

# VT PULSE

A WEEKLY PUBLICATION FROM VENUES TODAY

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## Quote of the Week

*"Typically when we talk about sustainability, we're referring to green efforts...But we should ask ourselves if the concert industry, as it currently operates, is itself sustainable."*

— Michael Enoch of Live Nation during an IAAM Los Angeles chapter meeting.

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## Greetings April,

Welcome to VT Pulse, your weekly guide to the "News Behind the Headlines." We're back after taking last week to put the finishing touches on the April magazine. Enjoy.



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## VT NEWS

### BOOKINGS

**SANTANA BRINGS ROCK CRED TO VEGAS RESIDENCY SCENE**

*Poster of Carlos Santana for his upcoming residency at The New*

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## SHORT TAKES

>> **AMERICAN AIRLINES ARENA GOES GREEN** — American Airlines Arena in Miami is now LEED certified, making it one of only two venues in the United States to receive the designation by the U.S. Green Building Council. Some of the features of the venue that made the certification possible are water-efficient landscaping, green roofing materials and underground parking.  
*Contact: Michael*

*Joint, Las Vegas.*



As the first generation of Las Vegas talent continues to fade into the desert night, Sin City has seen a slow, steady takeover from a parade of more contemporary artists such as Cher, Elton John, Bette Midler, Prince and Celine Dion, who've all booked residencies in the city over the past few years.

But, until now, there hasn't been a true rock and roll act that has committed to playing a string of dates in Vegas. AEG Live announced last week that 11-time Grammy-winning rock legend Carlos Santana will launch his "Supernatural Santana: A Trip Through the Hits" show on May 27 and play 36 shows through 2010 at The Joint at the Hard Rock Hotel and Casino.

"One of biggest [factors in getting Santana to commit] is that it reduces the pressure for an artist to go out and tour every single year," explained John Meglen, president & co-CEO of AEG Live/Concerts West about how the group convinced the hard-touring guitarist to put down roots. "And this is the ultimate show you'd want to see. It's like seeing Santana at the Fillmore [in

Goldfarb, (305) 448-6163

## >> PROJECTS GROUP TO OVERSEE NEW PAC

— The Bexar County Performing Arts Foundation, San Antonio, has selected The Projects Group to oversee redevelopment of the Municipal Auditorium and the San Antonio Fire Headquarters building into a performing arts center. The new venue is scheduled to open in 2013 and will cost \$132 million.

Contact: Rodney Smith, (210) 223-3333

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San Francisco], but maybe that guy in Iowa never had a chance to do that. With this, you can experience your favorite rock star in an intimate situation set up for rock and roll."

The new, 2,591-seat, \$60-million venue will re-open this month with a pair of shows by hometown heroes the Killers (April 17) and Paul McCartney (April 19). As part of the exclusive deal with AEG, the guitarist, who has sold more than 90 million records over the span of a 40-year career, will not play any other shows West of the Mississippi over the next two years.

Paul Davis, VP of Entertainment for the Hard Rock, said there have been a handful of artists the venue has pursued over the years for this kind of engagement, with Santana frequently topping that list. "We love it immediately and AEG and the Hard Rock felt it was the right artist at the right time in his career and the right time for the property," he said.

Santana's first stint will run from May 27-June 14, with a scheduled return in September. Tickets for the first string of dates are priced at \$79, \$89, \$129, \$155, \$229 and \$299, before taxes and fees, with the top-tier ticket coming in as the most expensive to date for a show that is in town for more than a one-night engagement, but which Meglen said was more than worth it for a chance to see an artist of Santana's caliber in a club-size venue.

The \$299 VIP suite seats represent 84 out of the 3,000 in the venue for each show, while the \$229 tickets are for VIP table seats on the same third level as the top tickets.

Meglen declined to discuss the cost of building the Santana staging, but said it was included in the cost of the deal and that while it will not be a Cirque-style lavish set, it will take fans on a journey through the bandleader's entire career with top-notch production values. The significant staging can be quickly loaded in and out to accommodate other touring dates.

