for \$265 million, bringing the primary giant into the resale world. She is set to officially resign on Dec. 19.

Rosner said she's leaving the company to pursue philanthropic work, although she said she was waiting until after the New Year to make her announcement.

"I feel like it would be a little premature to share this decision because it's a movement I've recently become involved with and I know they were waiting to make an announcement," she said.

Rosner is being replaced by Shawn Freeman, whom she hired from Hotels.com where they both once worked. Freeman will serve as president of TicketsNow

and senior VP of resale for Ticketmaster North America. He previously served as chief technology officer at TicketsNow.

In a July 23 interview with Venues Today at the National Association of Ticket Brokers meeting in Las Vegas, Rosner said she was brought on board to prepare the company for an acquisition and oversee the sale to a larger company.

“Ticketmaster was very interesting because of its audience share and the sheer number of people who visit the website, close to 15 million uniques,” she said. “There was a wonderful opportunity to think about combining that demand with the core asset of TicketsNow, which is our broker relationships and the supply side of our business. We wound up having some conversations with Ticketmaster and found that they were thinking along the same lines.”

Following the sale, the company laid off about 60 employees from its Chicago office. A short time later, founder Mike Domek left the company along with EventInventory division heads Nick Bucci and Ralph Garreffa. Under Rosner’s tenure, the company also changed its business model from a broker-to-consumer exchange, to a consumer-to-consumer exchange allowing fans to resell their tickets. — Dave Brooks

Interviewed for this article: Cheryl Rosner, (815) 444-9800

NAMING RIGHTS REPORT **BOJANGLES’ COLISEUM, CHARLOTTE, N.C.**

Date: Nov. 21

Terms: \$1.25 million over 10 years

Buyer: Bojangles’ Restaurants

Ownership: City of Charlotte

Facility Manager: Charlotte Regional
Visitors Authority



Comments: Charlotte City Council has approved a 10-year, \$1.25 million naming rights deal for the former Cricket Arena with Charlotte-based Bojangles’ Restaurants, a chicken-and-biscuits chain with 400 outlets in 11 states and three countries. The venue has been without a naming rights sponsor since 2005, when their deal with Cricket Communications ended. The venue hosts approximately 100 events including concerts, figure skating and rodeo annually, but has no main tenant.

“I cannot tell you how honored we are to be part of this historic building,” said Randy Poindexter, senior vice president of Marketing for Bojangles’.

Poindexter said the restaurant has had a 20-year relationship with the Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority, both as a sponsor and concessionaire. The naming rights deal came about on a chance discussion two years ago between Poindexter and CRVA contacts, during the annual Bojangles’ Shoot Out, a high school basketball tournament at the facility.

He called the contract “fairly inclusive” with signage inside and out, window graphics, and the use of the Bojangles’ name and logo on print and other media.

“Since we are a restaurant concept, it was important to us to have concession rights,” Poindexter said.

The facility’s concession area just inside the main entrance will be rebranded as a Bojangles’ restaurant and will serve their signature chicken sandwiches and freshly steeped ice tea.

“CRVA will operate it, but we do the training,” Poindexter said. “And we will get a commission on the sales.”

The new name, Bojangles’ Coliseum, pays tribute to the building’s history. It was built as the Charlotte Coliseum in 1955, though the name was changed to Independence Arena when a new coliseum was built for the Charlotte Hornets. The second coliseum has since been torn down and replaced with a third, Time Warner Cable Arena.

“The city was excited that we wanted to use Coliseum in the name,” Poindexter said.

Since the announcement, the local historic landmarks commission has asked that the venue’s exterior be designated a protected landmark. Poindexter said this would not impact their signage, which will be placed where the existing signage is.

“Our signage has already been approved by the city Planning Department,” Poindexter said. “We understand it’s a historical building, but we are not changing the structure.” – Liz Boardman

Contact: Randy Poindexter, (704) 940-8661