

From: Nazarene Kahn <nazarene@venuestoday.com>
Subject:
Date: May 27, 2010 9:52:44 AM PDT



The 2010/2011 International Venue Resource Guide is available in July!
Reserve ad space by June 14, 2010
Rob@venuestoday.com



VT PULSE

A WEEKLY PUBLICATION FROM VENUES TODAY

May 26, 2010 • VOL. IX, Number 17 • ISSN 1547-4143

Quote of the Week

“In the last couple of years, we’ve walked away from a number of deals because we were not willing to be in that environment where the only way we could not lose money was to do the wrong thing.”

— Liza Cartmell, Group President of Aramark Sports and Entertainment on business development for new concessions deals.

In this Issue

THE NEWS

[Supreme Court Decision Strikes Blow to Leaguwide Deals](#)

[Rock The Bells Returns To The 36 Chambers With 2010 Run](#)

[Wrigley-Area Development Under Fire](#)

HOT TICKETS

[UFC Says Merci Beaucoup to Montreal for \\$3 Mil Draw](#)

Greetings,

Welcome to VT Pulse, your weekly guide to the “News Behind the Headlines.” The 2010 Women of Influence have been selected. [Click here to visit our Facebook Page](#) to see this year’s three winners and make sure you take the time to say congratulations.



AUGUST FEATURES
Contract Management
PUBLIC VERSUS PRIVATE:
WHAT MAKES SENSE?
ADVERTISE TODAY!

THE BEAT

[Recalibration In The Future For Concessions Business: Liza Cartmell, Group President, Aramark Sports & Entertainment](#)

[New Sitcom Based on Exciting Lives of Venue Managers](#)

DEPARTMENTS

[Short Takes](#)

[HELP WANTED](#)

[CONTACT VT PULSE](#)

SHORT TAKES

>> **SUPERBOWL GOES TO N.J.** >> The National Football League has announced its 2014 Super Bowl will be played at the New Meadowlands Stadium in East Rutherford, N.J. The league decided to return the winter game to a cold weather locale during its annual owners meetings at the new Cowboys Stadium in Irving, Texas. *Contact: Steve Bornstein, (212) 450-2000*

>> **U2 CANCELS REMAINDER OF U.S. TOUR** — Irish rock superstars U2 have canceled their remaining US Tour after lead singer Bono suffered an injury. Currently on the second leg of its stadium tour, most of the dates will be rescheduled for 2011. The band has also canceled plans to headline the Glastonbury Festival in the UK. *Contact: Liz Morentin, (310) 975-6860*

SUBSCRIBE

Subscribe today and get three great resources!

Each monthly issue of



AD DEADLINE: JULY 19, 2010
venues
TODAY
WWW.VENUESTODAY.COM

VT NEWS

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

SUPREME COURT DECISION STRIKES BLOW TO LEAGUEWIDE DEALS

The U.S. Supreme Court dealt the National Football League and several other sports leagues a legal setback earlier this week when it rejected the league's bid for immunity from antitrust laws.

In a 9-0, unanimous opinion, the court ruled that the football league could not negotiate as a single entity and lock in deals for the league's 32 teams. In the case American Needle v. National Football League, a small sports manufacturer was attempting to make the case that the league's plans to sign an exclusive license to produce NFL headwear was a violation of the Sherman Act, a Depression-era law created to block companies from engaging in monopolistic business practices.

The case could jeopardize a number of contracts held by the NFL and other sports leagues, including ticketing contracts and collective bargaining agreements with athletes.

American Needle, which had previous contracts with the league, brought the suit after the NFL entered into an exclusive headwear agreement with Reebok. While American Needle argued the league conspired to prevent American Needle from competing for single-team contracts, the NFL argued that the league operates as a single business entity and is exempt from antitrust laws.

The league won its case at the district court level, and then won again at the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals. After the victory, American Needle appealed the case to the U.S. Supreme Court, and many were surprised that the high court agreed to hear the case.

