

April Armbrust (Parnell)

From: venuestoday [venuestoday@mail.vresp.com]
Sent: Wednesday, December 17, 2008 7:17 PM
To: april@venuestoday.com
Subject: VT Pulse, Dec. 17, 2008



VT PULSE

A WEEKLY PUBLICATION FROM VENUES TODAY

December 17, 2008 • VOL. VII, Number 39 • ISSN 1547-4143

Quote of the Week

"Our fair will change considerably with tall buildings all around."

— Jonathan Tunny on redevelopment plans for the fairgrounds in Brisbane, Australia

In this Issue

THE NEWS

[A Difficult Economy Shakes The Industry, But The Deals Continue To Get Done](#)

[AFL Votes To Suspend 2009 Season](#)

[Brisbane Fair Opts For Redevelopment Over Relocation](#)

[HOT TICKETS National Finals Rodeo Wins \\$9.5 Mil in Vegas](#)

THE BEAT

[Travelog: Optimism Abounds At IAFE Confab](#)

[Naming Rights Report](#)

[Faces & Places: Reno Joins Lane County Fair; Bjorklund Working Fuel](#)

DEPARTMENTS

[Short Takes](#)

[HELP WANTED](#)

[CONTACT VT PULSE](#)

Greetings April,

This edition of VT Pulse marks our 51st and final publication for 2008, so we begin with the Year in Review. You should have received our awesome Year-End *Venues Today* by now. Next time you hear from us it will be the January issue focusing on the INTIX and WFA conventions, stadiums, and Pacific Northwest venues. Happy New Year. And please read on for coverage of IAFE this week.

TurnkeySE.com to order your copy

2008 TURNKEY TEAM BRAND INDEX

- ✓ Brand report for all 122 teams in the NFL, NBA, NHL & MLB
- ✓ Team brand strengths & weaknesses market by market
- ✓ Fans grade every single team owner & management team
- ✓ Each team rated on 36 brand attributes & attribute importance
- ✓ Cost versus consumers' perceived value for every single team
- ✓ Sponsor Loyalty – whose fans most support their team's sponsors
- ✓ Most Admired Sponsors & Most Admired Leagues in 47 markets
- ✓ The definitive brand study for any team sponsor or team executive

The Turnkey Team Brand Index is a Property of Turnkey Sports & Entertainment - 856-685-1450

VT NEWS

YEAR IN REVIEW

A DIFFICULT ECONOMY SHAKES THE INDUSTRY, BUT THE DEALS CONTINUE TO GET DONE

It's been a rocky year for the entertainment business. While overall ticket sales have stayed strong, concerns about the future have many companies preparing for the worst.

And that makes the economy the story of 2008. High gas prices dominated the first three quarters of the year as promoters and entertainers tried to develop ways to entertain customers rocked by \$5-a-gallon gasoline. Then in October, the collapse of the stock market and the financial system brought on new concerns about the viability of live entertainment.

Suddenly, ticket sales weren't the only concern. Facility funding vehicles, like the auction-rate securities market, collapsed and threatened to slow construction on new projects in Dallas, New York and other municipalities.

SHORT TAKES

>> **ARIZONA PAC ON THE BLOCK?** — Following Nederlander Concert's decision to exit its management deal for the 7,034-seat Maricopa County Events Center, Sun City, Ariz., the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors has opted to return the venue to Arizona State University. ASU is considering a possible sale. The venue will close at least temporarily Dec. 31. Nederlander spent more than \$1 million upgrading the performing arts center, but could not make a go of it after three years in the highly competitive Phoenix marketplace.
Contact: Karen Stewart, (602) 372-4600



CONTACT US

To submit news or information, contact:

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

Sponsorships began to dry up, suite renewals dropped and layoffs became a reality at WNBA, the National Football League and Ticketsnow.

"It's a difficult time, but there's also a lot to be optimistic about," said AEG CEO and President Tim Leiweke. "The economic downturn has been on our radar for the past 18 months and we've tried to position ourselves to operate under these conditions. You can't ignore what's going on, but you have to see the bright light in this economy and realize that people will still invest in entertainment, even in the most difficult times."



