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VT PULSE

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Quote of the Week

"I think there's a hunger here for a winning culture."

—John Walker on his new position as Tickets.com's CEO and President.

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Greetings,

Welcome to VT Pulse, your weekly guide to the "News Behind the Headlines." Venues Today is now seeking nominations for our annual Women of Influence Awards. Nominations should include name, position/company and a brief explanation about why this person should be honored. Email nominations to samantha@venuestoday.com by April 30.

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SHORT TAKES

>> CTS CHALLENGES

MERGER — Live Nation revealed in a Security and Exchange Commission filing Tuesday that its merger with Ticketmaster has been challenged by CTS Eventim at the International Chamber of Commerce, arguing breach of contract over Live Nation's U.K. ticket distribution practices. *Contact: Hannah Kampf, (310) 867-7127*

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VT NEWS

FACES & PLACES

SUNS' JOHN WALKER HIRED AS NEW CEO FOR TICKETS.COM IN SURPRISE SHAKEUP

John Walker



Tickets.com has hired John Walker from the Phoenix Suns to replace CEO and President Larry Witherspoon, the company announced today.

Walker starts the new position full time on May 17, and will report directly to Bob Bowman, CEO of Major League Baseball Advanced Media. Walker is currently the Sr. VP of business development for the National Basketball Association team and was the moderator for a high-profile panel at Tickets.com's Executive Summit in Long Beach, Calif., in February.

"I think there's a hunger here for a winning culture," Walker said. "My experience on the team side and the venue side has allowed me to see how (a winning culture) can make people better."

Tickets.com has had its share of wins and losses in recent years. Considered to be one of the largest ticketing companies in North America, the Costa Mesa, Calif.-based firm enjoyed a string of victories under Witherspoon, including ticketing operations for the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver, and new contracts with the BOK Center in Tulsa, Okla., and International Speedway Corporation, which signed in October.

But the company has stumbled in its efforts to pick up basketball clients, often to emerging competitor Veritix, whose majority shareholder Dan Gilbert also owns the Cleveland Cavaliers. In September, Veritix signed the Utah Jazz, making them the fourth NBA team to use the platform. A number of NBA teams have ticketing contracts up for renewal this year and Walker said his extensive contacts throughout the league would be useful.

"There have been ongoing discussions with (NBA) teams before I came on with the company, and I fully expect that we'll have some wins in that area soon," said Walker, who, prior to the Suns, had worked with the Kansas City Royals.

Secondly, Walker said, "There needs to be a recommitment to our customers. We will be responsive, detail-oriented and professional. We're going to try and raise the bar on what people think about Tickets.com. We're going to try and get better."

For Steve Fanelli of the Oakland A's, that could mean finally implementing the ProVenue software system. He said his team has waited 13 months to implement the software and, despite several delays, is hoping to start installing the new ticketing system by October.

"Ultimately they need to get the product out on the market and this might kick-start that process," Fanelli said.

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Witherspoon was hired by Tickets.com in 2005 and ran the company as co-president with Andy Donkin, until Donkin was dismissed and Witherspoon moved to the CEO position. Prior to Tickets.com, Witherspoon worked as VP of Technology Services at the Seattle Mariners.

"I've worked closely with Larry in the past and he seemed upfront with their intentions and was always honest with us," said Fanelli, adding that Witherspoon was a constant presence at industry events, including INTIX and Ticket Summit. — Dave Brooks

Interviewed for this article: John Walker, (714) 327-5400; Nick Fanelli, (510) 563-2270

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CONCESSIONS

THEMED MICRO-ENVIRONMENTS DRIVE CONCESSIONS SALES FOR SAVOR

Savor's Shaun Beard, Veronica Quintero and Stephen Lazar outside one of six Tecate Cantinas built for the Grand Prix of Long Beach. (VT Photo)

samantha@
venuestoday.com

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

rob@venuestoday.com

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Vee Corporation, Minn.
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Professor (Sport Venue
Management)