While the sour economy has slowed down the rush to get more residencies up and running, Meglen said AEG believes in the model long term and is still looking for more candidates for Vegas. To that end, AEG will be marketing the Santana shows aggressively through the Hard Rock Hotel's mailing lists, in the artist's Bay Area

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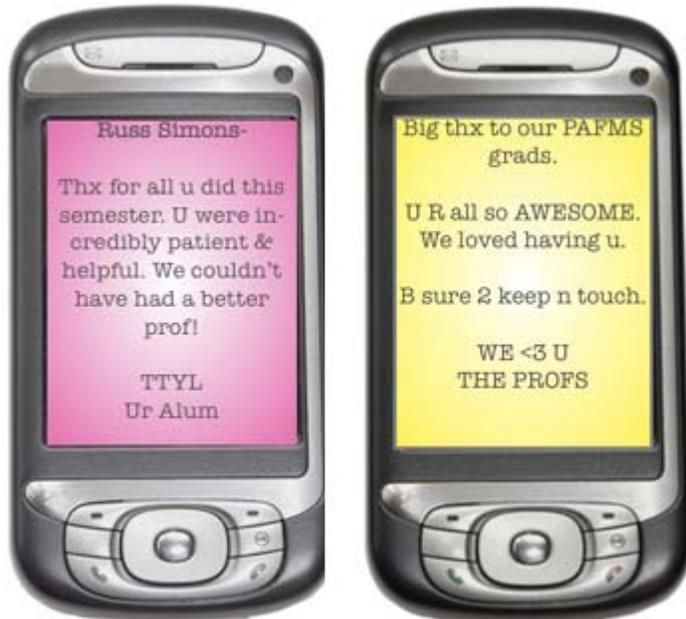
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home base, to the Latin community in the Southwest and with a "tremendous" amount of online marketing, direct marketing and package deals with hotels, restaurants, Vegas experiences and airlines.

"The one thing about Vegas is we all support each other's programming," he said. "The better entertainment we have in Vegas, the better all around it is for everyone."

The Santana residency will take some dates off the calendar for the Joint, but Davis said the fact that three out of the four committed days of the run are on Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday - three typically slow days for touring acts - helps alleviate too many hard booking decisions. Meglen would not discuss what Santana's, the Joint's or AEG's take could be on the shows, but said he thinks it will be "close" to sell-out business on a regular basis and that in these hard economic times, he's "cautiously optimistic" that the booking will be a home run. — Gil Kaufman

*Interviewed for this article: Paul Davis, (702) 693-4099;  
John Meglen, (323) 930-5700*



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### BEHIND THE HEADLINES

## FARGODOME HITS THE BAGS AS RED RIVER RISES

*Volunteers busily build sand bags inside the Fargodome, Fargo, N.D. The sand bags were used to fight flood water from the Red River.*



Usually host to rodeos and concerts, the Fargodome in Fargo, N.D., spent the last week of March serving as a staging site for the sandbagging operation that city officials hoped would save the North Dakota city from the rising waters of the Red River.

Sandbagging had begun at a city garbage utility, but had moved inside to the arena floor, with the blessing of the football coach of North Dakota State University, which calls the 17-year-old, 20,000-capacity arena home. The Fargodome is owned by the city of Fargo and managed by Global Spectrum.

A PRCA Championship Rodeo was scheduled to appear in the Fargodome on March 27 and 28, but because of the potential flood and the water's predicted crest around that time, the rodeo promoter canceled the event, said venue GM Rob Sobolik.

Once North Dakota State football coach Craig Bohl agreed to postpone practices, artificial turf was pulled up and sand was hauled in so volunteers could fill up sandbags.

"He had the team filling sandbags," Sobolik said of Coach Bohl.

Sobolik does not have exact figures, but in the two locations, between 80,000 and 90,000 volunteers filled 3.5 million sandbags with about 100,000 tons of sand.

Volunteers worked from March 23 through March 27, stopped for one day and worked another day-and-a-half on March 28 and 29 as the river crested at a lower-than-expected 40.85 feet, therefore not breaching the sandbag levies.

After the sandbagging operation ended, the cleanup began. Fargodome officials contracted with Munters Corp., which cleaned the Superdome after Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, Sobolik said.

The cost for the cleanup will be \$430,000, Sobolik said. Other costs associated with the sandbag process have not been completely tallied, but he expects them to be in the neighborhood of an additional \$150,000, for a project total of \$600,000 or even more.