The bloodiest battle of 2008 has been the ticketing wars between Live Nation and Ticketmaster. Promoter giant Live Nation hasn't formally launched its ticketing platform, but that hasn't stopped the company from pursuing an aggressive campaign to cut into Ticketmaster's monster market share.

In January, Live Nation announced that it had reached a deal with German-based CTS Eventim worth \$20 million to provide ticketing for its touring shows and nationwide network of amphitheaters. The deal wiped away 10 percent of Ticketmaster's clientele and threatened to shift the company's dominant market position as Live Nation announced plans to go after Ticketmaster's clients. In September, Live Nation announced that it had signed a deal to provide ticketing services for SMG, the world's largest venue management firm, a deal Ticketmaster CEO Sean Moriarty called "theatrics."

Tom Waits

Ticketmaster responded by making a number of acquisitions to boost its market share. In January, it purchased secondary ticket provider TicketsNow, giving the company a long-desired share in resale. Ticketmaster launched a paperless ticketing system to stop resale for shows by Tom Waits, AC/DC and Metallica and entered into a partnership with legendary band manager Irving Azoff. Ticketmaster's management has been mum on what the \$123 million merger means for the renamed Ticketmaster Entertainment, but many are wondering if the company plans to get into concert promotion. And remember, Moriarty did mention an interest in venue management when SMG struck its deal with Live Nation.



But the wars haven't been without their casualties. Ticketmaster's acquisitions have saddled the firm with additional debt, and its August IPO has been a disaster with its stock dropping in value by 80 percent in three months. Live Nation's stock has also seen a significant drop, despite rosy attendance numbers in the third quarter.

Kenneth Feld



The deal of the year goes to Kenneth Feld, who purchased Live Nation's motor sports division in a deal worth \$205 million. The deal expands Feld's empire into motocross and Monster Jam competition with big plans to expand both onto the international circuit. The deal marked the final sale of Live Nation's non-music assets, having sold its theater division to Key Brand Entertainment in February for \$90.5 million. In

If you no longer wish to receive these emails, please reply to this message with "Unsubscribe" in the subject line

Venues Today
 P.O. Box 2540
 Huntington Beach, California 92647

[Read the VerticalResponse marketing policy.](#)

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

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

Rich DiGiacomo
Mid & Western U.S.,
International
(310) 429-3678
rich@venuestoday.com

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

To update a Fair or
Festival Listing for
the VT Resource
Guide, contact:

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

Nicole Sorenson
Resource Guide Assistant
(714) 378-5400 ext. 26

**HELP
WANTED**

[VIEW THE FULL
LISTINGS](#)

Greater Richmond
(Va.) Convention
Center - Director of
Event Services

The Royal
Agricultural Society
of NSW, Australia -
Safety Manager

New Meadowlands
Stadium Company,
East Rutherford, NJ
- Vice President of
Facility Operations

[VIEW THE FULL
LISTINGS](#)

total, the company has sold off \$465 million in assets since 2006.

Portland (Ore.) Rose Quarter



AEG has been on a quieter growth spurt. In 2008, it signed a services deal to book and sell the Time Warner Arena, Charlotte, N.C., the AT&T Center in San Antonio and the Jobing.com Arena in

Glendale, Ariz. They also swiped away the management contract for the Portland (Ore.) Rose Garden from Global Spectrum in a deal that peeled management at parent company Comcast-Spectacor, which had managed the home of the Portland Trailblazers through its bankruptcy since 2006.

Struggling concessionaire Centerplate went private this year, signing a definitive merger agreement with an affiliate of Kohlberg & Company, a private equity firm, to be acquired in an all cash transaction. Kohlberg "merged" with Centerplate by combining a number of stock and bond options, in effect buying the company in a deal estimated to be worth \$185-\$200 million. The September deal, which is still pending in these tough economic times, wouldn't bring a change to the name of the company, and all senior management are expected to stay in place.

George Steinbrenner and Jerry Jones

The other big food deal went to sports owners Jerry Jones of the Dallas Cowboys and New York Yankees owner George Steinbrenner. The pair have joined forces to launch Legends Hospitality



Management, a full service concessions and merchandising entity that will service both teams' new stadiums, and pursue food contracts with other sports venues. The new venture has hired long-time Centerplate executive Dan Smith, who ran the company's Yankees operations for nearly 30 years, to serve as the firm's chief operating officer.

