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# VT PULSE

A WEEKLY PUBLICATION FROM VENUES TODAY

June 23, 2010 • VOL. IX, Number 20 • ISSN 1547-4143

## Quote of the Week

*"I may change the theme to 'raise the roof.'"*

— Sandra Hawke of the Rimrock Auto Arena, a facility at MetraPark in Billings, Mont. that was badly damaged by a tornado. A fair at the park is still scheduled for August, although Hawke is now considering marketing the event a little differently.

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Greetings,

Welcome to VT Pulse, your weekly guide to the "News Behind the Headlines." Venues Today's staff attended the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics conference earlier this week. To see photos from the show, visit [facebook.com/venuestoday](http://facebook.com/venuestoday).



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#### DEPARTMENTS

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#### SHORT TAKES

##### >> IEBA CELEBRATES 40TH ANNIVERSARY WITH HALL OF FAME —

The International Entertainment Buyers Association (IEBA) will be celebrating its 40th anniversary by forming the IEBA Hall of Fame. The Hall of Fame will honor pioneers of the industry and the induction will take place on Oct. 3. Nomination forms can be found at [ieba.org/hall-of-fame](http://ieba.org/hall-of-fame) and can be submitted to the IEBA office by July 5.

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#### VT NEWS

##### **BEHIND THE HEADLINES**

##### **TORNADO DEMOLISHES RIMROCK AUTO ARENA IN BILLINGS, MONT.**

*A tornado ripped the roof off of Rimrock Auto Arena in Billings, Mt.*



The tornado that tore through Billings, Mont., on Father's Day (June 20) destroyed Rimrock Auto Arena at MetraPark, but no lives were lost. The arena had been host to 4,500 fans of the Billings Outlaws of the Indoor Football League just the night before, but was empty at the time of the tornado, said Sandra Hawke, venue marketing director.

She got the call about the 4:30 p.m. touchdown while preparing for a Father's Day barbecue at her home 10 miles away. "We get the long views in Montana; we could watch it," she said. On Monday, Bill Dutcher, manager, was meeting with insurance representatives and the National Guard and Billings police were controlling traffic and access.

Immediate concerns besides rebuilding included future bookings at the 35-year-old, \$10 million, 10,800-seat arena. The repairs will be in the hundreds of millions, she said.

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Hawke said on-sales included Brad Paisley, set for Sept. 26, and Carrie Underwood, Dec. 10, both of which will be refunded. Celtic Woman, set for Aug. 22, will most likely reschedule for up to three shows at the 1,400-seat Alberta Bair Theatre in town, Hawke said.

Concerts set for Rimrock Arena during the annual MontanaFair Aug. 13-21 will be moved to the outdoor grandstand, Hawke continued. Bookings include Jason Aldean, the Scorpions and Hinder and Finger Eleven.

The most immediate problem is Outlaws playoff games, which were to start June 27 at the arena. They will most likely have three playoff games and a championship remaining in the post season. The plan is to go forward with the games at their Sports Complex practice field. With risers, they can probably increase capacity to 1,500, well short of the projected attendance. The decision was made that it was most important to have home court advantage on an appropriate field, Hawke said.

Bookings also include the Antiques Road Show this Saturday, June 26, which Hawke said will still be held at the 77,400-square-foot Expo Center which was damaged in the tornado when debris broke through the roof. It is being repaired and the 28,800 square foot Montana Pavilion is being prepared for the preparation area where antiquers bring their valuables prior to being filmed on the show. Hawke said she pursued that booking for eight and a half years before they determined after a site visit last year that MetraPark could house the show. She intends to be there with her art nouveau antique vase from the 1890's in hand. Space will be supplemented with tents, she added.

The AKC-sanctioned dog show June 22-24 is going on as planned in the Montana Pavilion, she said. "They're as happy as clams." Hawke has been calling them over for the press conference updates on the tornado damage and they have testified to the adequate accommodations and gained unexpected publicity for the event.