"In our conversations with the city of Fargo, they are expecting FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) to cover 75 percent of it," Sobolik said. "The state of North Dakota will cover 15 percent of it and the city of Fargo 10 percent. We do not anticipate any expenses from this to hit the Fargodome annual operating budget," which usually consists of \$4 million in revenues and \$3.9 million in expenses.

But it did cause the Fargodome to postpone two other events - a consumer show and a Shrine Circus appearance, which has been rescheduled for April 17-19. The Harlem Globetrotters will perform in the newly-cleaned arena on April 12 and the Elton John/Billy Joel

Face 2 Face Tour will hit the Fargodome May 2.

In the meantime, city officials are waiting to see if predictions for a second large crest of the Red River takes place during the week of April 15-22. The mayor of Fargo, Dennis Walaker, said forecasters have predicted a 75-percent chance of a 41.5-foot crest and a 25-percent chance of a 42.5-foot crest.

Any additional sandbag stuffing that takes place at the Fargodome will be performed in the parking lots and will not interfere with events or shows, Walaker said. — Mary Wade Burnside

Interviewed for this story: Rob Sobolik, (701) 241-9100; Mayor Dennis Walaker, (701) 241-1310

## ECONOMY

### IAAM CANCELS MORE MEETINGS AS ECONOMY



### SINKS TRAVEL BUDGETS

The economy has again struck the public facilities industry with the cancellation of several International Association of Assembly Managers (IAAM) meetings.

The latest victim: IAAM's International Stadium Managers Conference, scheduled for Kansas City, Mo., this May. IAAM has already canceled meetings for District 1, District 5, District 6 and District 7.

"The ISMC meeting will now be conducted as a webinar," explained IAAM Sponsorship Director Brenda Pennington, who said registered attendance at ISMC was below what is required to make the meeting economically feasible. Many of the sessions will be streamed over the Internet on May 13 and 14. The one-day cost for an IAAM member is \$125 and the two-day cost is \$175.

One reason for the drop in attendance is that revenue-strapped local and state governments run many of the facilities. With government agencies struggling to balance their budgets, it's increasingly difficult to justify travel expenses.

Dawn Sousa from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, said her marketing team was not planning on attending the Event and Arena Marketing Conference in Colorado Springs, Colo., on June 9-13, despite a rather upbeat year with bookings.

"We're expecting attendance to be down this year, based on what we're hearing," said Jim Delaney of Boston-based Activate Sports, which is organizing this year's EAMC. "Fortunately, we're going to a smaller market (last year's conference was in Washington, D.C.), so in terms of costs, this will be a lot more affordable."

Delaney said that he would have a better idea where attendance stands at the end of April once the early bird registration deadline passes. Delaney said his sponsorship revenues had remained relatively stable — only the WWE has not re-upped its support for the annual conference.

IAAM President Robyn Williams said her association was getting nervous about its annual conference, to be held in Boston, July 24-28. During a speech at an IAAM Los Angeles Chapter meeting, she said her group recognized that Boston is generally an expensive city for travel and also said that the event is "one of the main ways IAAM makes it money."

And while she said she likes the idea of webinars for

those who can't afford travel, she pointed out that "this is not the time to be insular" and that participants for internet-based professional education often "miss out on the opportunity to network and learn from their peers."

One alternative is the emergence of local chapter meetings, where building managers in the same or equivalent market get together regularly to discuss issues, she noted. The proximity of the meetings allows more opportunity for individuals to attend. — Dave Brooks

*Interviewed for this article: Brenda Pennington, (972) 538-1013; Robyn Williams, (503) 274-6565; Jim Delaney, (617) 851-6011*

## **CONCESSIONS**

### **LEVY RESTAURANTS GEARS UP FOR SEASON AT WASHINGTON NATIONALS BALLPARK**

Major League Baseball kicks off its preseason this week, and the Washington Nationals open their season with new menu options and four new concession stand concepts from new concessionaire Levy Restaurants. Levy took over the contract from Centerplate, which provided concessions to the stadium during its inaugural 2008 run. Levy already handled catering.

The team and Levy made major improvements to the Red Porch Restaurant in the Center Field Plaza. This restaurant is open to all fans beginning two-and-a-half hours before game time.

"The Red Porch Restaurant was one of the last things we finished last year," said Chartese Burnett, V.P. of communications for the Washington Nationals. "So, we wanted to tweak the looks of that. We are doing some tweaking to other areas as well."