**Disney Theatrical Group,
New York** - Group Sales
Manager

**NASCAR Hall of Fame,
Charlotte, N.C.** -Admissions
Manager

**New Era Tickets, Exton,
Pa.** - Director of New
Business Development

**Royal Agricultural Society
of NSW, Australia** -Manager
of Event Services

VIEW THE FULL LISTINGS



REPORTING FROM LONG BEACH, CALIF. — Savor, SMG’s catering division, rolled out themed concepts, creating sports bars and cantinas with pool tables and Adirondack chairs, to help drive outdoor sales at the 36th annual Toyota Grand Prix of Long Beach April 16-18. Shaun Beard, senior VP of Savor, called them micro environments, and said it added comfort and hospitality to the racing days for all customers, something already common for VIPs.

The event has changed considerably over the years, to a point that it’s a packed weekend celebration, not just a Sunday race, said Stephen Lazar, Savor VP-West and Business Development, and based at the Long Beach Entertainment and Convention Center from which the food team oversees the Grand Prix client.

Food and drink consisted of 210 points of sale among 22 operations for the Grand Prix, a 1.6 mile track that encircles the convention center, arena and Terrace Theater properties along with other downtown restaurants and hotels.

The size of the landscape for the event has not changed over the years, so the micro environments had to be created by consolidating three traditional belly-up stands to one concept. Besides creating eye appeal, the approach increased length of stay and sales and allowed for more high end merchandise, Beard said.

“That was our focus this year, along with expansion of our alcohol awareness training,” Beard added. The latter is called Savor Safe and involves secret shoppers, additional hours of training and heightened awareness. Beard said a visiting client complimented him on the fact that every time he bought beer, he was carded by a polite Savor employee. “I love to hear that,” Beard said.

The Grand Prix has expanded to include Team Drifting Challenge demonstrations along with several practice laps and qualifying races for the Indy cars on Friday, capped off with free Tecate Light “Fiesta Friday” concert. On Saturday, April 17, the schedule included the Toyota Pro/Celebrity race, Drifting demonstrations, qualifying and practice races and a free Tecate Light Rock-N-Roar concert featuring Cheap Trick. Sunday featured the main event along with supporting activities. The lifestyle exposition is open all three days and is hosted in the Long Beach Convention Center.

What used to be a one-day payday for Savor has grown to three big days, drawing up to 80,000 a day, with most guests staying for more than one meal. The evening concerts keep 5,000-7,000 on the grounds. Lazar said a Free Friday promotion was introduced five years ago and probably half the 60,000 in attendance on Friday this year had coupons for free admission.

Randy Bernard, new CEO of the Indy Racing League, was on hand to assess the event, which the IRL sanctions, and said he was most impressed with the number of people in attendance, a number he heard as 180,000. The IRL will be involved a minimum of three more years under the current contract, said Bernard, who joined the IRL from his former post with the Professional Bull Riders on March 1.

“One thing I would like to change is get the event on ABC,” he declared of his first impressions. It is currently broadcast on Versus, one of 17 races IRL broadcasts on that channel.

Bernard was also impressed with how much the Grand Prix was a social as well as sporting event and a great marketing event for the city of Long Beach. Part of his day there was taken up showing representatives from cities wishing to host a similar event around Long Beach.

Savor’s goal with the Grand Prix is to be hospitable and enhance the guest’s experience, Beard said. They brought in some third party concepts to give guests plenty of choices, including restaurants like California Pizza Kitchen with several portables and longtime independent concessionaires selling sought-after items like the World’s Largest Hamburger. There were six Tecate Zones, the cantina concept, which was under tent, with seating and dj’s and music.

Pricing was in line with last year. A 22-ounce beer was \$9.75; specialty dogs (Chicago, Baja Bacon, chili and kraut dogs) were \$6; grilled Italian sausage, \$8; a regular hot dog, \$4.75; assorted chips, \$2.50; bottled products, \$3.50; and peanuts, \$4. In the official merchandise tent, polo shirts were selling for \$30-\$55 and T-shirts were \$14.

The cantina and sports bar concepts worked well, Lazar said. Savor just renewed with the client, the Indy Racing League, to provide food and drinks service for the Grand Prix for five more years. Savor oversees all food and drink on the Grand Prix campus, and brings in partners to offer diversity of product and high end merchandise.

