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VT PULSE

A WEEKLY PUBLICATION FROM VENUES TODAY

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Quote of the Week

"It is like one of those (360 deals), but I despise that word."

—AEG Live's Randy Phillips on his concerts deal with Michael Jackson.

In this Issue

THE NEWS

[Michael Jackson Announces 02 Residency](#)

[Britney Spears Tells Venues 'Gimme More' Concessions Revenue](#)

[AEG Ponders Divorce Following Ticketmaster/Live Nation Affair](#)

HOT TICKETS

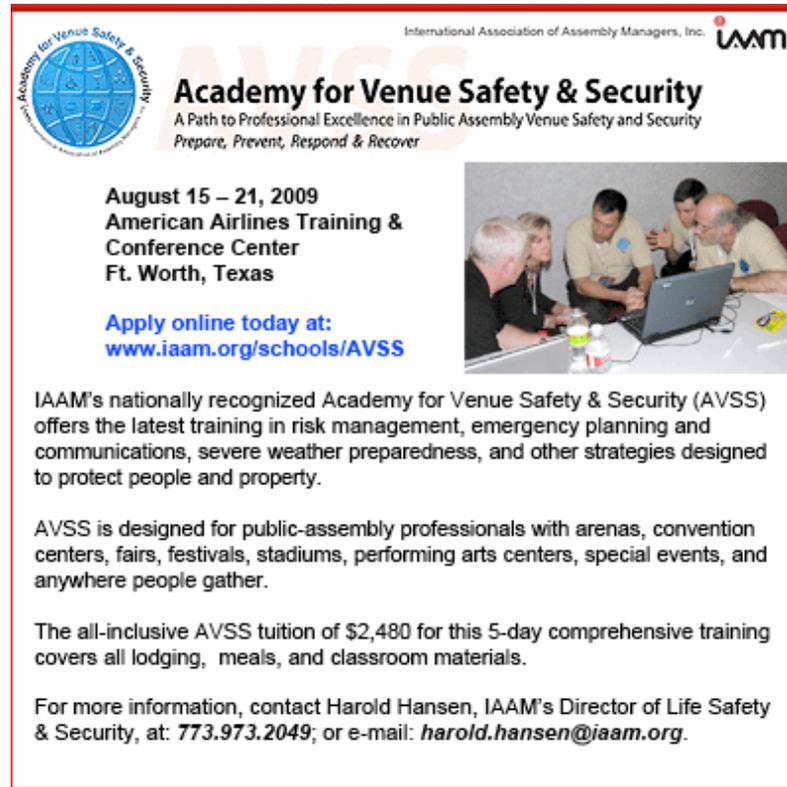
[Celine Clears Cool \\$10 Mil in Canada, eh?](#)

THE BEAT

[Fairs & Festivals: Texans Mosey On Over To Sunny San Antonio For Stock Show and Rodeo; Mid-South Fair Finds Interim Home at DeSoto Civic](#)

Greetings Riley,

Welcome to VT Pulse, your weekly guide to the "News Behind the Headlines." We're back in the office this week, finishing up the International Venue Resource Guide. Visit www.venuestoday.com to learn more.



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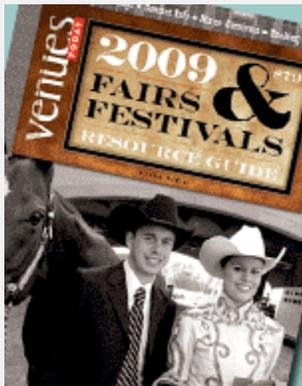
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SHORT TAKES

>> **L.A. CHAPTER MEETING ANNOUNCED** >> IAAM's District VII will be hosting a Los Angeles chapter meeting on March 30 at the Gibson Amphitheatre in Universal City, Calif. from 4 p.m.-7 p.m. Titled the "Entertainment Industry Economic Forum 2009-2010," the event is free to the public and includes drinks and refreshments. *Contact: Michael Enoch, (702) 632-7610*

>> **SXSW BROADCASTS WITH DTV** >> The South By Southwest Music Festival in Austin, Texas will be broadcast on DirectTV live on March 20 & 21. Performances by The Airborne Toxic, Ben Harper and Relentless7, Juliette Lewis and the New Romantics and Tinted Windows will appear on the 101 Network. *Contact: Elizabeth Derczo, (512) 467-7979*



VT NEWS

BOOKINGS

MICHAEL JACKSON ANNOUNCES O2 RESIDENCY

Michael Jackson during his March 5 press conference at the O2 Arena in London.