"It's not unusual for a league to support an appeal of favorable judgment, especially if they feel the judgment can be expanded to their benefit," said Rick Horrow, CEO

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

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

Rob Ocampo
Resource Guides Manager
(714) 378-5400, ext. 21
rob@venuestoday.com

Vanessa Bentley
Editorial Assistant
(714) 378-5400, ext. 28
vanessa@venuestoday.com

of Horrow Sports Ventures, which has negotiated over \$13 billion in sports sponsorship and facility deals. “In this case, the league wanted to expand the appeals court ruling and set a precedent that the league is exempt from all anti-trust challenges.”

The high court struck that position down and instead ruled the league’s 32 teams act independently, with Justice John Paul Stevens writing in the unanimous judgment that “teams compete with one another, not only on the playing field, but to attract fans, for gate receipts and for contracts with managerial and playing personnel” and specific to the American Needle case, “the teams compete in the market for intellectual property.”

The ruling doesn’t bring an end to the NFL’s deal with Reebok, said Horrow.

“This decision just struck down the Seventh Circuit’s decision that the NFL functioned as a single entity for the purposes of licensing intellectual property,” he said. “Remanding the case back to the lower court just means that the NFL will now have to go back and argue that the contract passes muster.”

Horrow said the case illustrates that the court views sports franchises as competing businesses with distinct agendas that might not be aligned with league offices.

That could be a boon for growing companies, like Under Armour, which are trying to make inroads into the pro football market but face competitors many times their size, said independent analyst Darren Rovell, who often appears on CNBC as their sports business expert.

“Under Armour is a \$1 billion company, facing off against Adidas which is 12 times its size and Nike, which is 20 times its size, “ he said. “If Under Armour’s numbers can’t compete at the league level, the company might now have a chance to work with certain NFL teams like they do at the college level.” Dave Brooks

Interviewed for this article: Rick Horrow, (561) 743-6408; Darren Rovell, (201) 735-2622

For advertising information, contact:

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

Jim McNeil
Eastern U.S.
(207) 699-3343
jim@venuestoday.com

Samantha Le
Sales and Marketing
Associate
(714) 378-5400, ext. 23
samantha@venuestoday.com

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

rob@venuestoday.com

HELP WANTED

VIEW THE FULL LISTINGS

The Norfolk (Va.) Scope
-Assistant Director

South Orange (N.J.)
Performing Arts Center -
Executive Director

Fan Interactive
Marketing, Los Angeles
-Sports & Entertainment
Social Networking Analyst

Cirque du Soleil,
Montreal, Canada
-Marketing Manager
(Arena Shows)

Burnsville (Minn.)
Performing Arts Center
-Director of Sales &
Marketing

Tennessee Hospitality
Association (TnHA),
Nashville - President and
CEO

The Carolina Theatre of
Durham (N.C.), Inc. - Box
Office Manager



GET IN!

www.venuestoday.com

Our July INTIX Quarterly gives you access to the latest in ticketing news and trends. This issue will be distributed at IAAM in Houston. Join US there! Advertise today.

Ad deadline: June 18, 2010

Venues
TODAY

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

Jim McNeil, Eastern U.S.
(207) 699-3343
jim@venuestoday.com

Samantha Le, Midwest, Texas, Intl.
(714) 378-5400
samantha@venuestoday.com

BOOKINGS

ROCK THE BELLS RETURNS TO THE 36 CHAMBERS WITH 2010 RUN

Rapper RZA fields a question while promoter Chang Weisberg (right) of Guerilla Union listens in during a press conference at the Key Club in West Hollywood (Photo by Jesse Solorio).



Albany (Ga.) Civic Center
Complex - Director

Ervin J. Nutter Center at
Wright State University,
Dayton, Ohio - Executive
Director

Feld Entertainment,
Vienna, Va. - Booking
Director

Vee Corporation, Minn.
-Marketing & Publicity
Internship

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 WEST HOLLYWOOD, CALIF. — It really doesn't make sense to use a Power Point presentation when the world's greatest freestyle rapper is in the building. MC Supernatural broke down the upcoming 2010 Rock the Bells tour lineup with an impressive three-minute freestyle rap highlighting the tours headlining acts. The tour announcement was Monday night at the Key Club.

"It's so hip, it's so real, and here comes the danger — and then we go straight to the 36 Chambers."