The Red Porch now has outdoor dining patios on two sides with an awning. Sliding glass panels and rollup glass doors open to expose both the Center Field Plaza and the playing field to provide a great viewing experience for the diners. The new menu features three styles of wings, including Thai-style chili wings, an Italian chopped salad pizza, and a selection of Minor League Kids Meals for \$6.

The Chicago-based Levy Restaurants was not expected to

make any construction changes, but four new concessions concepts were introduced at the park including a Healthy Plate cart, featuring healthy wraps, fresh salads, vegetables and hummus and fresh fruit. The Healthy Plate concept is in only one other Levy-served sports stadium, Dodger Stadium, home to the LA Dodgers, said Dave Meyers, director of operations, Levy Restaurants.

Another new concept is The Triple Play Grill, located on the left field side and offering pulled pork sandwiches and a foot-long Crab Louie sandwich. The Pit at the Red Loft will open mid-season and will serve traditional pit barbeque prepared on a charcoal grill. There will also be a barbeque concession stand that will open mid-season on the main concourse and serve ribs, pulled pork and brisket.

Additional menu boards have been added to 40 concession stands increasing visibility throughout the park. The team will offer three value meals at various stands, all at a cost of \$7.

Meyers said Ben's Chili Bowl, a D.C. tradition, will stay at the stadium. It was already being served. "We are looking forward to an upgrade of service," Burnett said. "We are very excited."

The regular season home opener for the Nationals is April 13 against the Philadelphia Phillies.

The Chicago-based Levy Restaurant now provides food operations to six MLB parks. — Pam Sherborne

*Interviewed for this story: Dave Meyers, (312) 335-5133; Chartese Burnett, (202) 675-5100*

## 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 April 7, 2009.

### FLEETWOOD MAC SPREADS RUMORS AROUND ROCHESTER

15,001 or More Seats	10,001-15,000 Seats	5,001-10,000 Seats	5,000 or Less Seats
1) Billy Joel &	1) Fleetwood	1) Elton John	1) Bette Midler

<p><b>Elton John</b> Gross Sales: \$3,596,465; Venue: <b>Honda Center,</b> <b>Anaheim, Calif.;</b> Attendance: 33,548; Ticket Range: \$180- \$45.50; Promoter: AEG Live, Goldenvoice; Dates: March 28,30; No. of Shows: 2</p>	<p><b>Mac</b> Gross Sales: \$717,450; Venue: <b>Blue Cross</b> <b>Arena, East</b> <b>Rochester, N.Y.;</b> Attendance: 8,183; Ticket Range: \$146.50- \$46.50; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: March 16; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p>Gross Sales: \$1,066,523; Venue: <b>The</b> <b>Colorado Springs</b> <b>(Colo.) World</b> <b>Arena and Ice</b> <b>Hall;</b> Attendance: 9,577; Ticket Range: \$127-\$67; Promoter: AEG Live, Goldenvoice; Dates: April 4; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p>Gross Sales: \$3,993,852; Venue: <b>The</b> <b>Colosseum at</b> <b>Caesars Palace,</b> <b>Las Vegas;</b> Attendance: 26,885; Ticket Range: \$250-\$95; Promoter: AEG Live, Concerts West; Dates: March 24-25, 27- 29, 31-April 1, 3- 5; No. of Shows: 10</p>
<p><b>2) Fleetwood Mac</b> Gross Sales: \$1,708,005; Venue: <b>Madison Square</b> <b>Garden Arena,</b> <b>New York;</b> Attendance: 14,955; Ticket Range: \$175-\$45; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: March 19; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p><b>2) Elton John</b> Gross Sales: \$645,130; Venue: <b>Laramie (Wyo.)</b> <b>Arena</b> <b>Auditorium;</b> Attendance: 10,170; Ticket Range: \$125-\$35; Promoter: AEG Live, Goldenvoice; Dates: April 3; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p><b>2) Fleetwood</b> <b>Mac</b> Gross Sales: \$904,625; Venue: <b>Mohegan Sun</b> <b>Arena,</b> <b>Uncasville,</b> <b>Conn.;</b> Attendance: 8,155; Ticket Range: \$175- \$125; Promoter: Live Nation, Mohegan Sun; Dates: March 14; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p><b>2) Dame Edna</b> Gross Sales: \$1,005,257; Venue: <b>Parker</b> <b>Playhouse, Fort</b> <b>Lauderdale, Fla.;</b> Attendance: 19,441; Ticket Range: \$58-\$15; Promoter: Broadway Across America, Broward Center for the Performing Arts; Dates: March 10- 28; No. of Shows: 20</p>
<p><b>3) 2009 Cinoco</b> <b>Mountain West</b> <b>Conference</b> <b>Basketball</b> <b>Championships</b> Gross Sales: \$1,521,387; Venue: <b>Thomas &amp; Mack</b> <b>Center, Las Vegas;</b> Attendance: 56,263; Ticket Range: \$45-\$20; Promoter: LVE; Dates: March 10- 14; No. of Shows: 16</p>	<p><b>3) Kings of Leon</b> Gross Sales: \$530,677; Venue: <b>Vector Arena,</b> <b>Auckland, New</b> <b>Zealand;</b> Attendance: 11,855; Ticket Range: \$53.55; Promoter: Frontier Touring Company; Dates: March 25; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p><b>3) Elton John</b> Gross Sales: \$734,149; Venue: <b>Rushmore Plaza</b> <b>Civic Center</b> <b>Arena, Rapid</b> <b>City, S.D.;</b> Attendance: 9,107; Ticket Range: \$94.50- \$44.50; Promoter: AEG Live, Goldenvoice; Dates: April 2;</p>	<p><b>3) Riverdance</b> Gross Sales: \$972,690; Venue: <b>Hershey (Pa.)</b> <b>Theatre;</b> Attendance: 14,493; Ticket Range: \$80-\$45; Promoter: HE&amp;R; Dates: March 24- 29; No. of Shows: 8</p>
<p><b>4) Bruce</b> <b>Sprinasteen &amp; The</b></p>	<p><b>4) Lil' Wayne</b> Gross Sales: \$428.314; Venue:</p>		