It was the announcement AEG Live CEO Randy Phillips has been waiting more than two years to make: Michael Jackson will be playing a residency at London's O2 Arena. The reclusive King of Pop made it official on March 5, when, in a rare public appearance, he announced that he will be playing a string of 10 dates at the 20,000-seat London venue beginning on July 8. More dates have recently been added for September, making for a total of 30 dates.

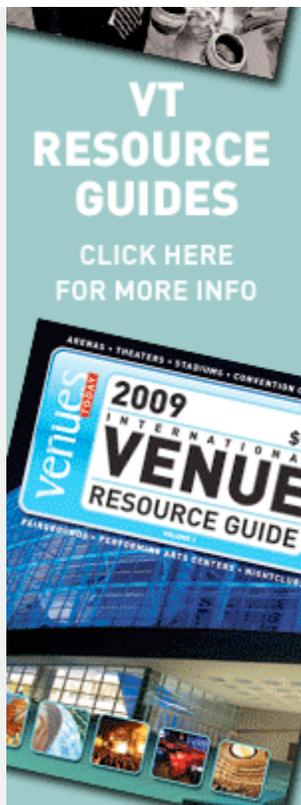
"For now, the only dates Michael is committed to are this O2 run, which I think will wind up being fairly extensive because the demand was much greater than we anticipated," said Phillips. He said the deal with the singer, whom he has known for more than 20 years, was designed as part of a four-year plan that will see AEG getting in many different business deals with Jackson.

"Our plan includes touring, new music and producing a 3-D motion picture [based on Jackson's iconic "Thriller"]," said Phillips, who was hesitant to call the pact a "360 deal."

"It is like one of those deals, but I despise that word. It's a fair deal where both parties stand a chance to make a lot of money. It's a real partnership, not just AEG writing a ridiculous check."

Though AEG could partner with Jackson to release his long-in-the-works next album, so far that part of the deal has not been completed. But Phillips said there are provisions in the pact that could give AEG rights to a world tour by Jackson. Phillips said the deal to produce the movie involves putting aside a considerable "seven-figure" sum into a development fund, but the project will not proceed without a director or serious script.

The London shows, which will be Jackson's first sustained dates in more



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Pauline Davis

than 12 years - since he mounted the "HIStory" world tour in 1997-98 - are being billed as the singer's last-ever live shows. During the brief press conference, Jackson, 50, stood at a podium inscribed with the words "This Is It" and explained, "These will be my final shows performing in London. 'This Is It' really means this is it."

Tickets for the summer shows, which will take place July 10-28, are reasonably priced at \$70-105 and went on pre-sale on March 11. Fans can pre-register to purchase tickets at www.MichaelJacksonLive.com. The London-based publicity firm handling the dates, Outside Organisation, reported that the site was receiving a massive crush of traffic equal to 16,000 visits a second from fans rushing to register for tickets. The official on-sale date for the general public is March 13.

Jackson's take for the O2 shows could be between \$30-\$50 million, but Phillips was not ready to predict AEG's take, though he did say it would be "very significant." As for the reasonably priced tickets for such a highly anticipated event, Phillips said that was Jackson's doing.

"It was very important to him that as many fans as possible could attend," he said. In order to make up for the low ticket price for 90 percent of the house for what is likely to be an expensive-to-mount event, Phillips said Jackson agreed to offer premium seating and VIP packages through reseller Viagogo as long as the pre-registration was set up in a manner that required an email response from a live person and helped to block out other brokers and scalpers.

The only question remains whether the sometimes unreliable singer, one of the best-selling artists of all time, will be able to maintain the stamina to perform his legendarily high-energy shows without missing any dates.

Phillips said Jackson took a five-hour physical recently that included a battery of blood tests administered by an independent third party and that he "passed with flying colors. In fact, his cholesterol is lower than mine!"

While his star has dimmed considerably in the U.S., Jackson remains very popular in Europe and Asia, with some fans waiting up to five hours to shout their support for Jackson as he made his way to the press conference.