For rap fans, that can only mean one thing — Wu-Tang Clan is back. The eight remaining members of the super group will hit the road this summer to perform their ground-breaking album "Enter the Wu-Tang Clan — 36 Chambers" in its entirety as part of promoter Chang Weisberg and Guerilla Union's four-date event.

"We're not just doing this with Guerilla Union because Chang is an independent promoter. We're doing it because he's a very good promoter," said RZA, often cited as the mastermind behind the Wu-Tang Clan. "Chang comes to my house; we'll have lunch and we'll talk about this tour. That what's makes a good promoter, someone who can come and communicate with the artist."

RZA said he and the other members have wanted to do something to celebrate the success of "36 Chambers," but have hit roadblocks following the death of famed Wu-Tang rapper Ole' Dirty Bastard.

"I didn't have to go talk to the rest of the Clan about doing this tour. Chang did," RZA said.

This year's run includes a number of rappers focusing on a single album as part of their performance. Rakim has signed on to play his entire "Paid in Full" record, circa 1987, while hip hop professor KRS-One will perform his "Criminal Minded" album from the same year.

And if that wasn't enough, Weisberg confirmed that UK rap legend Slick Rick will be joining the tour to perform the 1989 classic "The Great Adventures of Slick Rick."

"I've never as a promoter dictated what songs an artist will play. I don't want to contrive anything, but we told Rick that if Pink Floyd was going to do "The Wall," then Rock The Bells thinks we should do the "...Adventures of Slick Rick" and he said yes right away," said Weisberg.

This year, the tour will only hit four stops: the NOS Event Center outside of Los Angeles in San Bernardino, Calif., on Aug. 21, the Shoreline Amphitheater in Mountain View, Calif., Aug. 22; Governor's Island in New York, Aug. 28; and Washington, D.C.'s Merriweather Post Pavilion on Aug. 29.

Chang said he hoped to lengthen the stands to two days by 2011 and maybe include a camping component. As for future talent, Weisberg revealed that his agency missed out on securing one hip-hop group that he might go after again in 2011.

"I really wanted to book Run DMC, but it just didn't work out," said Weisberg. "I don't push for bands to reunite. Most of the time, I tell people that we interact with that their fans contact us on a daily basis and it's clear that they would support a reunion." — Dave Brooks

Interviewed for this article: RZA, (909) 802-2020; Chang Weisberg, (909) 706-3688



venues
TODAY

EUROPE

is beautiful in August.

*Be included in the Venues Today
spotlight on European venues.*

Ad Deadline: July 19, 2010

www.venuestoday.com

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

Jim McNeil, Eastern U.S.
(207) 699-3343
jim@venuestoday.com

Samantha Le, Midwest, Texas, Intl.
(714) 378-5400
samantha@venuestoday.com

CONSTRUCTION **WRIGLEY-AREA DEVELOPMENT UNDER FIRE**

A rendering of the the Addison and Clark proposed development in the Wrigleyville neighborhood of Chicago





In recent weeks, Chicago's Wrigleyville neighborhood, home of Wrigley Field, has become somewhat of a battleground, with the controversy stemming from a proposed \$100 million hotel, residential and retail complex.

Two years in the making, M&R Development's Addison Park on Clark includes a 137-room Hyatt Hotel, 135 residential units, 147,000 sq. ft. of retail space and a 399-space underground parking garage located at the south side of Addison Street, from Sheffield west to Clark Street.

A number of residents and neighborhood associations are opposed to the eight-story height of the development as well as its potential for destroying the Wrigleyville neighborhood's character. The area is known for small and independently-owned businesses, including restaurants, bars and boutiques.

Despite this opposition, Chicago Alderman Tom Tunney of the neighborhood's 44th ward is backing the project.

"After four major redesigns based on resident and group concerns over the building height and style, the alderman's Community Directed Development Council (CDDC) voted in favor of the project moving forward," said Max Bever, Tunney's community outreach director.

The plan threatens a number of businesses, including the renowned iO Theater, formerly ImprovOlympic, one of possibly nine businesses that would be displaced by the project. Theater alumni include Tina Fey, Mike Myers and Seth Meyers.