Cleanup efforts removing debris, including the six-inch roofing nails that were flattening tires on a lot of media vehicles that crossed into off-limits areas of the fairgrounds, were well underway Monday, Hawke said. The dog show crowd was already moving in with their motor homes Monday.

Several fortunate things happened in this midst of the devastation, she said. For one, the grounds were empty except for the maintenance man assigned to that day. Second, the power was already off to accommodate a lighting upgrade, so fire and electrocution were not a factor.

The roof was totally blown off Rimrock Auto Arena and the water poured in, saturating everything. Hawke said eye witnesses said the tornado seemed to "park itself on top of the arena for 15 minutes. It was stripped down to block and steel."

The management team was on site for three hours after the storm hit, Hawke said. Starplex Crowd Management, the security firm, secured the grounds and structure, with help from the National Guard.

Rimrock Arena was quite solid structurally and Hawke was guessing they would not rebuild from the ground up, but the damage was extensive. "We are fully insured," she said, though there are always things lost that are not covered. The astroturf belonged to the Outlaws and that was ruined and the Billings Gazette had brought in lighting and equipment that was destroyed.

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Festival Listing for the  
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Services

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

#### [VIEW THE FULL LISTINGS](#)

“Personal things are all lost,” she said.

Hawke also noted the arena was highly functional for its age, with wide concourses, soft seats and good storage. “It works well; it’s just old,” she said. “We managed to hang Metallica, even with their load.”

The rebuild will bring some changes, including improved ADA compliance.

She emphasized that the fair will go on as planned, Aug. 13-21, with some adjustments to event sites. “I may change the theme to ‘raise the roof,’” she quipped. – Linda Deckard

*Interviewed for this story: Sandra Hawke, (406) 256-2402*



#### **PROMOTERS**

#### **I.M.P. SUES TO BLOCK LIVE NATION VENUE**

Last week, Bethesda, Md.-based I.M.P. Inc., parent company of the 9:30 Club in Silver Spring, Md., as well as the club’s co-owner Seth Hurwitz, filed a lawsuit to prevent the state of Maryland from providing Montgomery County with \$4 million to help build a music venue in downtown Silver Spring.

Ground is expected to be broken for Fillmore Silver Spring, which would be

leased by Live Nation for rock concerts, this year.

Opponents of the plan contend that government officials are hiding the real cost of the project.

With this deal, Montgomery County will own the building, which Live Nation will rent for \$7,500 a month. Live Nation will agree to spend approximately \$2 million to decorate the building's interior as well as cover maintenance and utility costs.

The venue has a colorful history. Originally, Montgomery County wanted to build a cabaret-style restaurant and music venue called The Birchmere, but the proposal eventually died for reasons unknown.

Following the news, I.M.P. requested a meeting with Montgomery County Executive Ike Leggett to propose what it could provide in place of The Birchmere.

Two days later, Leggett held a news conference announcing that the county and Silver Spring's Lee Development Group, which owns the site, were partnering with Live Nation to build the Fillmore Silver Spring venue. The project would be paid for using \$8 million in state and county funds.

"When announced, this agreement was non-binding. There were no Request for Proposals (RFP)," said Audrey Fix Schaefer of Schaefer & Co. Communications in Rockville, Md., spokesperson for the 9:30 Club. "The \$8 million in taxpayer money was gifted via a backroom deal and provided Live Nation with rental rates scandalously below market value."

Live Nation's rate is a reported \$3 per sq. ft., while the going rate for a venue of this type is between \$35 and \$50 per sq. ft., according to documents provided by Schaefer.

Though there was no RFP, I.M.P. produced two offers to the county. If the land was transferred, the firm would pay for the entire venue, rather than utilizing taxpayer dollars. If the county sought to own the club, I.M.P. offered to contribute \$2 million in construction costs and double the rent Live Nation was slated to pay.