Phillips dismissed notions that the singer is getting back to live performing only to raise much-needed capital to prop up his reportedly sagging finances. "I can tell it's not about the money," Phillips said. "Yes, he wanted to go out and earn money, but it's not just that. His finances are not in the shape the press has reported. He took 12 years off to bring up his three beautiful kids and now he wants to show them, while he's young enough, what he does for a living."

Phillips said Jackson is in the midst of putting a band together for the shows. — Gil Kaufman

Interviewed for this article: Randy Phillips, (323) 930-5701

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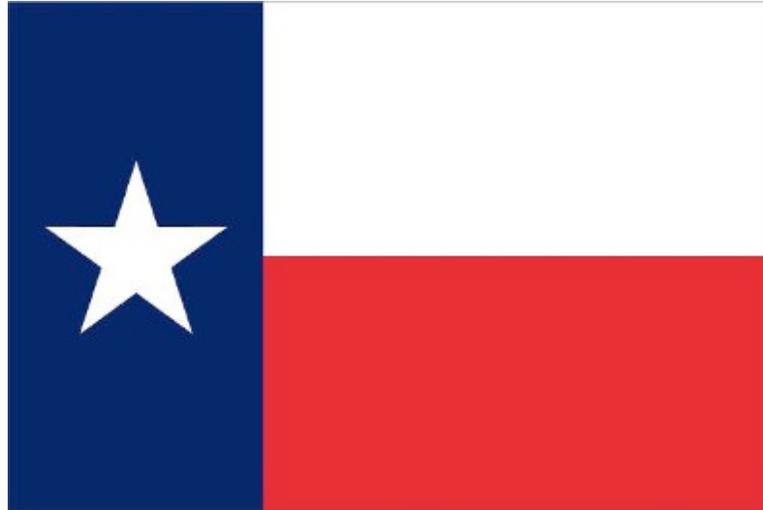
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Festival Listing for the VT
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Nazarene Kahn
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(714) 378-5400 ext. 25
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Big Guns

The Lone Star State flexes its big guns in our annual look at Texas venues. April is also the **Spring Special**- a look at the upcoming Fair & Festival Season. And we'll round out this issue with our second **INTIX Quarterly**. Bonus Distribution: INTIX members.

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CONCESSIONS

BRITNEY SPEARS TELLS VENUES 'GIMME MORE' CONCESSIONS REVENUES

Britney Spears is selling her own cotton candy for Circus Tour. (Graphic by Vanessa Bentley)



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Britney Spears has dubbed her latest tour a “Circus” and is acting more like Ringling Brothers than The Jonas Brothers.

The AEG Live-backed tour is transforming U.S. arenas into two-ring circuses with a stage in the round and Cirque Du Soleil-style dancers who perform amid a big top theme. In keeping with the circus theme, Spears and AEG Live are selling their own branded cotton candy and popcorn as part of its merchandising agreement with the venues.

“It’s very similar to what Feld does with the circus,” said AEG Live’s Randy Phillips, who is trying to capture the aesthetic of Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey. “We’re providing the packaging and most of the product, but the venue staffs are doing the selling. We have people in the concourse and hawking the products in the stands.”

Robb Henson from the Tacoma (Wash.) Dome said the deal was structured to replicate similar merchandise/novelty deals, with both sides getting a cut of cotton candy (\$4) and popcorn (\$8), although Henson wouldn’t disclose the terms of the deal. Representatives for Spears did not return calls for comments.

“It works because they’re using branded packaging for the cotton candy and the popcorn,” said Henson. “It’s a souvenir item, just like a commemorative cup we did for the Justin Timberlake concert. The idea has been around for years.”

The tour offered to provide personnel to help with the staffing of the cotton candy stands, but the St. Pete Times Forum in Tampa Bay, Fla., was able to coordinate the sales effort with existing concessions staff, said Elmer Straub, VP of Event Booking.

“We knew that what they were looking for was the look and feel of a circus, from the time you enter the building until the time you leave,” Straub said of the concert that grossed \$1.8 million. “We communicated to them that we had a lot of the existing staffing already in place to help produce the items and sell them. Our staff was able to collaborate with their team to accomplish their objective.”

Ultimately, the St. Pete Times Forum’s concessionaire Sportservice helped to staff and create some of the cotton candy. Straub said that he had spoken with venue managers who at first were apprehensive about incorporating popcorn and cotton candy sales into a merchandising deal, but ultimately he felt the provision “was not about giving up revenue, but helping to create the aesthetic that the tour was trying to accomplish.”

