

VT PULSE

A WEEKLY PUBLICATION FROM VENUES TODAY

April 22, 2009 • VOL. VIII, Number 13 • ISSN 1547-4143

Quote of the Week

"I think we will move from a situation where you have a ticketed concert where a couple friends show up together to seeing tribes showing up in social groups of eight to 10 people, taking it back to concerts being social events."

— Terry McBride of Nettwerk Music Group on his company's plans to launch a pay-what-you-want tour for rapper K-Os

In this Issue

THE NEWS

[Live Nation Adds Two In Charlotte](#)

[Nettwerk Music Pioneers "Pay What You Want" Tour Strategy](#)

[Green Ingenuity Abounds On Earth Day](#)

Greetings April,

Welcome to VT Pulse, your weekly guide to the "News Behind the Headlines." We won't be publishing the VT Pulse next Wednesday; our next issue is slated for May 6. **Happy Earth Day.**



International Association of Assembly Managers, Inc. **IAAM**

Academy for Venue Safety & Security

A Path to Professional Excellence in Public Assembly Venue Safety and Security
Prepare, Prevent, Respond & Recover

August 15 – 21, 2009
American Airlines Training & Conference Center
Ft. Worth, Texas

Apply online today at:
www.iaam.org/schools/AVSS



IAAM's nationally recognized Academy for Venue Safety & Security (AVSS) offers the latest training in risk management, emergency planning and communications, severe weather preparedness, and other strategies designed to protect people and property.

AVSS is designed for public-assembly professionals with arenas, convention centers, fairs, festivals, stadiums, performing arts centers, special events, and anywhere people gather.

The all-inclusive AVSS tuition of \$2,480 for this 5-day comprehensive training covers all lodging, meals, and classroom materials.

For more information, contact Harold Hansen, IAAM's Director of Life Safety & Security, at: 773.973.2049; or e-mail: harold.hansen@iaam.org.

VT NEWS

NEW VENUES

HOT TICKETS

[Cohen Rules West Coast From L.A. To Vancouver](#)

THE BEAT

[Pistons Stay On Top, Despite Downturn In Economy](#)

[Coachella Artists Ignore Curfews In Music Marathon](#)

DEPARTMENTS

[Short Takes](#)

HELP WANTED

CONTACT VT PULSE

SHORT TAKES

>> BCG ADDS

MEADOWBROOK — Boston Culinary Group was selected as food and beverage provider for Meadowbrook U.S. Cellular Pavilion, Gilford, N.H. The venue seats 6,600 outdoors, drawing more than 100,000 fans each summer, and opening 2009 with Korn and the Rock On Festival 2009, May 23.

Contact: Steve Cahoon,
(617) 499-2700 x168

>> BOSTON MARATHON

— For the first time since opening in 2005, Agganis Arena, Boston, hosted three consecutive sold out shows: Flight of the Chonords, April 17 and Kings of Leon, April 18-19,

LIVE NATION ADDS TWO IN CHARLOTTE

Inside the Fillmore, Charlotte, N.C.



Live Nation will operate, manage and exclusively book the 2,000-seat Fillmore and the 5,000-seat outdoor Uptown Amphitheatre, both in the 35-acre N.C. Music Factory entertainment complex. Live Nation already owns the 18,800-seat Verizon Wireless Amphitheatre elsewhere in the city. In addition, they will provide ticketing services to the new venues. Charlotte is also home to the Time Warner Cable Arena, which is booked by AEG.

Developer Noah Lazes of ARK Group said they would not release details beyond calling the agreement "longterm."

"It is a corporate guarantee, not a booking agreement," Lazes said. "They are not just paying when they book; they have a huge stake and investment in this project."

He said that the two companies have been talking since early in the development phase.