Independent promoters also grew their empires. Los Angeles-based Nederlander Entertainment signed a deal to provide exclusive talent-booking for Viejas Entertainment, owners and operators of the Concerts in the Park and Dreamcatcher venues, both in San Diego. Detroit-based Olympia Entertainment expanded its role at the city's Masonic Temple, moving from exclusive booker to building operator.

September brought the grand opening of the iconic, \$200 million, 18,000-seat BOK Center in Tulsa, Okla. Managed by SMG and headed by John Bolton, the Cesar Pelli-designed facility opened with a Sept. 6 concert by The Eagles. Bolton anticipates 100 major events, including 40 sports events and 16 concerts. The deal hopes to open up the Tulsa market as a concert destination for major country acts.

Oklahoma also gained its first professional basketball team when the Seattle Sonics left the KeyArena and relocated to the Ford Center in Oklahoma City. The deal came after the team's new ownership failed to win political concessions to get a publicly financed arena built in or around Seattle. — Compiled by Dave Brooks

Interviewed for this article: Tim Leiweke, (213) 742-7100

Stay visible to your clients with Venues Today!



Remind your customers that you are open and ready for business in our January issue. Major topics covered in the January:

- ** Pacific Northwest Venues
- ** Western Fairs Association Pre-Convention Coverage (ask your VT sales rep about the WFA advertising specials!)
- ** INTIX Pre-Convention Issue
- ** Stadiums

As always, it will go to all of **our subscribers**, AND will have bonus distribution here:

- **Western Fairs Association, Reno
- **All WFA Members
- **INTIX Convention, Salt Lake City
- **Stadium Managers Association, Palm Springs, Calif.

Contact your Venues Today account executive to reserve advertising space, and be sure to ask about the WFA advertising special!:

Eastern US * Sue Nichols * Ph: (615) 662-0252 * E: Sue@venuestoday.com

Texas *Pauline Davis * Ph: (615) 243-7883 * E: Pauline@venuestoday.com

Midwest & West Coast & Intl *Rich DiGiacomo * Ph: (310) 429-3678 *E: Rich@venuestoday.com

[Click here to visit our website and view advertising rates/sizes](#)

SPORTS AFL VOTES TO SUSPEND 2009 SEASON

The Kansas City Brigade is suspending play after one season at the Sprint Center as part of a league cancellation of the 2009 season.



After denying rumors of its imminent demise, the Arena Football League has now announced plans to suspend the 2009 season in a proposed restructuring. League owners voted Sunday night to suspend play and attempt to restructure the league into an entity that's more financially viable.

The cancellation means most arenas will lose about eight

home games, with an average attendance of 12,957 per event.

“We heard talk about the cancellation last week and we quickly began looking for replacements to fill those dates,” said Lee Zeidman of the Staples Center in Los Angeles, which hosts the L.A. Avengers. “It’s never a positive thing when you lose a sports franchise.”

Reports had surfaced on Dec. 10 that the league was in trouble after the New Orleans VooDoo franchise had collapsed, and a draft to disperse their player roster had been delayed. The league issued a statement the same day, stating “despite rumors and reports to the contrary, the 2009 season has not been suspended.”

But five days later, the league’s Board of Directors contradicted the previous statement, and announced the suspension of the 2009 season “subject to agreement and cooperation with the Arena Football League Players Association while the League works on developing a long-term plan to improve its economic model.”

Many fans found out about the deal when visiting their teams’ websites. The Utah Blaze replaced its homepage with a news story explaining the suspension, while the Avengers posted a press release explaining the stoppage. In total, about 400 players and coaches — as well as support staff — are out of work for the year.

“Every owner in the AFL is strongly committed to the league, the game and, most importantly, the fans,” interim commissioner Ed Policy said Monday in a statement.

“Owners, however, recognize that, especially in light of the current unprecedented economic climate, the AFL as a business enterprise needs to be restructured if it is to continue to provide its unique brand of this affordable, fan-friendly sport.”