“Everyone wants to hold onto different revenue streams, but the real focus was creating an experience that felt like a circus,” he said.

Straub said the huge show was a sellout with a massive stage in the round, and 37 trucks to unload the impressive production set. — Dave Brooks

Interviewed for this story: Randy Phillips, (323) 930-5701; Rob Henson,

(253) 593-7627; Elmer Straub, (813) 301-6763

INDUSTRY REACTION

AEG PONDS DIVORCE FOLLOWING TICKETMASTER/LIVE NATION AFFAIR

(Graphic by Vanessa Bentley)



Will Tim Leiweke and AEG end their relationship with Ticketmaster if the ticketing giant merges with Live Nation?

On Feb. 26, attorneys for Ticketmaster filed an affidavit with the Securities and Exchange Commission detailing a Feb. 6 communication they had received from Leiweke, who was apparently concerned about the merger and said he would option out of AEG's Ticketmaster agreements if the deal went through. According to the filing, AEG revenues "represented less than 10% of Ticketmaster's consolidated revenues for the fiscal year ended Dec. 31."

Ticketmaster Entertainment CEO Irving Azoff also mentioned the letter while testifying before a House of Representatives subcommittee, telling members of Congress "others will most certainly leave if this merger is consummated. AEG has notified us by letter that they believe they have the right to terminate our agreement in connection with this merger. If that's not competition, I don't know what is."

Leiweke wouldn't comment on the letter for this story, said spokesperson Michael Roth. While Leiweke hadn't been called to testify before Congress, he had been in touch with officials from the Department of Justice.

Leiweke did have some choice words about the merger during a Billboard music conference in New York, telling attendees "This merger won't

create a new idea on how to sell more tickets,” and “it’s all about the bottom line.”

If AEG decides to split with Ticketmaster, how will AEG ticket its events? Will they hire a new ticketing company? Will it try to develop its own platform?

“If they step in now, there are a lot of unproven question marks,” said ticketing consultant Charlie Williams. “The choices other than Ticketmaster are choices that have new products coming out that haven’t launched yet. There’s a lot of chance in moving to a new ticketing platform.”

Williams said the most obvious companies to replace Ticketmaster would be Tickets.com, which has launched its Pro Venue application, and Veritix, which is working on a product for Denver-based Kroenke Entertainment, which counts the Pepsi Center, the Denver Nuggets basketball team and the Colorado Avalanche among its diverse holdings.

“Neither of those companies are a proven industrial strength yet,” Williams said, adding that Live Nation’s own ticketing system with German-based CTS-Eventim was billed as a robust ticketing alternative, but crashed after early on sales for Phish and Coldplay.

The other question is whether AEG-managed venues will go along for the ride if Live Nation does decide to divorce Ticketmaster.

“We can’t control that, the principals are the ones who make those types of decisions,” said Ernie Hahn from the San Diego Sports Arena. AEG bought a controlling interest in Hahn’s management firm in September, a move that has propelled Hahn to “keep his head down and keep working hard while this all gets sorted out.”

While Hahn said he was unaware of AEG’s long-term strategy, he did add, “Ticketmaster is a great partner, but AEG takes a lot of risk each year. We need to make sure that everything works to our benefit because there’s so much money on the line.”

And while some ticketing companies are nervous about competing with Ticketmaster, others have embraced the merger as a way to stand out as an independent voice.

Iain Bluett of Ticket Alternative said his firm is positioning itself as a standalone system that offers more flexibility and won’t share venue information with Live Nation or competing facilities. As for reliability, Bluett said his system (powered by Paciolan, now Ticketmaster Irvine) “absolutely could handle a massive on sale” for an AEG-arena level act.

“But I don’t think that’s where the sweet spot is right now,” he said. “We’re actually seeing an upswing in club sales because the \$10-\$25 range turns out to be a better value. Many music fans want to go see two shows for the price of one Coldplay.” — Dave Brooks

Interviewed for this story: Michael Roth, (213) 742-7155; Charlie Williams, (847) 317-0193; Ernie Hahn, (619) 884-4855; Iain Bluett, (404) 897-2384

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 March 10, 2009.

CELINE CLEARS COOL \$10 MIL IN CANADA, EH?