The other trend, which was evident here, is variety and new offerings. “We have convention centers that have gluten-free shows; that didn’t exist 10 years ago,” Beard said. “That will spill out; it will be mainstream,” he said. (For more on trends in concessions see our May issue of Venues Today.) – Linda Deckard

Interviewed for this story: Shaun Beard, (610) 729-1590; Stephen Lazar, (714) 553-2400; Randy Bernard, (317) 492-6526

VT's 2010 Women of Influence Nominations Now Due!

Send your nominations to Samantha@venuestoday.com by Friday, April 30th.

She will join an impressive group of women that ranges from veterans like *Donna Dowless* and *Jane Kleinberger* to up-and-comers like *Nicole Feld* and *Patti-Anne Tarlton*. Nominees must be an executive with a venue or supplier and a mentor to others in the industry.

Include her name, title, affiliation, location and a brief description of her accomplishments.



Submit by **April 30, 2010**
to: samantha@venuestoday.com

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CONCESSIONS

OVATIONS LAUNCHES COOKING CLASSES IN NEW ORLEANS

Ovations class at the Pontchartrain Center in New Orleans



In a unique PR move, Ovations Food Services has created a summer cooking program at New Orleans' Pontchartrain Center.

The brainchild of SMG facility manager Kathleen Turner, Wine Me, Dine Me Cooking Classes are the first monthly classes of this type geared to bring more awareness to the venue and its emphasis on fresh food preparation.

Participants paid \$40 or \$150 each for the series, which includes a hands-on class, three-course meal and wine pairings with each course.

"Ovations has made a big push for from-scratch food preparation at the center," said Stacey Messina, general manager of food and beverage for Ovations-Messinas. "Kathleen came up with this program to get more people into the building and showcase it in a different way."

Fifteen participants attended the first of four two-and-a-half hour classes on April 15. The meal's wine pairings and descriptions were provided by Dallas-based Glazer Distributors.

Ovations' chef Mike Couste created the program after assessing other area cooking schools.

At the hands-on demonstration, participants learned how to prepare Cheese Plate Stuffed Pork Loin with blue cheese, walnuts, apples, dates, salami and an herb glaze. Attendees also helped make grilled and diced vegetables, truffle mashed potato and a berry parfait.

"We had a pork roast tying demonstration and then attendees participated in a hands-on ice breaker by chopping ingredients," Couste said. "Everyone also was able to get up close to the grill and cooking equipment."

In addition, participants were educated on the origin and history of the various ingredients.

The demographic of the class included those ages 25 to 81, and a third of participants were male. No one had taken a cooking class prior.

The remaining classes include Chicken Couste on May 20, Farmer's Market Seafood on June 24 and Grass-Fed Summer Grilling on July 22.

Although the classes are positioned as more of a PR venture than a money maker, Ovations is hoping to convert the program into team building cooking classes for its clientele.

"If we can sell this program to conventions, it may develop into a money-making venture," Turner said. "We are basically running the program at cost and trying to keep our overhead as low as possible."

There is already increased interest in the May class, with most April participants planning on returning. Many who are concerned with the class filling up are prepaying to reserve spots.

"We can accommodate a maximum of 30 people in the kitchen, who will rotate being observers and hands-on participants," Couste said.

To keep costs down, Ovations will attempt to partner with a wine company or distributor that will provide the beverages.

Depending on the interest and results of the remaining classes, Ovations may offer a cooking program for teenagers in the future.

“Considering our busy event schedule in the fall and winter months as well as the amount of prep that goes into the three-hour class, we’ll have to see if this is feasible,” Couste said. - Lisa White

Interviewed for this article: Mike Couste, (504) 465-9985; Stacey Messina, (504) 468-6693, Kathleen Turner, (504) 465-9985

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 30.