The announcement brings a sudden end to the 22-year-old league, which brought football indoors and appealed to sports fans looking for an inexpensive alternative to the NFL. The league currently has 16 independently operated teams with a season that begins in March. The league had a variety of high-profile investors including Dallas Cowboys owner Jerry Jones, Atlanta Falcons owner Arthur Blake and rock star Jon Bon Jovi, who co-owned the Philadelphia Soul. NFL Hall of Famer John Elway owns a stake in the Colorado Crush and ESPN has a minority share in the league and was two years into a five-year TV deal to broadcast games on Monday nights.

It’s also particularly bad news for arenas like the Sprint Center in Kansas City, which opened in 2007 with the Kansas City Brigade operating as the sole sports tenant. Although the team was 3-13, it averaged 12,800 fans per game for eight home events per season.

Jim Renacci, a co-owner of the Columbus Destroyers and the vice chairman of the AFL’s executive committee, has been charged with reviving the league for 2010 — a feat many cautiously watch. Renacci said there was a possibility the league could resume play in 2009, although he was not optimistic.

“I think anything is possible, but at this point in time, we’re looking at spending the appropriate time,” said Renacci “What I was saying about the 2009 season was if we rushed and tried to do some things, I’m not sure if we would have done it.” — Dave Brooks

Interviewed for this article: Lee Zeidman, (213) 742-7255; Jim Renacci, (614) 246-4167



CONSTRUCTION
**BRISBANE FAIR OPTS FOR REDEVELOPMENT OVER
 RELOCATION**

*Jonathan Tunny, RNA, Brisbane, Australia, talks redevelopment with
 Jerry Bouma, Capital Ex, Edmonton, Alta.*



LAS VEGAS — The Royal National Association, Brisbane, Australia, which operates the Ekka, the city's annual fair, is looking at redevelopment of its 55 acres with a mix of commercial, retail and residential highrises ringing the traditional but improved showgrounds.

Jonathan Tunny, manager of the show and grounds who presented the project during the International Association of Fairs & Expositions convention here, said he is confident this will happen over the next 15 years, despite a failure to get it done for the last 15. His reasoning is that they have a solid plan and committed partners.

On Dec. 19, the RNA was to receive concrete proposals from a narrowed list of potential commercial partners, with plans to review those proposals over the next three months. The major interested developers are Lend Lease and Leighton Properties, both solid companies with proven track records which are committed to this project globally, not just locally, Tunny said.

Tunny listed several reasons this project should succeed, including that the showgrounds is located one mile from the central business district, that it features a lot of green space, and that it has an established sense of place. "Everyone knows about the Ekka," he said.

There had been discussion of moving the showgrounds outside town, but having watched what happened to the Royal Easter Show when it was moved from Sydney to Homebush to become part of the Olympics project, the RNA board thought again. Tunny said the Royal Easter Show has seen attendance drop from 1.4 million to 800,000 in Homebush. "That's why we're staying where we are," he said.

But it is critical to improve the efficiency of the showgrounds, which have been built up on an ad hoc basis without a master plan. The infrastructure is weak and during The Ekka, "it's a nightmare operationally," he said.

On the other hand, RNA does own the grounds outright. The plan with redevelopment is to lease land to the developers, which is a challenge. Australians like to own their homes and land, he admitted, but the potential partners are willing to work that way, he said.

In part, that is because "we made it easy for them,"

Tunny explained. All the RNA is asking upfront is that the partners cover \$3 million a year in interest on a \$65 million loan the RNA expects to get from the government. In 10 years, the RNA pays the government back. And the leaseholds are for up to 99 years.

That \$65 million isn't enough to do all the RNA hopes to accomplish, by far. Tunny said it would only cover the cost of renovating the show bag pavilion, which has an asbestos roof, and the large animal facility. "Those are two key buildings," he added.

Tunny admits the idea of high-rise residential and office space around a showgrounds is out of the ordinary. The newcomers will have to put up with the noise and the smell of a livestock facility. On the other hand, the project will attract people who like that environment and see the value of country-meets-city when 1,200 head of cattle are in the neighborhood.

He advised other fair managers looking at redevelopment to "consult with your government to find out what they want for your area." Brisbane was looking to turn the area that includes the RNA into a "smart city," comfortable to walk around and cycle around, so the RNA's green space plan fits the government's vision.