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: \$7,002,234; Venue: Bell Centre, Calgary, Alberta; Attendance: 59,659; Ticket Range: \$195-\$65; Promoter: AEG Live, Concerts West; Dates: Feb. 12, 14, 15; No. of Shows: 3</p> <p>2) Celine Dion Gross Sales: \$3,588,815; Venue: Colisee Pepsi Arena, Quebec City, Quebec; Attendance: 20,903; Ticket Range: \$195-\$65; Promoter: AEG Live, Concerts West; Dates: Feb. 9-10; No. of Shows: 2</p> <p>3) Billy Joel & Elton John Gross Sales: \$2,503,863; Venue: St. Pete Times Forum, Tampa, Fla.; Attendance: 20,196; Ticket Range: \$179.75-\$54.25; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: March 5; No. of Shows: 1</p> <p>4) Celine Dion Gross Sales: \$1,897,276; Venue: HP Pavilion at San Jose (Calif.); Attendance: 16862; Ticket Range: \$185-\$49.50; Promoter: AEG Live, Concerts West; Dates: Feb. 20; No. of Shows: 1</p> <p>5) Britney Spears Gross Sales: \$1,890,503; Venue: St. Pete Times Forum, Tampa, Fla.; Attendance: 19,845;</p>	<p>1) Coldplay Gross Sales: \$1,911,079; Venue: Brisbane (Australia) Entertainment Centre; Attendance: 11,441; Ticket Range: \$90.55-\$71.14; Promoter: Chugg Entertainment; Dates: March 8-9; No. of Shows: 2</p> <p>2) Elton John & Billy Joel Gross Sales: \$1,807,309; Venue: Jacksonville (Fla.) Veterans Memorial Arena; Attendance: 13,433; Ticket Range: \$175-\$49.50; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: March 2; No. of Shows: 1</p> <p>3) Eric Clapton Gross Sales: \$809,496; Venue: Vector Arena, Auckland, New Zealand; Attendance: 8,523; Ticket Range: \$199.04-\$49.72; Promoter: Michael Coppel Presents; Dates: March 4; No. of Shows: 1</p> <p>4) Billy Connolly Gross Sales: \$779,522; Venue: Vector Arena, Auckland, New Zealand; Attendance: 18,651; Ticket Range: \$59.74-\$34.78; Promoter: Pacific Entertainment; Dates: Feb. 28, March 2; No. of Shows: 3</p> <p>5) T.I. Gross Sales: \$755,144; Venue: Cobo Arena, Detroit; Attendance:</p>	<p>1) Mardi Gras Party 2009 Gross Sales: \$1,887,537; Venue: Hordern Pavillion, Sydney, Australia; Attendance: 15,529; Ticket Range: \$135-\$100; Promoter: New Mardi Gras; Dates: March 7; No. of Shows: 1</p> <p>2) Iron Maiden Gross Sales: \$541,562; Venue: Westpac Centre, Christchurch, New Zealand; Attendance: 8806; Ticket Range: \$73.78-\$41.06; Promoter: Dainty Consolidated Entertainment, Vbase Ltd; Dates: Feb. 22; No. of Shows: 1</p> <p>3) Billy Connolly Gross Sales: \$365,025; Venue: Westpac Centre, Christchurch, New Zealand; Attendance: 8,093; Ticket Range: \$54.47-\$39.56; Promoter: Pacific Entertainment; Dates: Feb. 13; No. of Shows: 1</p> <p>4) Motley Crue Gross Sales: \$310,169; Venue: Rockford (Ill.) MetroCentre; Attendance: 6,128; Ticket Range: \$93.50-\$48; Promoter: Live Nation, In-House; Dates: Feb. 15; No. of Shows: 1</p> <p>5) Crusty Demons Gross Sales: \$277,259; Venue: Westpac Centre, Christchurch,</p>	<p>1) Elton John Gross Sales: \$5,365,772; Venue: Colosseum at Caesars Palace, Las Vegas; Attendance: 37,538; Ticket Range: \$250-\$100; Promoter: AEG Live, Concerts West, In-house; Dates: Feb. 2-15; No. of Shows: 10</p> <p>2) Cher Gross Sales: \$5,175,965; Venue: Colosseum at Caesars Palace, Las Vegas; Attendance: 34,740; Ticket Range: \$250-\$95; Promoter: AEG Live, Concerts West; Dates: Feb. 22-March 8; No. of Shows: 20</p> <p>3) Legally Blonde Gross Sales: \$784,493; Venue: Civic Center of Greater Des Moines (Iowa); Attendance: 16,059; Ticket Range: \$65-\$30; Promoter: In-house; Dates: Feb. 24-March 1; No. of Shows: 8</p> <p>4) A Chorus Line Gross Sales: \$771,024; Venue: Bob Carr Performing Arts Center, Orlando, Fla.; Attendance: 15,467; Ticket Range: \$66-\$37; Promoter: PTG Florida; Dates: Feb. 10-15; No. of Shows: 8</p> <p>5) Robin Williams Gross Sales: \$763,235; Venue: Dodge Theatre, Phoenix; Attendance: 9,748; Ticket Range: \$95-\$50; Promoter: Live</p>