"We've been a part of this neighborhood since the 1980s and in our current Clark Street location since 1995," said Charna Halpern, iO Theater owner and director. She estimated there are approximately 10,000 people involved in the protest. "Building a hotel in Wrigleyville makes sense, but when you knock down the neighborhood, it defeats the purpose."

Halpern had rallied more than 10,000 Facebook supporters at press time on her "People Against the Malling of Wrigleyville" page.

A petition opposing the development also is in the works and available online, according to Halpern. In addition, marches protesting the project are being planned.

The 600-member Southport Neighbors Association has objected to the scale and height of the project, which it states nearly doubles the zoning and creates a precedent for other area property owners.

"When the vote came to approve or oppose the development plan at the CDDC level, six of the nine neighborhood organizations voted against it," said Attorney Jill Peters, president of the Southport Neighbors Association. "The residential vote was outweighed by the support of the remaining institutional and commercial members."

Development opponents also have voiced concern that the complex will compromise the prominence of Wrigley Field, a neighborhood and baseball icon since it was built in 1914.

"Our biggest concern is that allowing something this massive will have a domino effect, driving up rents and property taxes, while forcing small, independent businesses to make room for big box stores," Peters said. "The development will completely change the character of this neighborhood,

which is already extremely dense and congested. If eight stories are allowed for this developer, others will expect the same.”

Alderman Tunney will determine the groundbreaking date for construction, which is estimated to be the summer of 2011. The project will take between 18 and 24 months for completion.

“There are misconceptions that small businesses will be torn down to make space for big box stores,” Bever said. “There is no letter of intent for buildings to be demolished. The space isn’t conducive to big box stores. The alderman will work with the developers and property owners to have businesses return [after construction is completed].”

When asked if there is a comparison to other mixed-use developments by sports and entertainment venues, such as Staples Center’s LA Live, Kansas City’s Power & Light District near Sprint Center and the Victory Plaza by Dallas’ American Airlines Center, Bever said the development’s unique location cannot be compared to any other.

“This is a solid proposal that has been worked on for many years. Building owners and partners are dedicated to the project,” Bever said. — Lisa White

Interviewed for this article: Max Bever, (773) 525-6034; Charna Halpern, (773) 880-0199; Jill Peters, (312) 214-3434

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 May 4.

UFC SAYS MERCI BEAUCOUP TO MONTREAL FOR \$3 MIL DRAW

15,001 or More Seats	10,001-15,000 Seats	5,001-10,000 Seats	5,000 or Less Seats
<p>1) UFC 113: Machidas vs. Shogun Gross Sales: \$3,087,653; Venue: Bell Centre, Montreal; Attendance: 14,639; Ticket Range: \$565.88-\$47.16; Promoter: evenko; Dates: May 8; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p>1) Disney on Ice Gross Sales: \$760,588; Venue: Vector Arena, Auckland, New Zealand; Attendance: 44,806; Ticket Range: \$40.94-\$13.98; Promoter: Feld Entertainment; Dates: May 20-23; No. of Shows: 7</p>	<p>1) Diana Ross Gross Sales: \$519,335; Venue: Radio City Music Hall, New York; Attendance: 5,974; Ticket Range: \$110-\$50; Promoter: Metropolitan Talent Presents, LLC, MSG Entertainment; Dates: May 19; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p>1) Kenny Chesney Gross Sales: \$1,293,625; Venue: The Joint, Las Vegas; Attendance: 7,984; Ticket Range: \$494.60-\$164.60; Promoter: AEG Live, The Messina Group; Dates: May 14-15; No. of Shows: 2</p>
<p>2) Taylor Swift Gross Sales: \$1,742,669; Venue: Prudential Center, Newark, N.J.; Attendance: 26,065; Ticket Range: \$69.50-\$25; Promoter: AEG Live, The Messina Group; Dates: May 12-13; No. of Shows: 2</p>	<p>2) Miguel Bose Gross Sales: \$647,049; Venue: Auditorio Telmex, Guadalajara, Mexico; Attendance: 13,701; Ticket Range: \$127.28-\$15.91; Promoter: OCESA; Dates: May 18-19; No. of Shows: 2</p>	<p>2) Ricky Gervais Gross Sales: \$501,435; Venue: Nokia Theatre L.A. Live; Attendance: 10,205; Ticket Range: \$75-\$40; Promoter: Goldenvoice; Dates: May 15-16; No. of Shows: 2</p>	<p>2) Barry Manilow Gross Sales: \$953,269; Venue: Paris Theatre, Las Vegas; Attendance: 6,549; Ticket Range: \$250-\$65; Promoter: AEG Live; Dates: April 30-May 2, 7-9, 13-15; No. of Shows: 9</p>
<p>3) Taylor Swift Gross Sales: \$1,713,529; Venue: Nassau Veterans</p>	<p>3) Cirque du Soleil "Alegria" Gross Sales: \$575,444; Venue: The E Center,</p>	<p>3) Carrie Underwood Gross Sales: \$374,895; Venue: Orleans Arena, Las Vegas; Attendance: 7,671; Ticket Range:</p>	<p>3) South Pacific Gross Sales: \$841,874; Venue: Civic Center of Greater Des Moines (Iowa); Attendance: 16,954; Ticket Range:</p>