The Uptown Amphitheatre and the Fillmore help complete the venue portfolio for Charlotte, the

drawing more than 20,000 fans. The next show is Sesame Street Lives "Elmo Makes Music" for seven performances beginning April 24.
Contact: Jessica Connor, (617) 358-7017

>> **SAVING THE EARTH** — The St. Paul (Minn.) RiverCentre staff plans to step up its sustainability initiatives longterm. VP and GM Jim Ibister announced on Earth Day a partnership agreement with Progressive Associates of St. Paul to assess multiple ways the venue can conserve.
Contact: Kathy O'Connor, (651) 265-4819

>> **JOINT OFFICIALLY OPENS** — The Joint at the Hard Rock Resort & Casino in Las Vegas officially opens Friday with a concert by hometown heroes The Killers. The 2,300-capacity nightclub is operated by AEG Live/Concerts West and managed by Paul Davis.
Contact: Laura Cleary, (702) 693-4434

SUBSCRIBE

Do you find VT Pulse interesting and can't wait for more?

country's 20th most populated market, said Wilson Howard, Live Nation's president in the Southeast region. A 35-year veteran of the business, Howard joined the Live Nation family after his promotion company Cellar Doors was acquired by SFX and then eventually sold and spun off to Live Nation.

"Charlotte has always been a great music town, and these two venues complement that," he said. "Our goal is to make this market stronger; not oversaturate it."

Lazes said, "Wilson is my idol - he's a workhorse and actively involved in everything he does. He has been my mentor in the music business for years."

Charlotte has long been known as a sports town, rather than a music town, but Lazes said that that is not for lack of interest, but lack of venues.

"We have the best NASCAR track, a great NBA arena and NFL stadium, but we have not had the best nightclubs or music venues, and that has hurt live music," he said. "We lost a big piece of the market because there was no venue to showcase."

He and his father, Rick, are out to change that - creating a \$30 million strolling entertainment district akin to Sixth Street in Austin. The former textile mill complex on the edge of downtown includes locally grown nightclubs, bars, restaurants and coffee shops, along with national spinoffs like the New York nightclub Butter, the Chicago-based dance club Crobar, and the South Beach daiquiri bar Wet Willie's. It is part of a larger mixed-use development called Uptown Village that also houses a recording studio, offices, and eventually, condominiums.

Subscribe today and get three great resources!

Each monthly issue of Venues Today will bring you information, news, photos, trends, features and more for the public assembly facility management industry.

The weekly e-newsletter is also full of all original reporting delivered to you in a timely fashion. Keep up with who's who and what's going on as it happens!

Subscribers have online access to our archive database. This feature allows you to view articles OR charts published in either the magazine or the e-newsletter.

[CLICK TO SUBSCRIBE](#)

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

Live Nation expects to book approximately 25 shows a year at the Uptown Amphitheatre and about 80 shows a year at the Fillmore. The first booking is The Fray, who will play the Uptown Amphitheatre on June 13. Gov't Mule is the first announced show for the Fillmore on June 24, but more will be announced in the coming weeks.

"The concept is that these two new venues will give us an opportunity to break artists and be part of their growth," Howard said.

The Fillmore takes its design cues from the Fillmore in San Francisco, with red oak hardwood floors, red painted interior, vintage posters of legendary live music performances, elaborate chandeliers, and state-of-the-art lighting and sound.

The outdoor Uptown Amphitheatre offers views of the Charlotte skyline, along with elevated lawn seating, traditional outdoor seating, premium box seats with food and beverage service, and an indoor VIP area with private restrooms, private bar and views of the stage.

Having both venues side-by-side, and operated by one company, will give them a lot of flexibility for concerts and special events, Lazes said.

"If something is selling heavily, move it outdoors," he said. "If it's raining and something is selling light, we can move it in."

Lazes said the economy is a concern - Charlotte is headquarters to many a TARP bank - but they remain optimistic the city will come out of the recession stronger.