Ticket Range: \$127.75-\$39.50; Promoter: AEG Live, Concerts West; Dates: March 8; No. of Shows: 1

9,718; Ticket Range: \$88-\$48; Promoter: Sweetheart Productions; Dates: March 7; No. of Shows: 1

New Zealand ; Attendance: 6,034; Ticket Range: \$58.95-\$25; Promoter: Crusty Touring Company; Dates: Feb. 11; No. of Shows: 1

Nation; Dates: Feb. 13-14; No. of Shows: 2

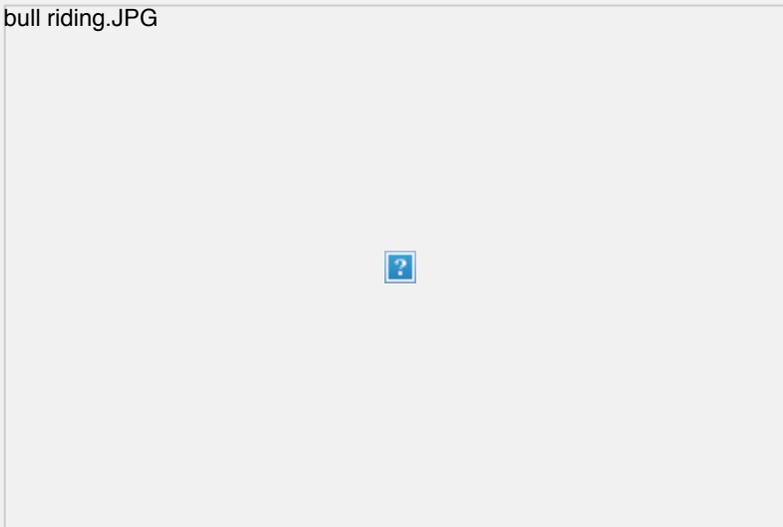
Compiled by Rob Ocampo. To submit reports, e-mail HotTickets@venuestoday.com or fax to (714) 378-0040.

THE BEAT

FAIRS & FESTIVALS

TEXANS MOSEY ON OVER TO SUNNY SAN ANTONIO FOR STOCK SHOW AND RODEO

bull riding.JPG



Bullriding at the San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo

Good weather and the possibility of area residents taking “staycations” might have accounted for a slight increase in attendance at the San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo, from last year’s 1,300,513 to 1,313,785.

“Historically, during tough economic times, such as what we are facing currently, people turn to traditional entertainment venues such as stock shows and rodeos,” said marketing coordinator Yvonne “Bonnie” Ramirez. “And rather than

driving for an extended vacation, they do what is known as staycations.”

The weather for the Feb. 5-22 event, which saw seven record-breaking days, was exceptional, mostly warm and sunny with little wind and rain, Ramirez said.

Also, sponsorships were up 10 percent.

Fourteen concerts sold out in the 16,000-plus seat AT&T Center, Ramirez said. They included Taylor Swift, Jason Aldean, Cross Canadian Ragweed, Montgomery Gentry, Pat Green, Gary Allan, two Alan Jackson performances, Reba McEntire, Goo Goo Dolls, Lady Antebellum, Billy Ray Cyrus, Duelo and Brooks & Dunn. Other performers included Push Play; Switchfoot; Stars of Texas featuring Radney Foster, Wade Bowen, Cory Morrow and Brandon Rhyder; Luke Bryan; Duelo; Josh Turner, Darius Rucker; Jack Ingram and Jason Aldean.