<p><b>E Street Band</b> Gross Sales: \$1,377,875; Venue: <b>Jobing.com</b> <b>Arena, Glendale,</b> <b>Ariz.;</b> Attendance: 15,433; Ticket Range: \$95-\$65; Promoter: Jam Productions; Dates: April 3; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p><b>Dunkin Donuts</b> <b>Center,</b> <b>Providence, R.I.;</b> Attendance: 7,265; Ticket Range: \$150- \$29.75; Promoter: In- house, Live Nation; Dates: March 17; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p>No. of Shows: 1 <b>4) Prince</b> Gross Sales: \$539,000; Venue: <b>Nokia Theatre</b> <b>L.A. Live;</b> Attendance: 7,000; Ticket Range: \$77; Promoter: AEG Live, Goldenvoice; Dates: March 28; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p><b>4) Legally Blonde</b> Gross Sales: \$861,544; Venue: <b>Bob Carr</b> <b>Performing Arts</b> <b>Center, Orlando,</b> <b>Fla.;</b> Attendance: 17,141; Ticket Range: \$67-\$38; Promoter: PTG Florida; Dates: March 10-15; No. of Shows: 8</p>
<p><b>5) Fleetwood Mac</b> Gross Sales: \$1,277,092; Venue: <b>Izod Center, East</b> <b>Rutherford, N.J.;</b> Attendance: 13,306; Ticket Range: \$146.50- \$22; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: March 21; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p><b>5) Motley Crue</b> Gross Sales: \$423,298; Venue: <b>Verizon Wireless</b> <b>Arena,</b> <b>Manchester,</b> <b>N.H.;</b> Attendance: 7,499; Ticket Range: \$75- \$29.50; Promoter: In- house, Live Nation; Dates: March 17; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p><b>5) Motley Crue</b> Gross Sales: \$378,778; Venue: <b>Mohegan Sun</b> <b>Arena,</b> <b>Uncasville,</b> <b>Conn.;</b> Attendance: 7,505; Ticket Range: \$81.50- \$61.50; Promoter: Live Nation, In-house; Dates: March 13; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p><b>5) Rent</b> Gross Sales: \$764,706; Venue: <b>San Diego Civic</b> <b>Theatre;</b> Attendance: 14,775; Ticket Range: \$82-\$20; Promoter: Nederlander; Dates: March 10- 15; No. of Shows: 8</p>

Compiled by Rob Ocampo and Riley Camarillo. To submit reports, e-mail [HotTickets@venuestoday.com](mailto:HotTickets@venuestoday.com) or fax to (714) 378-0040.