PEAS AND TAYLOR SWIFT MAKE MARQUEE MONTH FOR STAPLES CENTER

15,001 or More Seats	10,001-15,000 Seats	5,001-10,000 Seats	5,000 or Less Seats
<p>1) Supafest Gross Sales: \$2,282,961; Venue: Acer Arena, Sydney; Attendance: 20,859; Ticket Range: \$147.85-\$92; Promoter: Nonstop Entertainment; Dates: April 15-16; No. of Shows: 2</p>	<p>1) Kelly Clarkson Gross Sales: \$316,903; Venue: Brisbane (Australia) Entertainment Center; Attendance: 3,972; Ticket Range: \$79.79; Promoter: Chugg Entertainment; Dates: April 13; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p>1) Jeff Beck Gross Sales: \$357,323; Venue: Nokia Theatre L.A. Live; Attendance: 5,944; Ticket Range: \$89.50-\$24.50; Promoter: AEG Live, Goldenvoice; Dates: April 17; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p>1) Madea’s Big Happy Family Gross Sales: \$1,680,226; Venue: Fox Theatre, Atlanta; Attendance: 25,569; Ticket Range: \$127-\$32; Promoter: Entertainment Services, LLC; Dates: April 15-18; No. of Shows: 6</p>
<p>2) Black Eyed Peas Gross Sales: \$1,904,099; Venue: Staples Center, Los Angeles; Attendance: 29,220; Ticket Range: \$89.50-\$49.50; Promoter: AEG Live, Concerts West; Dates: March 29-30; No. of Shows: 2</p>	<p>2) Carrie Underwood Gross Sales: \$311,455; Venue: Peoria (Ill.) Civic Center Arena; Attendance: 6,215; Ticket Range: \$55-\$35; Promoter: AEG Live; Dates: April 7; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p>2) Alan Jackson Gross Sales: \$213,298; Venue: UCF Arena, Orlando, Fla.; Attendance: 4,583; Ticket Range: \$67.50-\$27.50; Promoter: In-house; Dates: April 9; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p>2) Legally Blond The Musical Gross Sales: \$791,431; Venue: San Diego Civic Theatre; Attendance: 15,944; Ticket Range: \$79-\$17.50; Promoter: Nederlander; Dates: March 30-April 4; No. of Shows: 8</p>
<p>3) Taylor Swift Gross Sales: \$1,736,197; Venue: Staples Center, Los Angeles; Attendance: 27,518; Ticket Range: \$69.50-\$49.50; Promoter: The Messina Group; Dates: April 15-16; No. of Shows: 2</p>	<p>3) Gordon Lightfoot Gross Sales: \$244,834; Venue: John Labatt Centre, London, Ontario; Attendance: 4,068; Ticket Range: \$69.38-\$53.35; Promoter: Global Spectrum; Dates: April 15; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p>3) Jason Aldean Gross Sales: \$182,329; Venue: Wesbanco Arena, Wheeling, W.Va.; Attendance: 5,964; Ticket Range: \$34.75-\$24.75; Promoter: Outback Concerts; Dates: April 8; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p>3) Cirque Dreams: Illumination Gross Sales: \$531,085; Venue: The Balboa Theatre, San Diego; Attendance: 8,181; Ticket Range: \$72-\$17.50; Promoter: Nederlander; Dates: April 13-18; No. of Shows: 8</p>
<p>4) Bon Jovi Gross Sales: \$1,704,814; Venue: St. Pete Times Forum, Tampa, Fla.; Attendance: 19,079; Ticket Range: \$225-\$26.75; Promoter: AEG</p>	<p>4) Hedley Gross Sales: \$207,191; Venue: John Labatt Centre, London, Ontario; Attendance: 4,834; Ticket Range: \$44.88; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: April 4; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p>4) Kelly Clarkson Gross Sales: \$172,443; Venue: Newcastle (Australia) Entertainment Centre; Attendance: 2,308; Ticket Range: \$82.77; Promoter: Chugg Entertainment; Dates: April 15; No. of Shows:</p>	<p>4) Mark Knopfler Gross Sales: \$409,632; Venue: Pantages Theatre, Los Angeles; Attendance: 5,043; Ticket Range: \$131-\$56.50; Promoter: Nederlander; Dates:</p>