"I think if the public knew how every step of this thing has been back-roomed and steam rolled, they would be properly outraged," said Seth Hurwitz, I.M.P.'s chairman. "We are going to begin the process of uncovering these layers."

"An analysis of the County's financial projections for the venue showed renting to Live Nation at such below-market terms represents a loss of approximately \$20.5 million to taxpayers over the course of the 30-year lease," Schaefer said.

In addition, the Live Nation deal would be the first for-profit arts venue to receive direct subsidies in Montgomery County.

"The County Financial Summary overstates the value of the developer's contribution by up to \$3.5 million, overstates Live Nation's contribution by almost \$2 million; and understates the cost of the county's capital improvement contribution by up to \$3.2 million," Schaefer said.

She added that the arrangement, approved by the County Council, compels Montgomery to absorb any cost overruns, which have occurred before in county construction of arts venues.

Leggett would not comment for this article, but the county's Assistant Chief

Administrative Officer Diane Schwartz-Jones did issue the following statement:

"All of the issues raised by the 9:30 Club - a potential competitor to this venue - have been openly discussed and debated over the last two and a half years in an open and transparent manner, in a variety of forums and through many processes. This filing is no more than a last minute attempt to derail this project, which is a vital component to the revitalization of one of our urban centers," she wrote in an email.

Lee Development Group will donate the former JCPenney facade and land, worth about \$3.5 million. The firm would retain rights for more than a dozen years to build on the remainder of the property.

"This dispute is between the state of Maryland and the 9:30 Club," said Bruce Lee, president of Lee Development Group. "We're moving full steam ahead in terms of the Live Nation venue."

Live Nation would not comment, due to the ongoing litigation. — Lisa White

*Interviewed for this article: Seth Hurwitz, (202) 265-0930; Sally Greenberg, (202) 835-3323; Bruce Lee, (301) 585-7000; Audrey Fix Schaefer, (301) 947-1133*



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## **HOT**Tickets

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 June 1.