Memorial Coliseum, Uniondale, N.Y.; Attendance: 25,831; Ticket Range: \$69.50-\$25; Promoter: AEG Live, The Messina Group; Dates: May 14-15; No. of Shows: 2

4) Carole King, James Taylor
Gross Sales: \$1,231,730; Venue: **Allstate Arena, Rosemont, Ill.;** Attendance: 17,076; Ticket Range: \$350-\$45; Promoter: Jam Productions; Dates: May 24; No. of Shows: 1

5) Russell Peters
Gross Sales: \$881,960; Venue: **AcerArena, Sydney;** Attendance: 13,380; Ticket Range: \$99.73-\$66.40; Promoter: Adrian Bohm Presents; Dates: May 20; No. of Shows: 1

Salt Lake City; Attendance: 9,768; Ticket Range: \$90-\$35; Promoter: Cirque du Soleil; Dates: May 19-23; No. of Shows: 8

4) Carrie Underwood
Gross Sales: \$347,010; Venue: **Save Mart Center at Fresno (Calif.) State;** Attendance: 7,126; Ticket Range: \$55-\$35; Promoter: AEG Live; Dates: May 18; No. of Shows: 1

5) Carrie Underwood
Gross Sales: \$264,285; Venue: **Tallahassee (Fla.) Leon County Civic Center;** Attendance: 5,137; Ticket Range: \$55-\$35; Promoter: AEG Live; Dates: May 4; No. of Shows: 1

\$55-\$35; Promoter: AEG Live; Dates: May 22; No. of Shows: 1

4) Larry Hernandez
Gross Sales: \$343,020; Venue: **Nokia Theatre L.A. Live;** Attendance: 6,303; Ticket Range: \$85-\$45; Promoter: Goldenvoice; Dates: May 14; No. of Shows: 1

5) Carrie Underwood
Gross Sales: \$321,555; Venue: **Pensacola (Fla.) Civic Center;** Attendance: 6,415; Ticket Range: \$55-\$35; Promoter: AEG Live; Dates: May 5; No. of Shows: 1

\$65-\$17.50; Promoter: In-house; Dates: May 18-23; No. of Shows: 8

4) The Barber of Seville
Gross Sales: \$657,127; Venue: **Keller Auditorium, Portland, Ore.;** Attendance: 8,863; Ticket Range: \$146.75-\$25.25; Promoter: Portland Opera; Dates: May 7, 9, 13, 15; No. of Shows: 4

5) Conan O'Brien
Gross Sales: \$364,468; Venue: **Chicago Theatre;** Attendance: 7,087; Ticket Range: \$76.50-\$36.50; Promoter: Jam Productions; Dates: May 19-20; No. of Shows: 2

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

THE BEAT

Q&A

RECALIBRATION IN THE FUTURE FOR CONCESSIONS BUSINESS: LIZA CARTMELL, GROUP PRESIDENT, ARAMARK SPORTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Liza Cartmell



Venues Today discussed the state of the industry with Aramark's Liza Cartmell, who is also one of our three 2010 Women of Influence, announced today. Following are some of her observations on changes and trends in food and drink concessions.