## THE BEAT

### GRAND OPENINGS HARTMAN ARENA WOWS THE AUDIENCE

*Alan Jackson performs at the Hartman Arena in Wichita, Kan. (Photo by Mark Reimer)*

The privately owned and operated Hartman Arena, Wichita, Kan., has met and

exceeded expectations, according to John Nath, general manager of the venue and veteran of 32 years in the business.

The \$20 million, 6,700-capacity venue hosted its first concert, Alan Jackson, March 28, on the heels of the worst snowstorm in Wichita in 30 years. About 100 people from Western Kansas had to cancel, but there was plenty of warning so the true fans just booked a hotel in town the night before the show, Nath said.

The concert drew 5,500 fans, a sellout, grossing \$293,000. Sodexho handles concessions. Nath said per caps were \$10. "It was a great opening."

Reid Hatch, general manager for Sodexho, said the concessionaire has six permanent stands and a variety of portables, accounting for 28-35 points of sale. He has a fulltime staff of eight and hires non-profit organizations to man the stands, accounting for a workforce of 75-100. Menu items include the 100 percent Black Angus Quarter Pound Hot Dog (this is Kansas), for \$4; a 24-ounce beer, \$6.50; soda, \$3; and popcorn, \$4.

The true wow factor comes from the Law Kingdon Architects design, which has the arena bowl built underground and the street level concourse open to the bowl. When a patron hands over his ticket and walks into the arena, he's immediately in the show or game. There's no transitional concourse area with vomitories to the seating bowl. "It's like the world's biggest nightclub," Nath said. "The whole thing is open to the performance area."

The original concept had been for a sports arena. When Nath and crew came over from the Kansas Coliseum across the street (and still operating), the numbers for a sports arena did not pencil out. Nath said they immediately recommended changes in design, including additional steel in the ceiling for concerts and rigging.

Nath believes this design will be copied elsewhere. The outside is pretty much a box and the arena is located in the suburbs in the middle of a development that is not developed. It's actually 10 miles outside of Wichita in Park City.

The arena was built and is owned by Hartman Oil which, also owns the resident Indoor Football League team, the Wichita Wild. That team drew 4,400 to its opening game April 4, Nath said. They drew 1,500-2,000 on average at their old home, Kansas Coliseum. Nath attributed the huge turnout in part to the honeymoon period for a new building, but added Hartman Oil chose to build its own arena, which seats 5,100 for football, because they are realistic about the draw. They did not want to move to the new 15,000-seat Intrust Arena owned by Sedgwick County, which opens in 2010 and essentially replaces Kansas Coliseum, Nath said.

Nath projected 15 concerts and 85 event days for the first 12 months of operation. Hartman Arena will make cash flow, including debt service, he said, declining to reveal an operating budget for the private enterprise. So far, besides Alan Jackson and the Wild, the arena has hosted a Disturbed concert. Upcoming are Slipknot, May 10; Yanni, June 10, and New Kids on the Block, July 3. Nath is working with

Mammoth Concerts, a representative for Live Nation, and DCF Concerts out of Oklahoma City primarily.

His plan is to market Hartman Arena as “the cool place to go, the arena that has the good vibe,” cashing in on the night-clubby atmosphere. He is also promoting its sustainability, which includes a 150-foot tall, wind turbine which will generate all the arena’s non-performance day electricity. “It’s a very green building,” Nath said. “We were built on a neutral site, no dirt removed, none trucked in.” — Linda Deckard

*Interviewed for this story: John Nath, (316) 744-8880, x 107; Reid Hatch, (316) 744-8880, x2.*

## TRAVELOG

### IAAM CHAPTER MEETING TAKES SOMBER LOOK AT MARKET SUSTAINABILITY

*Steve Macfadyen of The Show, Rancho Mirage, Calif with Live Nation's Michael Enoch and Rick Merrill from The Gibson Amphitheatre in Universal City, Calif. The three helped organize a meeting for the Los Angeles chapter of IAAM.*



UNIVERSAL CITY, Calif. — Live Nation’s Michael Enoch has a different perspective on sustainability.

“Typically when we talk about sustainability, we’re referring to green efforts,” said Enoch, who serves as VP of Design & Construction for Live Nation. “But we should ask ourselves if the concert industry, as it currently operates, is

itself sustainable.”