"We did not live high off the hog, and did not run up real estate," Lazes said. "And [N.C. Music Factory] is unique in the top 25-market. We have

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

Vanessa Bentley
Intern
intern@venuestoday.com

Bintal Patel
Intern
intern@venuestoday.com

For advertising
information, contact:

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

Kathleen Crain
Midwest U.S.
(714) 378-5400 x26
kathleen@venuestoday.com

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

Rich DiGiacomo
Northeast and West coast
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:

the largest contiguous property with surface parking in the city and 2,500 free parking spaces. Our operators, many big city concepts, are keenly aware of admission and drink charges and will not overshoot the market. Live Nation is aware of that, too." — Liz Boardman

Contact: Noah Lazes, (704) 987-0612; Wilson Howard, (704) 549-5555

BOOKINGS

NETTWERK MUSIC PIONEERS "PAY WHAT YOU WANT" TOUR STRATEGY

Rapper K-Os

HELP WANTED

[VIEW THE FULL LISTINGS](#)

Greater Richmond
Convention Center-
Event Manager

Texas A&M University,
Kingsville- Associate
Professor/Full Professor
& Dept. Chair

St. Augustine
Amphitheater, St.
Augustine- Assistant
General Manager

[VIEW THE FULL LISTINGS](#)



Terry McBride is used to bucking convention. The co-founder and CEO of Canada's Nettwerk Music Group - responsible for the careers of Sarah McLachlan, Avril Lavigne and Coldplay among others - has created waves lately with his push to free songs from traditional music industry control and let fans get their hands on an artist's raw files and remix them to their heart's content.

Now, with an upcoming 10-date Canadian tour by Toronto-based rapper K-Os slated to kick off on April 30, McBride has his sights set on upending the touring business as well, with a "pay what

you want” model that he hopes will prove his theories about social interaction and music.

“I sat down with him [K-Os] nine months or a year ago and we talked about the whole album cycle, not just touring,” said McBride. “This is part of the overall idea that fans are your marketing and promotions team and that the relationship is authentic if there is power behind that emotion. The tour is an extension of that relationship.”

The rapper ran an online contest in late 2008 and early 2009 in which he gave fans the 11 tracks from his new album, “Yes!” and asked them to remix the songs. The audience-voted winners were then compiled onto a “Yes It’s Yours (Fan Remix Album),” CD that is another element of what will be the ticketless shows.

There will be no advance ticket sales — fans just show up at the club and are admitted entrance until the venue hits capacity. Some of the venues on the tour include the Commodore Ballroom in Vancouver, B.C.; the Edmonton Events Centre; Kool Haus in Toronto and the L’Olympia de Montreal.

As fans exit the venues following the concerts, there will be three options: a collection box for whatever price the fans think is worth paying, another enabling them to donate money to the David Suzuki environmental organization and the “Karma” table, where anyone making a donation will be given a copy of the fan-remixed version of K-Os’ latest CD. “If you make a donation [to the Suzuki organization] on the way out you get a fan mix CD,” McBride said. “If you make a karma donation and liked the show, you get a gift. So, either way, you leave with a CD.”

While K-Os (born Kevin Brereton) will get no traditional advance money for the tour - since

there are no ticket sales to speak of - McBride sought out corporate sponsorship from the telecommunications giant Rogers Wireless, which will underwrite 60 percent of the costs and should cover booking the buildings and tour-related expenses. The company will also hold back 100 promotional tickets to give to users who enter a contest, guaranteeing them entry to the shows in venues ranging from around 1,000 to 2,500 capacity. McBride did not say how much Rogers was ponying up for the deal, but said that he met with several potential underwriters last year and Rogers had the most interest and best history with music promotions.

For now, McBride is confining the idea to Canada and to K-Os, but he's eager to see what the results will be. "I think we will move from a situation where you have a ticketed concert where a couple friends show up together to seeing tribes showing up in social groups of eight to 10 people, taking it back to concerts being social events," McBride predicted. "My intuition tells me that with Twitter and Facebook and all this ability to communicate with peer groups so much easier, this is a social event more than a ticketed concert."

Asked what will happen if no one decides to pay for the concerts, the eternally optimistic McBride said he doubted that would happen, pointing to a successful experiment run with another of his artists, singer/songwriter Griffin House. McBride said he convinced House to sell "karma"-priced CDs at his shows more than a year ago, allowing fans to leave what they wanted for the discs. Once he began that pricing scheme, McBride said House saw a 300 percent increase in overall grosses and 20 percent increase in profits since everyone was leaving the venue with a CD, even if they already had one.