### **FIVE CARRIE UNDERWOOD CONCERTS TOP BOX OFFICES**

15,001 or More Seats	10,001-15,000 Seats	5,001-10,000 Seats	5,000 or Less Seats
<p>1) <b>James Taylor, Carole King</b> Gross Sales: \$1,104,823; Venue: <b>Time Warner Cable Arena, Charlotte, N.C.</b>; Attendance: 13,861; Ticket Range: \$275-\$38.50; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: June 2; No. of Shows: 1</p> <p>2) <b>Phish</b> Gross Sales: \$1,036,625; Venue: <b>Toyota Park, Chicago</b>; Attendance: 22,293; Ticket Range: \$46.50; Promoter: Jam Productions; Dates: June 11; No. of Shows: 1</p> <p>3) <b>Dave Matthews Band</b> Gross Sales: \$877,390; Venue: <b>Darien Lake Performing Arts Center, Darien Center, N.Y.</b>; Attendance: 21,577; Ticket Range: \$70-\$10; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: June 2; No. of Shows: 1</p> <p>4) <b>Hot 107.9 Birthday Bash 15</b> Gross Sales: \$839,669; Venue: <b>Philips Arena, Atlanta</b>; Attendance: 17,903; Ticket Range: \$129-\$10.79; Promoter: Radio One; Dates: June 19; No. of Shows: 1</p> <p>5) <b>Carrie Underwood</b> Gross Sales: \$510,160; Venue: <b>Fargodome, Fargo, N.D.</b>; Attendance: 10,394; Ticket Range: \$55-\$35; Promoter: AEG Live; Dates: June 17; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p>1) <b>Cirque du Soleil - "Alegria"</b> Gross Sales: \$1,063,139; Venue: <b>Berry Center, Houston</b>; Attendance: 16,442; Ticket Range: \$95-\$40; Promoter: Cirque du Soleil; Dates: June 16-20; No. of Shows: 8</p> <p>2) <b>Brooks and Dunn</b> Gross Sales: \$515,136; Venue: <b>Jacksonville (Fl.) Veterans Memorial Arena</b>; Attendance: 8,819; Ticket Range: \$64-\$34; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: June 13; No. of Shows: 1</p> <p>3) <b>Glenn Beck, Bill O'Reilly</b> Gross Sales: \$415,387; Venue: <b>The Chaifetz Arena, St. Louis</b>; Attendance: 6,212; Ticket Range: \$122-\$47; Promoter: Mercury Radio Arts, Inc.; Dates: June 19; No. of Shows: 1</p> <p>4) <b>Carrie Underwood</b> Gross Sales: \$412,175; Venue: <b>JQH Arena, Springfield, Mo.</b>; Attendance: 8,499; Ticket Range: \$55-\$35; Promoter: AEG Live; Dates: June 15; No. of Shows: 1</p> <p>5) <b>Carrie Underwood</b> Gross Sales: \$384,764; Venue: <b>Credit Union Centre, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan</b>; Attendance: 7,231; Ticket Range: \$52.69-\$33.53; Promoter: AEG Live; Dates: June 20; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p>1) <b>Diana Ross</b> Gross Sales: \$351,196; Venue: <b>Nokia Theatre L.A. Live</b>; Attendance: 5,397; Ticket Range: \$99.50-\$29.50; Promoter: AEG Live; Dates: June 9; No. of Shows: 1</p> <p>2) <b>Sesame Street Live</b> Gross Sales: \$341,237; Venue: <b>Nokia Theatre L.A. Live</b>; Attendance: 13,697; Ticket Range: \$85-\$10; Promoter: VEE Corporation; Dates: June 4-6; No. of Shows: 7</p> <p>3) <b>Foreigner</b> Gross Sales: \$298,381; Venue: <b>Starlight Theatre, Kansas City, Mo.</b>; Attendance: 6,959; Ticket Range: \$159.50-\$10; Promoter: Live Nation, Mammoth, In-house; Dates: June 3; No. of Shows: 1</p> <p>4) <b>Carrie Underwood</b> Gross Sales: \$289,930; Venue: <b>1st Bank Arena, Broomfield, Colo.</b>; Attendance: 5,642; Ticket Range: \$55-\$35; Promoter: AEG Live; Dates: June 3; No. of Shows: 1</p> <p>5) <b>Carrie Underwood</b> Gross Sales: \$285,920; Venue: <b>The Colorado Springs World Arena and Ice Hall</b>; Attendance: 5,858; Ticket Range: \$55-\$35; Promoter: AEG Live; Dates: June 4; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p>1) <b>Cher</b> Gross Sales: \$1,727,400; Venue: <b>The Colosseum at Caesar's Palace, Las Vegas</b>; Attendance: 14,296; Ticket Range: \$250-\$95; Promoter: AEG Live, Concerts West; Dates: June 15-16, 19-20; No. of Shows: 4</p> <p>2) <b>Sting with the Royal Philharmonic Concert Orchestra</b> Gross Sales: \$649,739; Venue: <b>Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall, Portland, Ore.</b>; Attendance: 5,341; Ticket Range: \$326-\$46; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: June 4-5; No. of Shows: 2</p> <p>3) <b>Little House on the Prairie</b> Gross Sales: \$518,802; Venue: <b>Fox Theatre, Atlanta</b>; Attendance: 10,363; Ticket Range: \$70-\$20; Promoter: Theater of the Stars; Dates: June 15-20; No. of Shows: 8</p> <p>4) <b>Bolero</b> Gross Sales: \$285,847; Venue: <b>Keller Auditorium, Portland, Ore.</b>; Attendance: 6,143; Ticket Range: \$127-\$20; Promoter: Oregon Ballet Theatre; Dates: June 4-6; No. of Shows: 4</p> <p>5) <b>The Time Reunion</b> Gross Sales: \$226,636; Venue: <b>Fox Theatre, Detroit</b>; Attendance: 2,822; Ticket Range: \$88-\$68; Promoter: Olympia Entertainment, Taurus Productions; Dates: June 11; No. of Shows: 1</p>