As the nation’s economic footing seems to be becoming less tenable and ticket prices continue to rise, many wonder if the current live events business model is sustainable for artists, agents, promoters, facilities and consumers? This was the question posed at the IAAM District 7 Los Angeles Chapter meeting held on March 30 at the Gibson Amphitheatre, Universal City, Calif. Organized by Enoch, Steve Macfadyen of The Show in Rancho Mirage, Calif., and Rick Merrill of the Gibson Amphitheatre, the afternoon meeting examined the economic climate of the live events industry for an audience of about 35 attendees.

Niederlander COO Alex Hodges was the keynote speaker for the meeting, enlightening the audience with rhetorical gambits like “marketing budgets are going up, but really they’re way down,” and “Ticket prices are getting cheaper, but more tickets are becoming more expensive.

To the first he was referring to the real costs of marketing compared with inflation – if it wasn’t for the Internet, venues would be spending much more money on traditional advertising. Referencing ticket prices, he was alluding to the fact that average ticket prices are down, while the size of the top-tiered ticketing sections in his venues are actually growing.

“I feel bullish about the business, but I know it’s not bulletproof and it will take some real close attention to the numbers to get through this period,” he said.

That meant passing on shows that didn’t make financial sense and not getting drawn into pie-in-the-sky bidding wars with other building managers, he said. Artist representation won’t drop their guarantees on their own and building managers have to stand up for the right price.

“There have been a couple times this year where we’ve had to really hold the line, and we still got the show,” he said.

Hodges said the business needs to do more to cultivate younger artists and admits that his own facilities have spent the last two seasons skewing toward legacy acts.

The meeting also included presentations on new Los Angeles facilities including upgrades to the Live Nation-managed Gibson Amphitheatre and Hollywood Palladium, as well as the opening of Club Nokia at L.A. Live.

“We’re seeing a changing philosophy about how to attract patrons to shows,” said Eric Bresler of AEG Facilities, which built the nearby L.A. Live Entertainment Complex. “Our philosophy is to get people to spend as much time before and after the event as possible inside of our district; whether that means dining, clubs or after-hours entertainment.”

He said AEG is being more careful about how it designs its facilities; creating spaces that entice visitors to use periphery spaces – whether it be a pre-game drink at the ESPN Zone before heading into the Staples Center in Los Angeles, or enjoying an after-party at L.A. Live’s Conga Room following a concert at Club Nokia, both in Los Angeles.

“The development guys are essentially glorified marketers these days,” he joked.

Perhaps the most exciting moment came at the beginning of the meeting as Enoch was introducing his guest speakers. Unbeknownst to him, a catering candle had lit some nearby debris and caught part of the catering table on fire, resulting in a small blaze. Enoch, Merrill and other Gibson officials quickly put out the fire before the meeting resumed. — Dave Brooks

Interviewed for this article: Michael Enoch, (702) 632-7610; Alex Hodges, (323) 468-1730; Eric Bresler, (213) 742-7100;

## BEING SCENE

### EPHONE REVOLVER GOLDEN GOD AWARDS, CLUB NOKIA AT L.A. LIVE, LOS ANGELES

*Revolver Magazine* hosted America's first ever hard rock and heavy metal music award show Tuesday featuring dozens of metal luminaries and a lifetime achievement award for former Black Sabbath front man Ozzy Osbourne.

The televised program was produced by Warped Tour pioneer Kevin Lyman and booked by the *Revolver* magazine staff. Metal icons like Dave Mustaine of Megadeth, Jonathan Davies of Korn, Vinnie Paul of Pantera and Maynard Keenan of Tool all presented awards for live and recorded heavy metal music.

"It's great that we're finally having a metal awards show in the U.S. and I don't have to fly all the way to Europe," said Tom Araya of Slayer. "It just proves we're getting some mainstream recognition from the music industry." — Dave Brooks

*Tim Millar and Rody Walker from Canadian-based Protest the Hero walk the Black Carpet. The band was being honored for best viral video; Marta Peterson of heavy metal band Bleeding Through.*



*Slayer frontman Tom Araya; plenty of heavy metal fans like this couple bought tickets to attend the awards show, which included performances by Killswitch Engage, Hatebreed and Megadeth; the Black Carpet from above.*



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