In addition to convincing K-Os and Rogers Wireless to get on board, McBride said he had to sell promoter Live Nation on the idea, which he said they took to pretty quickly. "They've had to take a huge leap of faith and kudos to them," he said. "It's an awful lot of work with no guaranteed return. They understand me as a promoter ... they've seen me do a lot of things and my track record of success speaks for itself." A spokesperson for Live Nation did not return requests for comment for this story.

Though there's no guarantee what kind of money anyone will make on the outing, McBride was convinced that every show will play to a packed house, likely with turn-away business. "I'm confident it will make money," he said. "It's yet to be seen if it's more than before, but intuitively I think it will be profitable." — Gil Kaufman

Contacted for this story: Terry McBride, (604) 654-2929

Nominate a Woman of Influence



Venues Today's annual "Women of Influence" awards are coming up. We are currently seeking nominations about women who are making a difference in the industry. We want to give recognition where recognition is due.

Submit nominations to Linda Deckard at
linda@venuestoday.com

The nomination deadline is May 8.

For advertising information, contact:

Southeast U.S. * Sue Nichols * sue@venuestoday.com

Midwest U.S. * Kathleen Crain *
kathleen@venuestoday.com

Northeast & west coast U.S. and Intl * Rich DiGiacomo *
rich@venuestoday.com

Texas * Pauline Davis * pauline@venuestoday.com

GREEN

GREEN INGENUITY ABOUNDS ON EARTH DAY

DJ R.O.B. rocks the first solar-powered DJ booth at the Palms Hotel in Las Vegas.



While the global economic crisis has shifted some attention away from environmental concerns, a number of concert professionals are working to continue to raise awareness with initiatives to power event equipment with renewable energy.

Just in time for today's Earth Day celebration, The Palms Hotel in Las Vegas debuted one of the country's first solar DJ booths to be used at its pool and clubs including the Live Nation-managed Pearl at the Palms.

The sun powers the DJ station, which uses four 170-watt panels to capture energy into four 12-volt batteries. Power is stored for use at night and when the sun doesn't shine. Palms Pool sponsor Miller Lite also is sponsoring the solar-powered booth.

The mobile solar power and staging company that created the system, Sustainable Waves, based in Austin, Texas, and San Diego, Calif., works on a national level in conjunction with various events and venues.

"We're heading in the direction of putting in free-standing venue installs with this unit," said

Mark McLarry, the company's president. "We foresee it being used in arenas and stadiums in the future."

According to Jenna Morton, director of community affairs at N9NE Group, a carbon neutral nightlife and hospitality company based in Las Vegas, the new booth is part of its environmentally friendly philosophy.

"In the last few years, we are doing as many things as possible to walk softly," she said.

Festivals have also become fertile grounds for promoting green initiatives. For six years now, the Coachella Valley Music & Arts Festival in Indio, Calif. has been working with Los Angeles-based nonprofit Global Inheritance on a number of environmental initiatives including a carpool contest, a recycled paper plane event, and a series of alternative-energy powered golf carts designed for Coachella artists.

"Each golf cart runs on a different renewable energy source," said Global Inheritance Founder Eric Ritz. "The golf carts for M.I.A. and Paul McCartney run on solar, Amy Winehouse's is ethanol; Turbonegro is wind, Franz Ferdinand is air, and the cart we made for the Yeah Yeah Yeahs which they plan to ride tonight to their performance is also powered on solar. Golf carts are great festival staples so we thought it would be fun."

Global Inheritance also helped with the festival's water program by providing a free bottle of water to anyone who turned in 10 empty bottles, and encouraged visitors to bring their own bottles for a \$1 refill.

"They could have given away easier things than water because that's just revenue out of their pocket, but they get it and they understand

what makes an impact,” he said. “And as a nonprofit, festivals are the most cost effective way for us to reach a lot of people in a short period of time.”