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

## THE BEAT

### FACES & PLACES

#### VETERAN MOVES: EVANS TO LIVE NATION; ZITO TO ANDY FRAIN; ANDERSEN TO NORTHLANDS; WILLIAMS TO HAWKS; NEECE TO AUSTIN CITY LIMITS

**Mike Evans** has joined Live Nation in the new position of president of Arenas. He will work out of Live Nation's Philadelphia office and will be liaison between the promoter and arena managers in a fashion to be determined.

Evans has been booking shows for SMG for the past 11 years as executive vice president, sports and entertainment. And he will continue to interact with SMG venue managers. "SMG is very important to Live Nation, which is indicative of how we were able to do this. We have a longstanding history of working together," Evans said.

Prior to his stint with SMG, Evans spent 23 years working for the late Abe Pollin and Washington Sports & Entertainment in D.C. His first day on the job with Live Nation was June 21 and he was flying to Los Angeles to meet with his new firm the rest of this week.

In a press release, Live Nation described Evans' role as "responsible for managing Live Nation's dealings with Live Nation's North American arena partners. In 2009, Live Nation promoted more than 1,000 North American arena shows, attracting more than 9 million fans and generating net gross ticket sales of approximately \$600 million. Evans will report to Live Nation CEO of Concerts, Jason Garner."



**Steve Zito**, currently senior VP-operations and entertainment for the Memphis Grizzlies of the National Basketball Association and FedEx Forum, is also taking on a newly-created position. Effective July 12, he will be president of Andy Frain Services sports and entertainment division. He, too, will not be moving. He will open an Andy Frain office in Memphis two miles from home. His role will be to increase awareness of Andy Frain's Crowd Management Engineering services, founded in 1924, representing the firm to venue managers.

Zito has been with the Grizzlies since 2005. Prior to that, he was vice president of facilities and events for the San Antonio Spurs of the NBA from 2002-2004; and worked with the Alamadome, San Antonio, from 1993-2001.

Andy Frain Services is headquartered in Chicago and has been Safety Act Certified since 2006, a Department of Homeland Security designation. The firm currently has more than 20 clients in sports and entertainment. Zito leaves the Grizzlies July 9.



**Richard Andersen** has announced his plans to serve as president and CEO of Northlands, a 600-acre campus that includes a convention center, the Rexall Place arena, home to the Edmonton Oilers of the National Hockey League, plus a number of events including Indy Racing League and the Canadian Rodeo Finals.

"The entire facility is owned by the public. We're a public trust and serve as the stewards (of the campus). All the profits from Northlands are placed back into the community," he said.

Andersen is the former GM of the Petco Park in downtown San Diego, and is the second vice chair of the International Association of Assembly Managers Board of Directors.

"In terms of the move, I don't think it will be that dramatic of a change," said Andersen. "My wife and I lived in Pittsburgh before we lived in San Diego, and Pittsburgh had some long, cold winters and we loved it there."



**Bob Williams**, an anomaly in this business where moving up usually means moving on, has moved in a full circle, adding president of the Atlanta Hawks to his many titles. He started his career 35 years ago with the National Basketball Association team, offering to work for free to get his dream job out of college. They said they couldn't let him work for free, but they could pay him next to nothing, he joked, adding the pay was \$500 a month.



Since that auspicious beginning, Williams has made vertical or lateral moves within the organization to keep his interest high. His first move was to the now-imploded Omni, which he managed. The worst day in his career was in 1997, telling the Omni staff of 120 that the building was going to be torn down to make way for the new Philips Arena, which he also managed. He was able to hire many of them back after the 28-month construction phase, he added.