"But we need to revitalize our brand and optimize its value," Tunny added. To capture value, they realized they will need 5-25 story buildings, not two-stories. "Our fair will change considerably with tall buildings all around," he said.

Some in the audience asked about security concerns when the showgrounds becomes part of a neighborhood environment. Tunny said that the plan is to leave the grounds open as public space outside of the event dates. "We will see people walking through there all the time. Having people around provides its own security," he said. — Linda Deckard

Interviewed for this story: Jonathan Tunny, +61-7-3852-1831

HOT Tickets

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. 25, 2008.

NATIONAL FINALS RODEO WINS \$9.5 MIL IN VEGAS

15,001 or More Seats	10,001-15,000 Seats	5,001-10,000 Seats	5,000 or Less Seats
<p>1) 2008 National Finals Rodeo Gross Sales: \$9,592,795; Venue: Thomas & Mack Center, Las Vegas; Attendance: 158,913; Ticket Range: \$250-\$41.50; Promoter: LVE; Dates: Dec. 4-13; No. of Shows: 10</p>	<p>1) Kylie Minogue Gross Sales: \$1,200,058; Venue: Vector Arena, Auckland, New Zealand; Attendance: 19,975; Ticket Range: \$82.22-\$54.63; Promoter: Frontier Touring Company; Dates: Dec. 8-9; No. of Shows: 2</p>	<p>1) Smashing Pumpkins Gross Sales: \$548,332; Venue: Gibson Amphitheatre at Universal CityWalk, Calif.; Attendance: 11,550; Ticket Range: \$89.50-\$39.50; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: Dec. 2-3; No. of Shows: 2</p>	<p>1) Wicked Gross Sales: \$7,348,217; Venue: Orpheum Theatre, Minneapolis; Attendance: 101,025; Ticket Range: \$130-\$25; Promoter: Hennepin Theatre Trust; Dates: Nov. 5-Dec. 7; No. of Shows: 40</p>
<p>2) Tina Turner Gross Sales: \$3,842,065; Venue: Air Canada Centre, Toronto, Ontario; Attendance: 44,587; Ticket</p>	<p>2) Billy Joel Gross Sales: \$929,884; Venue: Vector Arena, Auckland, New Zealand; Attendance: 10,222; Ticket</p>	<p>2) New Kids On The Block Gross Sales: \$479,775; Venue: Nokia Theatre L.A. Live ;</p>	<p>2) Bette Midler Gross Sales: \$2,628,457; Venue: The Colosseum at Caesars Palace, Las Vegas; Attendance: 18,286; Ticket</p>

Range: \$124.67-\$48.01; Promoter: AEG Live, Concerts West, Marshall Arts; Dates: Nov. 13, Dec. 12-13; No. of Shows: 3

3) Billy Joel
Gross Sales: \$2,703,000; Venue: AcerArena, Sydney, Australia; Attendance: 25,525; Ticket Range: \$232.21-\$65.54; Promoter: Frontier Touring Company; Dates: Dec. 9, 11; No. of Shows: 2

4) AC/DC
Gross Sales: \$2,646,799; Venue: The Forum, Inglewood, Calif.; Attendance: 28,595; Ticket Range: \$93.50; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: Dec. 6, 8; No. of Shows: 2

5) Tina Turner
Gross Sales: \$2,571,933; Venue: Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum, Uniondale, N.Y.; Attendance: 25,005; Ticket Range: \$150-\$56.50; Promoter: AEG Live, Concerts West, Marshall Arts; Dates: Dec. 3-4; No. of Shows: 2

Range: \$206.37-\$78.68; Promoter: Frontier Touring Company; Dates: Dec. 14; No. of Shows: 1

3) Trans-Siberian Orchestra
Gross Sales: \$813,091; Venue: Dunkin Donuts Center, Providence, R.I.; Attendance: 17,482; Ticket Range: \$61.50-\$34.50; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: Dec. 10; No. of Shows: 2

4) Metallica
Gross Sales: \$774,417; Venue: Citizens Business Bank Arena, Ontario, Calif.; Attendance: 10,959; Ticket Range: \$77.50-\$57.50; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: Dec. 12; No. of Shows: 1