The Lollapalooza music festival and Los Angeles Clippers basketball games are also providing fans with the option of being environmental stewards by purchasing Be Green tickets.

With this program, ticket buyers can choose to pay an extra \$2.50 for tickets, which were created by Green Mountain Energy Co. This provides 250 kWh of renewable energy certificates to offset approximately 332 lbs. of CO₂. The tickets are sold through a shopping cart system with the money going directly to the charity. In the event of a cancellation, the charity keeps the money.

For every unit of renewable energy generated, an equivalent amount of renewable certificates is produced to help offset conventional electricity generation in the region where the renewable generator is located. The purchase also helps build a market for renewable electricity.

N9NE Group has partnered with Green Mountain Energy to offer these tickets to its customers. The company plans to offset 100 percent of its total calculated carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions associated with annual electricity, natural gas and refrigerant usage for 2009.

There is no cost for venues to implement this program. Sustainable Waves provides venues with information on setting up the ticketing system, along with marketing materials.

McLarry said that, with green in the mainstream, it has helped speed up change from a venues perspective. Although there are no figures yet in

terms of cost savings for its solar DJ booths, using less energy will conserve energy money in the long run.

"It's a way for venues to give back," McLarry said. "By nature of what we do, our projects get media attention, and the more media attention venues receive, the more tickets they sell to their events." — Lisa White and Dave Brooks

Interviewed for this article: Mark McLarry, (619) 358 -9939; Jessie Pound, (702) 737-3100; Eric Ritz, (213) 626-0073

There's still time to
Say thx to ur skool!



Venues Today is offering a last minute chance to

say thanks to your school- PAFMS, that is. We are selling congrats and thank you text ads for a stellar deal of 300 bucks!

Monday, April 27th is the deadline for advertising so don't miss it!

Say thanks TODAY!

For advertising information, contact:

Southeast U.S. * Sue Nichols * sue@venuestoday.com

Midwest U.S. *Kathleen Crain
*kathleen@venuestoday.com

Northeast & West coast U.S. and Int'l *Rich DiGiacomo * rich@venuestoday.com

Texas * Pauline Davis * pauline@venuestoday.com

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 March 31, 2009.

COHEN RULES WEST COAST FROM L.A. TO VANCOUVER

15,001 or More Seats	10,001-15,000 Seats	5,001-10,000 Seats	5,000 or Less Seats
1) Britney Spears Gross Sales: \$1,585,578; Venue: American Airlines Center, Dallas; Attendance: 17,868; Ticket Range: \$500-\$39.50; Promoter: AEG Live; Dates: March 31; No. of	1) Neil Young Gross Sales: \$903,307; Venue: John Labatt Centre, London, Ontario; Attendance: 8,973; Ticket Range: \$175-\$53.25; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: April 15; No. of Shows: 1 2) New Kids on	1) Kenney Chesney Gross Sales: \$1,274,480; Venue: Mohegan Sun Arena, Uncasville, Conn.; Attendance: 15,053; Ticket Range: \$125-\$95; Promoter: AEG Live, Live Nation, The Messina Group; Dates: April 17-18; No. of	1) Leonard Cohen Gross Sales: \$973,345; Venue: Paramount Theatre, Oakland, Calif.; Attendance: 8,979; Ticket Range: \$251-\$69.50; Promoter: AEG Live, Concerts West; Dates: April 13-15; No