Concerts were paired with 18 rodeo performances as well as two Xtreme Bulls performances, Ramirez said. The Xtreme Bulls performances were televised on ESPN and ESPN2. Tickets ranged in price from \$10 to \$50.

Spring Hill, Fla.-based Wade Shows provided 35 rides for the midway and had four record-breaking days, Ramirez said, and overall had similar revenues to last year’s record-breaking year.

A \$50 MegaPass allowed fairgoers to ride all the rides every day, or they could purchase a \$25 flat-rate wristband for Saturdays and Sundays, Ramirez said. Gate admission costs \$7 for adults, \$5 for senior citizens and \$3 for ages 2 to 11.

Ramirez declined to release any budget information for the event but did note that this year was the 60th anniversary of the San Antonio Livestock Show and Rodeo and therefore some new acts were booked, including the interactive "CSI: Live."

Next year's dates are Feb. 4-21. - Mary Wade Burnside

MID-SOUTH FAIR FINDS INTERIM HOME AT DESOTO CIVIC CENTER

The Mid-South Fair, Memphis, Tenn., will leave its home of 143 years in June, with plans to house the 2009 fair at the DeSoto Civic Center, Southaven, Miss., and arrive at the new fairgrounds in Tunica, Miss., in time for the 2010 event. The 2009 fair will run Sept. 15-Oct. 4, with move-in beginning a week out.

Jim Rout, manager of the Mid-South Fair, is quite pleased with the visibility of the DeSoto Civic Center site, which is right on the I-55 on the way to Jackson. They will have air-conditioned tents for the livestock exhibits, parking lot asphalt for the carnival (he is still negotiating with North American Midway Entertainment to play the 2009 event) and buildings for exhibits and shows.

Stuart Taylor, director of the DeSoto Civic Center, said the fair will use all of the 450,000-sq.-foot East Side parking lot, 17,000-sq.-ft. convention hall and 400-seat performing arts theater. Rout noted he will not have to hire as many part-timers because the civic center staff will take care of the indoor sites. His concern will be the tents and parking lot.

"We'll only have two or three gates," Rout added, adding that in Memphis he has had to man eight or nine gates.

In addition, the Mid-South Fair is collaborating with the PRCA rodeo produced by well-known rodeo clown Lecelle Harris to brand it the Rodeo of the Mid-South.

DeSoto hosted the rodeo for the first time last year and had it scheduled for two weeks before the fair this year until the Mid-South Fair booked the center. All parties agreed to combine the two events. Tickets for the Oct. 1-3 rodeo will be \$15-\$20 and will include admission to the fair, Taylor said. Rout is hopeful the rodeo will draw 12,000 people in three nights.

This is a second attempt at hosting a "fair" for the DeSoto Civic Center. Farrow Amusements played a date there eight years ago, a 2-day affair, but it did not do well. Taylor is hoping the Mid-South Fair might draw 300,000-400,000 to his property, but Rout is more cautious. History indicates fair attendance suffers from a move, he said. The 2008 fair drew 341,000 in Memphis. Rout is projecting 250,000 in Southaven.

There will be a fee for parking, to be determined, Taylor said. The civic center will make its money from a modest rent and a share of parking and concessions, along with income from the rodeo.

Rout and staff are quite busy this off-season, with preparations to vacate their longtime home by June 30, produce a fair at DeSoto Civic Center in September, raise \$35 million to improve the donated fairgrounds in Tunica immediately and prepare the new grounds for a 2010 fair. "We've already sent 14 tractor trailer loads from our warehouse to a warehouse in Tunica," Rout said. "Come April 1, we'll have 90 days to get out of here." He said a big garage sale is in the planning stages.

HOK Smith Forkner completed the plans for the new fairgrounds in January, Rout said. The lease on the land was transferred to the Mid-South Fair Dec. 31, 2008.

Raising the \$35 million is ongoing. The state of Mississippi has already given tentative approval on a sales tax rebate for 10 years, so that any tax the fair generates the fair gets back. They've also demonstrated an interest in paying for the first exhibit hall, which will cost \$12.5 million, Rout said.

The key will be to turn the new Mid-South Fairgrounds into a year-round operation. Location will help, Rout said. It is right on Route 61, known as the "blues highway" because that's the route blues singers took from Mississippi into Memphis, and across the street from a major casino, though that's deceptive because the casinos are set a mile back from the highway. Do not envision the Las Vegas Strip, he cautioned. It is nothing like Vegas.