Live; Dates: April 17; No. of Shows: 1	5) Daughtry Gross Sales: \$201,256; Venue: Wolstein Center at Cleveland State University ; Attendance: 5,290; Ticket Range: \$39.50-\$29.50; Promoter: AEG Live; Dates: April 1; No. of Shows: 1	1	April 16-17; No. of Shows: 2
5) Black Eyed Peas Gross Sales: \$1,073,877; Venue: General Motors Place, Vancouver, British Columbia ; Attendance: 15,676; Ticket Range: \$92-\$49.50; Promoter: AEG Live, Concerts West; Dates: April 11; No. of Shows: 1		5) Mo’Nique Gross Sales: \$121,011; Venue: Nokia Theatre L.A. Live ; Attendance: 4,214; Ticket Range: \$69.50-\$39.50; Promoter: AEG Live, Goldenvoice; Dates: April 2; No. of Shows: 1	5) Celtic Woman Gross Sales: \$243,573; Venue: Fox Theatre, Atlanta ; Attendance: 3,965; Ticket Range: \$68-\$34; Promoter: Madstone Productions; Dates: April 7; No. of Shows: 1

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

THE BEAT

TICKETS

MYSPACE LAUNCHES EVENTS APP, WORKING ON TICKETING PLATFORM

MySpace recently unwrapped its long-in-the-works ticketing and events platform, which will allow artists to make an even deeper connection to their fans while its users expand the type and number of events on their personalized calendars. The goal? To sell more concert, movie and show tickets by cluing users into millions of potential events.

Among the updated features are a new MySpace calendar, which brings together the users’ events along with those of their friends, artists they follow and sponsored gigs from advertisers.

“The key reason we’re so excited about this is because, this year, MySpace has the largest database of events of all types, including nearly a million shows (through 2010),” said Marcus Womack, director of events and ticketing for the social networking site. “Our goal was to service that database in a more prominent way, which includes an easier way to look for things in the directory and a new social calendar.”

Like its iLike subsidiary, MySpace Events will let users see which friends are planning to attend a concert and automatically alert a viewer’s friend list when they purchase tickets to a show, as well as combining those events with similar ones in the MySpace database. The upgrade is an improvement over the previous method, which required users to leave MySpace to go to an artist’s page or a third party site to buy concert tickets.

“Artist profiles are now updated with ticket purchase functionality and we’re working with Ticketmaster to provide a feed of ticketing options,” said Womack.

The goal is not to allow artists to sell tickets directly to fans by bypassing Ticketmaster and other primary ticket sellers, but to streamline the process, he said. In addition to Ticketmaster, Womack said the revamped site will work with a variety of primary and secondary ticketing companies.

If it’s a Wal-Mart sponsored event, the stream will feature a sponsored logo. Womack declined to discuss the cost of such a sponsored link, saying it would vary depending on the client. Advertisers will also have more promotional platforms to reach out to followers about live shows, CD releases, TV appearances and other non-ticketed activities, toward the site’s goal of helping users plan all their social activities through MySpace.

When someone makes a purchase through the MySpace portal using a ticketing partner, Womack said, MySpace will get a standard referral commission, which he said varies based on the retailer.

Users also have the ability to share their MySpace calendar information across their social network, from Twitter to Facebook or other sites thanks to shortened URLs that can be shared on outside websites and through email. Events on other sites such as Facebook can also be integrated into the MySpace listings for a

more comprehensive view.

Future plans for the site include the ability to add concert email notification, as well as alerts about DVD releases and premiers and integrating the iLike concert app into MySpace. — Gil Kaufman

Interviewed for this article: Marcus Womack, (310) 969-7148

Q&A

RYAN HUG ON MANAGING AN ARMY OF VOLUNTEERS AT COACHELLA

REPORTING FROM INDIO, CALIF. — The early attendance figures indicate that Coachella was much more crowded this year, with 75,000 paid tickets (68,000 in 2009) and another 10,000 comps. Approximately 1,000 of those free tickets went to the Work Exchange Team, a for-profit volunteer organization in Atlanta that recruits and supervises volunteers for music festivals. With a paid staff of only five, the company is helmed by CEO and President Seth Weiner, who also runs promotions firm Shimon Presents, and has deals to provide volunteers for next weekend's Stagecoach, held on the same site as Coachella. Venues Today caught up with volunteer coordinator Ryan Hug, who managed 1,000 Coachella volunteers with 20 paid staff members, to learn more about the organization.