<p>Shows: 1</p> <p>2) Britney Spears Gross Sales: \$1,313,862; Venue: Target Center, Minneapolis; Attendance: 17,245; Ticket Range: \$75-\$37.50; Promoter: AEG Live; Dates: April 3; No. of Shows: 1</p> <p>3) Bruce Springsteen & The E Street Band Gross Sales: \$1,302,672; Venue: Frank Erwin Center, Austin, Texas; Attendance: 15,652; Ticket Range: \$89-\$39; Promoter: Live Nation, In-house; Dates: April 5; No. of Shows: 1</p> <p>4) Leonard Cohen Gross Sales: \$937,142; Venue: General Motors Place, Vancouver, British Columbia; Attendance: 8,632; Ticket Range: \$250-\$59.50;</p>	<p>the Block Gross Sales: \$211,210; Venue: wireless Center, Moline, Ill.; Attendance: 5,581; Ticket Range: \$65-\$25; Promoter: Live Naiton; Dates: April 2; No. of Shows: 1</p> <p>3) Avenged Sevenfold, Buckcherry Gross Sales: \$142,512; Venue: San Diego Sports Arena; Attendance: 3,714; Ticket Range: \$39.75; Promoter: Frank Productions, Knitting Factory Entertainment; Dates: April 17; No. of Shows: 1</p> <p>4) Chris Tomlin Gross Sales: \$90,258; Venue: Jacksonville (Fla.) Veterans Memorial Arena; Attendance: 3,523; Ticket Range: \$28-\$25; Promoter: Premier Productions; Dates: April 5; No. of Shows: 1</p> <p>5) Boxing: Derek Ennis vs. Ismail Arvin Gross Sales:</p>	<p>Shows: 2</p> <p>2) Leonard Cohen Gross Sales: \$1,251,786; Venue: Nokia Theatre L.A. Live; Attendance: 13,564; Ticket Range: \$254.50-\$64; Promoter: AEG Live, Concerts West; Dates: April 10-11; No. of Shows: 2</p> <p>3) Leonard Cohen Gross Sales: \$436,743; Venue: Save On Foods Memorial Centre, Victoria, British Columbia; Attendance: 5,663; Ticket Range: \$250-\$69.50; Promoter: AEG Live, Concerts West; Dates: April 21; No. of Shows: 1</p> <p>4) Young Jeezy Gross Sales: \$407,790; Venue: Lakefront Arena, New Orleans; Attendance: 6,780; Ticket Range: \$102-\$47; Promoter: Rufus Johnson; Dates: April 12; No. of Shows: 1</p> <p>5) Alan Jackson Gross Sales: \$321,490; Venue:</p>	<p>of Shows: 3</p> <p>2) The Color Purple Gross Sales: \$673,065; Venue: Fox Theatre, Detroit; Attendance: 13,280; Ticket Range: \$75-\$29.50; Promoter: AEG Live; Dates: April 14-19; No. of Shows: 8</p> <p>3) Leonard Cohen Gross Sales: \$449,745; Venue: The Long Center-Michael and Susan Dell Hall, Austin, Texas; Attendance: 4,725; Ticket Range: \$250-\$85.50; Promoter: Aeg Live, Concerts West; Dates: April 1-2; No. of Shows: 2</p> <p>4) Robin Thicke & Jennifer Hudson Gross Sales: \$445,527; Venue: Fox Theatre, Atlanta; Attendance: 7,019; Ticket Range: \$87.50-\$49.50; Promoter: AFG</p>
--	--	--	--

Promoter: AEG Live, Concerts West; Dates: April 19; No. of Shows: 1	\$42,415; Venue: Atlantic City (N.J.) Boardwalk Hall ; Attendance: 1,102; Ticket Range: \$55-\$22; Promoter: Dee Lee Productions; Dates: April 11; No. of Shows: 1	Eastern Kentucky Exposition Center ; Attendance: 5,668; Ticket Range: \$57.50-\$47.50; Promoter: Red Mountain Entertainment; Dates: April 18; No. of Shows: 1	Live, Atlanta World Wide Touring Company; Dates: April 14,16; No. of Shows: 2
5) Nickelback Gross Sales: \$824,875; Venue: Target Center, Minneapolis ; Attendance: 14,075; Ticket Range: \$73-\$43; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: April 7; No. of Shows: 1			5) Mike Epps Gross Sales: \$365,399; Venue: Fox Theatre, Atlanta ; Attendance: 6,650; Ticket Range: \$58.75-\$39.75; Promoter: Bay Area Productions; Dates: April 17; No. of Shows: 2

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

THE BEAT

SPORTS

PISTONS STAY ON TOP DESPITE DOWNTURN IN ECONOMY

Despite a worsening economy and the near collapse of the automotive industry, Detroit has weathered the storm once more, holding onto its title as the attendance champion of professional basketball for the 2008/2009 regular season.