5) Neil Diamond
Gross Sales: \$701,106; Venue: DCU Center, Worcester, Mass.; Attendance: 9,505; Ticket Range: \$121.25-\$55; Promoter: AEG Live, Concerts West; Dates: Dec. 6; No. of Shows: 1

Attendance: 6,870; Ticket Range: \$82-\$42; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: Nov. 26; No. of Shows: 2

3) Cheech & Chong
Gross Sales: \$469,436; Venue: Gibson Amphitheatre at Universal CityWalk, Universal City, Calif.; Attendance: 6,882; Ticket Range: \$69.50; Promoter: AEG Live, Goldenvoice; Dates: Dec. 6; No. of Shows: 1

4) John Mayer
Gross Sales: \$461,480; Venue: Nokia Theatre L.A. Live; Attendance: 6,882; Ticket Range: \$69.50; Promoter: AEG Live, Goldenvoice; Dates: Dec. 6; No. of Shows: 1

5) Stevie Wonder
Gross Sales: \$423,000; Venue: Nokia Theatre L.A. Live; Attendance: 6,020; Ticket Range: \$115-\$45; Promoter: AEG Live, Goldenvoice; Dates: Dec. 13; No. of Shows: 1

Range: \$250-\$95; Promoter: AEG Live, Concerts West; Dates: Dec. 2-3, 5-7, 9-10; No. of Shows: 7

3) Trans-Siberian Orchestra
Gross Sales: \$649,173; Venue: i wireless Center, Moline, Ill.; Attendance: 16,320; Ticket Range: \$57.50-\$23.50; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: Dec. 13; No. of Shows: 2

4) Robin Williams
Gross Sales: \$460,304; Venue: Paramount Theatre, Seattle; Attendance: 5,654; Ticket Range: \$92-\$47; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: Dec. 5; No. of Shows: 2

5) Harry Connick Jr.
Gross Sales: \$442,452; Venue: Chicago Theatre; Attendance: 7,050; Ticket Range: \$72-\$37; Promoter: Jam Productions; Dates: Dec. 10-11; 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

TRAVELOG OPTIMISM ABOUNDS AT IAFE CONFAB

IAFE Chairman Rick Frenette of the Utah State Fair in Salt Lake City; The Orange County Fair gave viewers a glimpse of its new exhibition featuring musician Weird Al. Pictured at the rough cut screening of the film during IAFE are HOK's Meg Kullerd, Weird Al and HOK's Bill Bourne..



Tom Baker of the California Construction Authority offers a presentation on solar power at California fairs; new to the trade show this year was Greg Woody of Triangle Talent who perused the floor with his semi-domesticated baby hyena.



LAS VEGAS — The International Association of Fairs & Expositions show is wrapping up Dec. 18 after a four-day run at the Paris Hotel in Las Vegas. While the economy weighed heavily over those at the convention, attendees were optimistic about the future and said they believed the fairs and festivals industry could weather the economic uncertainty of 2009.

“People are nervous and you see an impact on the trade show floor,” said Rick Frenette of the Utah State Fair, who is outgoing chairman of IAFE. “A lot of performers and promoters are trying to get competitive and really give fair managers something of value.”

He said many fairs saw attendance up for the year, even in the face of a troubled economy. He added that smaller fairs are struggling to attend this year’s event because of local budgetary issues, saying that it’s difficult for many smaller fair boards to free up funding.

“I would say it’s a slower year than in the past,” said Ryan Pelton with American Icon Entertainment. Pelton performs as an Elvis Presley impersonator and helps book other tribute acts.

“Anyone who walks the tradeshow floor can sense the slowness, especially on Tuesday,” he said. “It just seemed like there was less traffic and I’ve found that more people are entering the market. For many years I did travel resort bookings and I think that model is slowly disappearing. People don’t want to pay for entertainment on top of expensive resort fees, so we’re taking our show on the road and we see fairs as a viable alternative.”

Pelton said he’s reducing guarantees to lure in fair managers, and other shows have indicated that they have reduced their fees. Pelton said he’s cut artist guarantees across the board by 15 percent until the new year, while electronic entertainment provider Dance Heads has dropped its fees from \$2,500 per day to \$1,500 per day.