Williams was named president of Philips Arena in 1999 and still holds that title. But now he is also president of the Atlanta Hawks and continues as executive vice president of Atlanta Spirit, which owns the Hawks, the Atlanta Thrashers and Philips Arena operating rights. Don Waddle is president of the Atlanta Thrashers and exec VP of the Atlanta Spirit.

And finally, veteran talent buyer and manager Tim Neece is leaving his post of seven years with Texas Performing Arts at the University of Texas, Austin, to become general manager of the Austin City Limits Live 2,750-seat Moody Theater. The property, co-owned by Stratus Properties, includes a W Hotel and Condos, retail and restaurants and is to open in late December 2010 or early January 2011.

Neece started his career with his own management firm and in 1980 hit it big with client Christopher Cross. He moved to Los Angeles and worked with Irving Azoff's Frontline Management for 13 years before deciding to move back to Texas. In 1996, he joined Direct Events in Austin, which managed the Backyard Amphitheater and Austin Music Hall. After four and a half years, he joined NextStage, which built what is now Nokia Theatre in Grand Prairie, Texas.

Neece said the new facility is a unique challenge. It is the TV studio for Austin City Limits for all their broadcasts and will be booked for other events, concerts and corporate events, the rest of the year. Besides being a TV studio, it is attached to a luxury hotel. The four-story building that is Austin City Limits Live consists of a ground floor of retail and three floors of performing arts. The loading bay can handle three semis and a bobtail all at once, with equipment loaded onto a freight elevator. "It's well thought out," Neece said.

He will leave Texas Performing Arts next week and starts with Austin City Limits Live at Moody Theater July 6. — Linda Deckard and Dave Brooks

*Interviewed for this story: Mike Evans, (610) 784-5447; Steve Zito, (901) 205-1501; Richard Andersen, (619) 933-6514; Bob Williams, (404) 878-3003; Tim Neece, (512) 471-2787*

## NAMING RIGHTS REPORT



### Maverik Center, West Valley City, Utah

**Date Announced:** June 9

**Buyer:** Maverik, Inc., a Utah-based convenience store chain

**Terms:** Multi-year, financial terms not released

**Ownership/Management/Tenant:** West Valley City/Centennial Management Group/Utah Grizzlies hockey team and Utah Blaze arena football

**Brokered:** AEG Facilities and city officials

**Comments:** The former E Center in West Valley City, Utah, which opened in 1997, has its first naming rights sponsor. The buyer is Maverik, Inc., a Utah-based company that operates 210 convenience stores across the western United States.

The terms will not be released, said General Manager Kevin Bruder, because Maverik is privately held.

"That's part of a confidentiality agreement," Bruder said. "But the venue is excited and pleased with the

outcome.”

Bruder said the venue would benefit from a partnership with a strong local company, which will drive traffic to both companies.

The deal includes exclusive sponsorship and advertising rights, signage inside and outside the building, a luxury suite, and a Maverik storefront in the building.

“The storefront will promote some of their proprietary products,” Bruder said. “The product line is yet-to-be determined, but will be dynamic.”

The name on the 12,500-seat venue will officially change during a ribbon-cutting ceremony on July 10, prior to a Justin Bieber concert.

*Contact: Kevin Bruder, (801) 988-8800*

### **O2 World Hamburg**

**Date Announced:** April 13

**Buyer:** Telefónica O2

**Terms:** 10 years, financial terms not disclosed

**Ownership/Management/Tenant:** AEG/HSV Hamburg handball team and the Hamburg Freezers ice hockey team

**Comments:** AEG has expanded its partnership with communications giant O2, inking a naming rights deal with Telefónica O2 in Germany for O2 World Hamburg, formerly the Color Line Arena. The two companies already have naming rights deals at The O2 Arena in London, The O2 Dublin, O2 Arena Prague and O2 World Berlin.