According to a report released by the National Basketball Association, the Detroit Pistons drew more fans to the Palace of Auburn Hills (Mich.) than any other team in the NBA, earning that distinction for the sixth time in the past seven seasons.

According to the report, the Pistons drew in 896,971 people through its turnstile for its 41 regular season home games — an average of 21,877 per game. The attendance figures equal a less than one percent drop from the previous season, when the team drew 905,116 fans.

“A lot of our success stems from the fact that we understand the market and that people are going through tough times and that we need to be more creative in terms of packaging our tickets,” said Thomas Wilson, president and CEO of Palace Sports and Entertainment. While ticket sales have remained close to flat, deep discounting has brought a drop in revenue equivalent to “several million dollars,” he

said.

“There are people out there telling you not to discount tickets because you will never recover the value, but we’re in unprecedented economic waters and you have to listen to what the market is telling you,” he said.

That means discounting tickets, new fan offers and higher value giveaways, all marketed to fans through the Pistons' consumer database of several hundred thousand people that had been compiled over the past four to five years.

“We had to activate folks with a price that might work and come up with excuses for people to come out, whether it be “Guys Night Out” special or a buy-one-get-one-free offer,” he said. “We were also making marriages on our season tickets and partnering people up to split their season tickets among several buyers. We didn’t do that in the past; it was an all or nothing proposition, but this model allowed us to bring in new people to the facility who, in the past, might not have been able to buy tickets.”

Detroit has been particularly hard hit by the economic downturn as the automotive industry clings to life with the help of federal loans. Wilson said the big three automakers were an important part of the facility, but most of the suite-holders were suppliers to the industry, not car companies.

“Right now we have 15 to 20 suiteholders who just can’t give us an answer about next year, and we find ourselves doing one year leases, which we never did in the past,” Wilson said. “Everything has changed around the margins. I’ve got people sitting in a suite watching Billy Joel or Elton John and saying to themselves, ‘I just laid off 200 people. How can I justify this?’”

Overall, the NBA attendance record is the third highest it has ever been with 21.5 million fans attending events, averaging 17,520 fans per game. The 2006-2007 season was the highest ranking of all time with an average attendance of 17,757 per game, while the 2005-2006 season ranked second with an average of 17,558.

The remaining teams in the top five were:

- 2.) The Chicago Bulls, selling 847,903 tickets with an average of 21,197 per game
- 3.) The Portland (Ore.) Trail Blazers, selling 841,499 tickets with an average of 20,524
- 4.) The Dallas Mavericks, selling 821,723 tickets for an average of 20,042
- 5.) The Cleveland Cavaliers, selling 820,439 tickets for an average of 20,010

Rounding out the list were the New York Knicks, the Los Angeles Lakers, the Golden State Warriors, and the Toronto Raptors. The champion Boston Celtics were ranked 12th on the list.

“We think our fans are responding to our game, our players, our style of play in a very positive way,” said NBA commissioner David Stern during a conference call on April 13. “What we’re doing is we’re working closely with our teams and they’re

working closely with each other to make sure that best practices take hold with respect to renewals of tickets, club seats, suites and sponsors.” — Dave Brooks

Interviewed for this article: Tom Wilson, (248) 377-0100

FAIRS & FESTIVALS



COACHELLA ARTISTS IGNORE CURFEWS IN MUSIC MARATHON

Irreverant artwork is a staple of Coachella. Global Inheritance of Los Angeles created this ethanol-powered golf cart to honor singer Amy Winehouse, who was originally scheduled to play but had to cancel due to visa difficulties.

INDIO, CALIF. — After three long, hot days in the desert, the Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival at the Empire Polo Club wrapped its April 17-19 run with a three-hour

set by 80's band The Cure.