The biggest launch showcased at IAFE appeared to be a traveling 3D movie featuring Weird Al. Titled “Weird Al’s Brain,” the traveling exhibition includes a film narrated by Al and a walk-through exhibit teaching attendees about the science of the brain. The exhibit is being produced by Steve Beazley and the Orange County Fair, Costa Mesa, Calif., with a startup cost near \$2.5 million. The show will be offered as a traveling exhibit to state and county fairs for approximately \$10,000-\$17,000 per day.

“It fulfills our mission to provide education and entertainment for our community,” Beazley said. “And Al seems like a natural choice. He’s known throughout the fair world and has a dedicated following in cities across the country.” — Dave Brooks

Interviewed for this story: Rick Frenette, (801) 538-8476; Ryan Pelton, (614) 352-6789; Steve Beazley, (714) 708-1500

NAMING RIGHTS REPORT

JACKSONVILLE (FLA.) MUNICIPAL STADIUM

Date Announced: Dec. 9

Tenant/Ownership: Jacksonville Jaguars/City of Jacksonville

Management: SMG

Comments: The Jacksonville Jaguars and city officials are negotiating changes to the naming rights deal for Jacksonville Municipal Stadium. Misty Skipper, spokesperson for Mayor John Peyton said the existing deal splits revenue from the sale of naming rights on a 50/50 basis, with 100 percent of any additional revenue from the sponsor going to the Jaguars.

“Under the proposed contract, we would receive 25 percent of total revenue from the sponsor,” Skipper said. “We feel the sum of the whole will be greater than a larger percentage of a part.”

Skipper said the deal also gives the Jaguars authority to sell naming rights to other areas within the stadium, like the Touchdown Club, and the will-call box. The team receives 100 percent of that revenue.

The Jacksonville City Council is expected to vote on the change in January. There are no imminent deals, Skipper said.

The venue has been without a naming rights partner for nearly two years, when a 10-year deal with Alltel Communications expired and was not renewed.

Contact: Misty Skipper, (904) 630-7377

CONSOL ENERGY ARENA, PITTSBURGH

Date Announced: Dec. 15

Terms: 21 years, price not disclosed

Buyer: Consol Energy

Tenant/Ownership: Pittsburgh Penguins (NHL)/Allegheny County Sports & Exhibition Authority

Comments: Canonsburg, Pa.-based Consol Energy has agreed to put its name on the Pittsburgh Penguin’s new \$310 million arena, which is slated to open in 2010. The terms of the 21-year deal have not been released. Consol Energy, the largest producer of high-Btu bituminous coal in the United States, has been a major sponsor of the hockey team for several years. Last year, the company sponsored a giant television screen outside Mellon Arena, so fans who could not get tickets could watch the team play in the Stanley Cup playoffs. They also sponsor a video played prior to each home game.

The Penguins currently play at Mellon Arena, a name that is expected to remain the same, despite their sponsor’s name change from Mellon Bank to The Bank of New York Mellon, or BNY Mellon. Interior signs reflect the bank’s name change, but the arena will keep the old name, because it is so well branded. — Liz Boardman

Contact: Joseph Cerenzia, (412) 996-8823

FACES & PLACES

RENO JOINS LANE COUNTY FAIR; BJORKLUND WORKING FUEL

Valerie Major and Rick Reno of the Lane County Fair.



Rick Reno, formerly director of the Crown Coliseum, Fayetteville, N.C., has assumed the post of director of the Lane Events Center and Fairgrounds, Eugene, Ore. Reno made the move Nov. 24. He attended the International Association of Fairs & Expositions in Las Vegas, Dec. 15-18, as a fair manager. His charge is to increase off season usage of the

grounds.

Rick Bjorklund, formerly with the Tulsa (Okla.) State Fair, is helping to promote an event at May Farms, Byers, Colo., called Fuel. The June 12-14 event will be the first energy festival in an agricultural setting, he said. It has the support of the Governor and the Colorado Department of Agriculture. — Linda Deckard

Interviewed for this story: Rick Reno, (541) 682-4292