If you were going to predict what this business would be like in five years, what would be the major change?

I think you will see a lot more partnerships between concessionaires and owners of facilities and sports teams. It's not so much about the margins as it is about being able to operate in an environment of shared interests. The expectations of the fans and the flexibility the team needs to adapt to what's going on in the marketplace mean they need us to be more flexible. If they've put us in a box that says you're vanilla, and the market is looking for chocolate, we can't meet their needs. We've mutually agreed in a growing number of places to migrate to that.

What are the major changes in concessions this season for

baseball?

There was a little more of a seismic shift last season because of the economy and there is more of a continuation now. We went very aggressively last year and continue this year into more packaging, value-oriented offerings. We continuously upgrade the core product because we find it's not so much about people not being willing to spend. They want to make sure they're getting value. We can get them to continue to spend by introducing more fresh hamburgers, higher quality sandwiches, and select specialty items like the gluten free. These are not big money makers, but they take care of a niche in the market excluded previously.

Is the all-inclusive ticket going to grow in this marketplace?

We continue to roll out the loaded ticket technology. Every team is at a different level as far as utilization of it as a marketing tool. It's one of those things like nobody used to use credit cards in the facilities and it took about 10 years to really get the momentum of people even thinking of taking out their credit card at the game. Adults who went to sports always brought cash. The longest line in the building for the last 10 years wasn't the bathroom; it was the ATM.

What about using your cellphone or some other kind of electronic wallet at the concessions stand? How far down the line is that?

The capability exists today, but the willingness and that pioneer group is a very small percentage. If you're talking 40,000 people and it's two percent, that's 800 people; that's just not a lot. We have that with loaded tickets, where the dollars and percentage are very, very small. We've had loaded tickets since we opened the Phillies six years ago. They're the largest users, the most forward-thinking in introducing it and making it available, but it's still under five percent dollarwise.

When will you see a return on investment?

ROI can be consumer satisfaction and the team's capacity to offer a variety of packages for people. One of the big successes in loaded tickets for the Phillies has been in their premium areas; the ability for their premium ticket holders to provide as an amenity a complete experience. That the entrepreneur knows that's a great value because they're able to entertain yet they don't have to go to 81 games is big. Do I get the value because I can eliminate my cash counting and my run to the bank? I'm never going to get the ROI on that. It's a totally different ROI for different people if they use it in the right way.

Is it true major concessions companies work on two and three percent margins these days?

Pretty much. And it's not sustainable. People need to make operating decisions that aren't great and that's not good for anybody. In the last couple of years, we've walked away from a number of deals because we were not willing to be in that environment where the only way we could not lose money was to do the wrong thing. We've lost some market share, but that's okay.

Will there be a correction?

There's one already underway. The economy is forcing people to think differently about what they need to do to succeed. I don't think the suite model as it was configured will survive. The basic deal was to charge you a set fee, say \$250,000, for the suite. Then you will go to 10 football games or 81 baseball games and I may or may not charge you extra for the concerts and, by the way, I'm going to charge you an arm and a leg to have food in the suites. You are going to be outraged at the prices you are going to have to pay in order to entertain properly in accordance with the suite environment you are trying to set. But you are going to have an administrative assistant to the president who will balk at the price and order popcorn and peanuts, hot dogs and a couple of beers. All of a sudden, the experience is nowhere near what it was designed to be.

How did it get there?

For a long time, people were willing to spend whatever price it took to be able to touch the sports world. It was a corporate item; that's what it cost. Now people are looking at \$300,000 and saying that's big, I'm going to have to cut six people. And, by the way, at StubHub I can buy that suite for two big meetings and I'll spend \$40,000 and that's all I care about; I'll bring all my best customers. There's this whole recalibration. People are bringing the analytical, disciplined part to the value proposition and not saying it's

sports, I'm going to buy it. – Linda Deckard

Interviewed for this story: Liza Cartmell, (215) 238-3000

TELEVISION

NEW SITCOM BASED ON THE EXCITING LIVES OF VENUE MANAGERS

Matthew Perry (left) stars in the new ABC sitcom "Mr Sunshine," which looks at the life of an arena GM.