As a nod to the music marathon that the Goldenvoice/AEG Live-produced event has become, Robert Smith and his band rocked the audience for what seemed like an eternity, only leaving the stage after their power, sound and audio was cut off. After all, Coachella has a midnight curfew and going over that curfew can cost \$1,000 a minute, according to Indio Police spokesperson Ben Guitron.

That didn't seem to stop opening night headliner Paul McCartney, who went 55 minutes past the midnight curfew during his Friday set, which included a bevy of Beatles hits. Sri Lankan rapper M.I.A. didn't let Saturday pass without controversy, inviting fan members to come dance with her on the main stage while security personnel tried to prevent the 100+ fans who crowded the stage from hurting themselves. M.I.A. was filling in for singer Amy Winehouse, who couldn't make the festival because of problems securing a U.S. visa.

In total, Coachella featured five stages: two outdoor stages and three tented stages for various acts including the largest Sahara tent which served more of a dance crowd with acts like Girl Talk, The Crystal Method and the Chemical Brothers. As a testament to its booking strength, Coachella ended each night with five headliners (often playing at the same time) who were generally at the top of their respective genre. Saturday, for example, featured a main stage performance by pop icons The Killers, as well as shows by underground rap legends Atmosphere (who recently

headlined the Paid Dues tour); metal band Mastadon and DJ group MSTRKRFT, one of the top selling electronic acts in the world.

According to reports from Goldenvoice, the festival scored an aggregate attendance of 160,000; it's second biggest year ever. During an onsite interview, organizer Paul Tollett said that the festival's layaway ticket program drove about 20 percent of total sales for the concert.

"I think a lot of it has to do with the quality of the artists we book," he said. "As a value proposition, you're getting 130+ bands for essentially \$2 an act. That's a great deal."

New this year to Coachella was Staff Pro, who provided staffing and security to the event. In the past years, security was handled by Contemporary Services Corporation.

"The key for us was to keep the employees happy," said Thushan Rajapaksa, who oversaw the event for Staff Pro. "Keep the employees well fed. Keep the employees cool and not work them 16 hours a day. We go out of our way to get shade tents, water coolers and stagger the call times so that not everybody comes in the beginning. We wanted to bring new people in every two or three hours."

Rajapaksa and team will stay on next week as the Empire Polo Club is transformed for the Stage Coach Festival, April 25-26, a two-day country event produced by Goldenvoice that includes Kenny Chesney, Brad Paisley, Reba McEntire and Kid Rock.

"We'll be onsite with the senior management team throughout the week, and many of us won't see home until May 1," he said.

New to the festival this year was a filtered water program to discourage the sale of plastic water bottles, known to cause litter and landfill problems. Visitors could purchase a container for \$10 that included free filtered water refills over the course of three days. Patrons were also allowed to bring in their own water bottles and refill them for \$1 a pop.

Also new was an iPhone application that allowed Coachella visitors to see the Coachella time set schedules, customize their own schedules for bands they wanted to see, view interactive maps and locate friends using the phone's GPS capabilities and upload photos to the Coachella website.

"Cell phone use is huge during the festival, so we worked with a design team to create this application and make Coachella easier to navigate," Tollett said. "It was also free for anyone to download."

The festival also featured new art installations including the Serpent Mother, a metal dragon skeleton that breathed fire, as well as a 90-foot tall bamboo skyscraper. Major sponsors for this year's event were Heineken, which sponsored an air-conditioned beer dome where patrons could listen to dance music while

watching a kaleidoscope video screen on the dome's ceiling, along with State Farm which provided DJ lessons and Sony Playstation, featuring an air-conditioned lounge where visitors could play new video games. — Dave Brooks

Interviewed for this article: Paul Tollett, (323) 930-5700; Thushan Rajapaksa, (714) 230-7223

If you no longer wish to receive these emails, please reply to this message with "Unsubscribe" in the subject line or simply click on the following link: [Unsubscribe](#)

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

[Read](#) the VerticalResponse marketing policy.