But he is hopeful the Mid-South Fair venues will become the neutral site for casino events, particularly at the amphitheater. There are eight or nine competing casinos in Tunica, all potential event sponsors. He plans to reverse the trend in Memphis, where the fair was 90 percent of annual income. He said original feasibility studies suggested off-season rentals might be close to \$2 million in Tunica. "I cut that in half," he said of budgeting, so he's hoping for \$1 million.

"I'm a car buff. I think our Tunica site will be great for those huge car auctions, and then they can have dinner and see a show at the casinos," Rout said.

His goal now is to seek federal "stimulus bill" funding. "We are shovel ready," he said of the potential for job creation, from infrastructure to construction. In Rout's opinion, it's the perfect candidate for some of that stimulus bill funding and he has the lobbyists lined up to prove it. – Linda Deckard

Interviewed for this story: Jim Rout, (901) 274-8800; Stuart Taylor, (662) 280-9120

NAMING RIGHTS REPORT

Norton Plaza - Louisville (Ky.) Arena

Date Announced: March 2

Buyer: Norton Healthcare

Terms: 10 years, \$10 million

Tenant/Ownership: University of Louisville/Louisville Arena Authority

Broker: Team Services

Comments: Norton Healthcare has signed a unique 10-year, \$10 million sponsorship deal for Louisville's downtown arena, which is slated to open in the fall of 2010. As part of the deal, the healthcare company will open an urgent care center in the facility.

"They had space in the front reserved for a team store, but they did not need it all," said Michael Gough, CEO. "We suggested an urgent care center - because coincidentally, we had been looking to site an urgent care facility downtown. It filled a need."

Gough said there are 66,000 people living and working in downtown Louisville, and existing emergency rooms are already busy.

In addition, Norton will staff two separate first aid stations in the venue during events, and their name will be on a pedestrian plaza adjacent to the venue, as well as on signage at nearby Papa John's Cardinal Stadium, which is also undergoing a renovation, as part of arena construction.

Gough said there has been some push back from residents over the deal, since sports venue naming rights deals have been in the news lately. "We did a pretty good job of explaining to the community what and why," he said. "This is an urgent care facility in a highly visible, high traffic area. And we did not negotiate for luxury suites, though we did get some regular seats."

The venue is slated to open in the fall of 2010, and the Norton deal is the first of what arena officials said would be between four and eight cornerstone sponsors. The Louisville Arena Authority will use \$700,000 of Norton's annual payment to pay down construction debt. The University of Louisville will get the other \$300,000 as part of their lease with the authority.

Contact: Steve Manaugh and Michael Gough, (502) 599-0422

All Pro Freight Stadium, Avon, Ohio

Date Announced: Feb. 25

Buyer: All Pro Freight Systems, Inc.

Terms: 10 years, terms not disclosed

Brokered: Locally

Tenant/Ownership: Lake Erie Crushers (Frontier League baseball)/City of Avon

Comments: The Lake Erie Crushers have sold naming rights to a local company, All Pro Freight Systems. “All Pro has been in the market for 20 years, in Cleveland for 10, and in Avon for 10,” said Ryan Gates, general manager for the Crushers. “They are less than a mile from the stadium, and when they saw the stadium being built next door, they looked ahead. They are not just attaching their name to year one – [All Pro owner Chris Haas] is looking out to year five and year 10.”

The Crushers, part of the Frontier League, which is not affiliated with Major League Baseball, are a new team scheduled to debut in the newly built \$32 million municipal ballpark on June 2. The ballpark seats up to 5,000.

All Pro will have marquee signage outside the stadium, which overlooks Interstate 90, as well as at the main entrance and above the scoreboard. They will also receive one of the venue’s 11 private suites.

“More important than the luxury suite was our commitment to community programs,” Gates said. “All Pro wanted tickets they could give to the community, and for his customers, clients and employees.”

The venue includes a 67,000-square-foot, YMCA-operated public recreation center and has 11 private suites, as well as a picnic and patio area. All Pro Freight is a privately held trucking, warehouse and distribution company headquartered in Avon, with additional offices in Orlando, Fla., and Edison, N.J.

The Crushers will lease the ballpark from the city for \$250,000 a year. – Liz Boardman

Contact: Ryan Gates, (440) 934-3636

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