America's venue managers are finally getting their prime time due.

Television Network ABC has announced a mid-season replacement situation comedy starring Matthew Perry of "Friends"-fame as Ben - a "self-involved manager of a second-rate San Diego sports arena who begins to reevaluate his life on his 40th birthday." [Click here to watch a preview of the show.](#)

The show is called "Mr. Sunshine." It is written and produced by Perry, and has raised some good-natured eyebrows among San Diego venue managers.

"I was surfing in January and a knee-boarder I know asked if I'd heard they were working on a sitcom about me and the arena," said Ernie Hahn, general manager of the San Diego Sports Arena. "I googled it and to my surprise saw 'second-rate,' 'aging sports arena' and 'self-involved.'"

There is only one sports arena in San Diego, and it is aging, Hahn pointed out. There is only one manager who is 40 years old and going through some life changes.

"Right after I turned 40, I sold a majority stake to AEG. So I did a double take," Hahn said. "I thought 'Am I getting punked?'"

Hahn said he has had no involvement in the project, beyond talking to a location scout.

"I told him I have 20 years of experience, 15 as general manager," Hahn said. "I know the business as well as most, and have stories and nuances, and see why it could be a funny sitcom."

ABC did not have anyone available to comment by Pulse's deadline, press officials said. The network is working on an upcoming press junket to announce the show.

The show is set at the fictional "Sunshine Arena." The cast of characters includes Allison Janney (The West Wing) as Perry's "attractive, powerful and highly erratic" boss and arena owner. In the trailer, she

expresses a fear of clowns, and asks Perry to arrange for her to make love to John Cougar Mellencamp when he plays a one-off in the arena; and Andrea Anders (Joey) as Alice, the “cute, tomboyish marketing director and Ben’s friend with benefits” who is also dating James Lesure (“Las Vegas”) as Alonzo, “a former basketball player, handsome and unbelievably happy.”

Nate Torrence - best known as the credit card customer service representative in the David Spade Capital One commercials - plays Ben’s newest employee - the boss’s clueless son. The cast is rounded out by a “hapless operations crew whom Ben refers to collectively as ‘the Steves.’”

In the trailer, the crew grapples with Ben’s 40th birthday, a circus elephant who has gotten loose in the arena, and finding a way to melt the ice floor.

Those situations sounded very familiar to Lee Zeidman, senior VP/GM of Staples Center and Nokia Theatre at LA Live for AEG, Los Angeles. Zeidman said both came up in conversations he had with Perry and executive producer Thomas Schlamme the day they shadowed him at Staples Center, asking a boatload of questions. “It was a double header day three or four months ago,” he said. “They asked a lot of questions about how Staples Center works.” Schlamme directed and produced “The West Wing.”

Zeidman is one who thinks this sitcom could be good for the industry. “It’s entertainment,” he pointed out. While AEG has been approached by Hollywood types about reality shows many times, those are always about issues going wrong. It’s not a reality show unless it’s problematic and that, to him, would likely be detrimental. An entertaining sitcom, however, could be fun. “I’m going to watch it,” he said.

Other venue managers in San Diego said they were not approached about the project.

“The trailer was funny, but I am not sure how accurate it will be,” said John Kolek, facility director of Viejas Arena. “We haven’t heard from anybody at all. But it definitely wasn’t based on me.”

Kolek said the trailer’s exterior shots didn’t look like a San Diego venue. “It almost looked like the old Forum in Los Angeles,” he said. Zeidman said he, too, thought he recognized The Forum, where he used to work, in the preview shots.

“I only learned about it from friends,” said Mike McSweeney, general manager of Qualcomm Stadium at Jack Murphy Field. “Early on, they said it was an aging stadium, but an arena has a diversity of events that offers more storylines. Out here in Mission Valley, we’re still waiting for our 15 minutes of fame.” – Liz Boardman

Contact: Ernie Hahn, (619) 308-4345; Mike McSweeney, (619) 641-3130; John Kolek, (619) 594-0234; Lee Zeidman, (213) 742-7255

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
US

[Read](#) the VerticalResponse marketing policy.