What is Work Exchange Team?

We manage volunteers for music festivals across the country. The volunteers apply online, and we'll use their credit cards to put down a \$350 deposit for a ticket. They're required to work 18 hours throughout the festival. Once they've completed their shifts, we'll refund the money to them. We're essentially lifting the hold we placed on their credit card.

What kind of work are you having the volunteers do?

We have people in catering, parking booths, ticket scanning, accessibility, helping with hotel shuttles and bringing water around the festival. It's mostly physical labor. We have volunteers serving on our Walking Information Team, and they walk around with a signs that say 'Please, ask me questions.' The volunteers are provided with a guide that has an overview of everything in the festival.

How long has WET worked at Coachella?

This is our first year at Coachella. We've been doing the Work Exchange Team since 2005 and we've done some volunteer coordination before that. The first event we did was the Langerado Festival in Florida. Currently, we're doing Work Exchange Team for a new festival in Alabama this May called "The Hangout," (Gulf Shores), along with Wakarusa in (Ozark) Arkansas, Bonnaroo (in Manchester, Tenn.); a new festival in (Oxford) Maine called Nateva, and the All Good Music Festival (in Masontown, W.Va.).

Is the organization mostly web-based?

Primarily, because we can take volunteer credit card deposits online and enter it into a database that we can sort through easily. We do accept a certain number of walkup volunteers, but 97 percent of our volunteers are picked online.

How do you design the volunteers' schedule?

We will work with the volunteers and we'll ask during the application process about their three favorite bands. We do our best to make sure they see two of those three bands. It's really hard to accommodate everyone, but we do our best. Typically, volunteers work two nine-hour shifts or three six-hour shifts. We also have opportunities available the weekend prior to the opening. We had a pre-festival team of local volunteers who helped construct and prepare the site. Usually they'll work more than 18 hours, but they won't miss any music.

And once a worker is done, you hand them a ticket?

Yes, they check in with us and we'll dispatch them to a department head, which might be supervising ticket scanning, or water delivery. That department head will use a time card to sign off that the volunteers logged their hours.

How big is your staff?

Well, most of the people that work in our Atlanta office are interns and volunteers, but we do employ a core staff at the festival, and they are paid by the festival with access to catering.

How do you maintain the quality of work from your volunteers?

It's very hit or miss. Honestly, eight out of 10 are really good workers and they're signing up to volunteer because they want to be a part of Coachella, or they want to be involved with the music industry. One of our slogans is 'Get your feet wet in the music business,' and we offer a chance for fans to work back stage and see the inner workings of a festival, outside of being a bystander. Most people are interested in long-term careers and they're not just trying to get a free ticket. Other people sign up because they want a free ticket, and that's where we protect ourselves with the credit card deposits. If they flake out, we can charge them for a full ticket and they can go and enjoy the show. We offer the opportunity for any of our volunteers to leave early. We don't have a problem with that. — Dave Brooks

Contact: Ryan Hug, (404) 492-6672

NAMING RIGHTS REPORT



KFC Yum! Center, Louisville

Date Announced: April 19

Buyer: Yum! Brands

Terms: 10 years for \$13.5 million

Ownership/Operator/Manager/Tenant: Louisville Arena Authority/Kentucky State Fair Board/AEG/University of Louisville men's and women's basketball teams

Brokered: Team Services, LLC

Comments: The Louisville Arena Authority has signed a 10-year deal with Louisville-based Yum! Brands — the corporation that owns KFC, Taco Bell and Pizza Hut, among others — for naming rights to the 721,000-sq.-ft. downtown arena slated to open this fall. The deal includes a first right to negotiate an option for an additional five years, if both parties agree in the eighth year.

"E.J. Narcise at Team Services brokered the deal over more than a year and a half," said Harold Workman, president and CEO of the Kentucky State Fair Board. "It did take time because of the economic climate, but we are thrilled with the named corporation. They are well known in their hometown, and worldwide."

Yum! Brands employs 1,400 people in the Louisville area, and is an active partner with community events, Workman said.

As part of the deal, Yum! Brands will receive prominent exterior signage, including a rooftop sign, as well as interior signage, Workman said. They will also have seven concession areas where patrons can purchase KFC, Taco Bell and Pizza Hut products, depending on the event.

"They will not serve pizza during [University of Louisville] events, because that already goes to Papa John's," Workman said. Papa John's — also based in Louisville — is the official pizza of the university.

A double center court suite and premium hospitality options are also part of the deal, as are digital messaging rights.

So far, Louisville Arena Sports & Entertainment has garnered more than \$37.5 million in naming rights and partnerships for the venue, including a 10-year, \$10 million deal with Norton Healthcare that includes a walk-in clinic at the venue, and deals with investment firm Hilliard Lyons, Stock Yards Bank & Trust, and the Galt House hotel.

The \$238-million venue is being paid for by bonds issued by the Louisville Arena Authority and is part of a

tax increment financing district that will share in property and sales taxes generated in the district.

Contact: Harold Workman, (502) 367-5100

Huntington Center, Toledo

Joe Napoli, President of Toledo (Ohio) Arena Sports Inc. is seen here with Sharon Speyer and CEO Stephen Steinour for Huntington National Bank and Huntington Center GM Steve Miller.



Date Announced: April 16

Buyer: Huntington Bancshares Inc.

Terms: 6 years for \$2.1 million

Ownership/Management/Tenant: Lucas County Commissioners/SMG/Toledo Walleye (East Coast Hockey League)

Brokered: Locally

Comments: Huntington Bancshares, Inc., which operates Huntington National Bank branches across Ohio, has purchased long-term naming rights for the Lucas County Arena, which opened last fall. The six-year, \$2.1 million deal includes three additional six-year options that could bring the county \$11 million over 24 years, or 10 percent of the construction costs.

The money will be used to pay down the county's costs and debts on the 8,000-seat venue, said Pete Gerken, board president of the Lucas County Commissioners, in a statement released Friday.

The deal was brokered locally, between officials from Lucas County, the bank, and Gateway Consulting, the arena consultant, said Steve Miller, general manager.

"Huntington Bank is based in Columbus, about two-and-a-half hours away, but they have the number one

share in the Toledo market,” Miller said. “They have a strong interest in the area, and in community partnerships.”

Miller said the bank would have two ATMs in the facility, and would have use of a luxury suite, with eight tickets to each Toledo Walleye hockey game. Details like signage and pre-sale ticket opportunities will be worked out over the next several months.

“They will have signage outside, and concourse signage, but it is all to-be-determined,” Miller said. “We agreed to put it where it made the most sense.”

The county will go out to bond on \$90 million to pay for the facility in mid- to late summer, Miller said, and Huntington Bank would have the opportunity to bid the job.

“But they are not involved in financing at this point,” he said.

The approximately \$105 million arena is part of a complex that includes the SeaGate Convention Centre and Fifth Third Field, home to the Toledo Mud Hens.

The venue was one of the nation’s first LEED-certified sports arenas, and features a “green wall” outside the front doors, which uses plant life to help cool the glass-enclosed main entrance. It also has a light-colored roof that reflects sunlight and underground cisterns that re-use rain water to water the landscaping.

Huntington has held naming rights for Huntington Park in Columbus, the home of the Columbus Clippers minor league baseball team, since 2006. The price of that deal was \$12 million for 23 years. — Liz Boardman

Contact: Steve Miller, (419) 321-5019

ON THE WEB

Coachella has wrapped and Senior Writer Dave Brooks was on the scene for three days covering the massive music festival. Look for his wrap-up article in the May issue of *Venues Today*, and view his photos from Coachella by clicking [here](#). And don’t forget about our Tumblr blog. We’ve got new posts on [Kevin Lyman](#) and the upcoming [Association of Luxury Suite Directors Conference](#).

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