Financial terms are not being disclosed, according to Moritz Hillebrand, director of communication for Anschutz Entertainment Group.

Branding and signage includes “permanent and dominant signage in the arena, branding of the arena façade, LED Cube, way finding, website and newsletter,” Hillebrand said.

The O2 brand will also be advertised on the arena televisions, fascia board and concourse signs, and will be seen in branded areas, including an O2 Blue Room, store, and information booth. The company received two luxury boxes in the agreement, Hillebrand said.

The partnership will allow AEG to improve the arena with technological improvements and an expansion.

Over the next year, ICON Venue Group will oversee the \$9.2 million renovation of the venue, including new hospitality areas, a VIP entrance, and upgrades to suites, and the suite concourse. The venue will be equipped with a 360-degree LED board.

AEG purchased the arena two-and-a-half years ago.

*Contact: Moritz Hillebrand, +49 (0)40 8816-3100*

– Liz Boardman

### **TRAVELOG**

#### **SCHOOLS DIVERSIFY CONTENT AS DIGITAL MEDIA CHANGES BROADCAST LANDSCAPE**

*Chris Kesicke, Ben Godwin and Brian Hommel from XOS are seen here with client Jennifer Martin from the University of Alabama.*



REPORTING FROM ANAHEIM, CALIF. — Schools and athletic conferences are beginning to change the way they view and value their content. Once the sole domain of broadcasters on both network television and cable, a number of schools are rewriting their existing deals and taking control of how their content is used across the Internet and mobile space.

Representatives from the powerful Southeastern Conference (home to five national championships in the past seven years) shared details of their content sharing deal with firm XOS Digital during a panel titled “The Future of Digital Content” at the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics conference at the Anaheim Convention Center Tuesday.

In 2008, the SEC signed a 15-year broadcast deal with CBS worth an estimated \$55 million annually. Part of that agreement gave the SEC control over how it used its images and videos for the Internet and mobile devices, and the conference hired XOS to head its digital strategy. While neither party would disclose how much the deal was worth, XOS’ Chris Kesicke, director of Partner Relations, said most high profile agreements are based on a revenue-share model.

“The key principle behind the digital network is taking content, repurposing it and then distributing,” said the XOS’ Assistant GM Ben Godwin. In the SEC’s case, the main portal is the conference’s website with all video and images leading back to the page. Besides game highlights, content included news clips on a recent Florida baseball game, NFL draft reports and interactive box scores.

The SEC generates revenue by wrapping the video with sponsor messages, and charging for certain downloads, like iPhone and iPad apps (typically 99 cents), as well as video on demand (the decisive Florida-Alabama game in 2009 costs \$3.99 to download).

“These apps are things we update each year,” said Godwin. “The ’09 football app is out; we’ll launch a new app for 2010 in the fall.”

One of the conference’s most successful rollouts was the SEC widget. XOS has 160 affiliates that aggregate the conference’s content onto their website. Sites like the Athen’s Banner Herald newspaper carry the applications on their website, and these widgets will post live scores and highlights (up to 30 minutes post game) for all Georgia games.

“The schools get the distribution and a little bit of rev-share, we get the eyeballs,” said Godwin.

At the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa, the school worked with the SEC to create three DVDs commemorating the team's championship run, said Jennifer Martin, the school's director of licensing. The school uses social media tools like Facebook and Twitter, along with traditional email marketing, to drive traffic to the video retail site.

"We sent out a 'Tide Mail' to a network of over 144,000 fans every time we had a new DVD or product that has our content from the XOS/SEC digital network," she said.

XOS also handles enforcement for the SEC and monitors the Internet for violations. Besides warning advertisers who misuse official images of the league, XOS also helps schools lay claim to their internet identities – XOS helped obtain control of the "LSU" profile on YouTube after it discovered that a user of the same name was using the ID to broadcast a single video – a ping pong game between two tweens.

Not all conferences chose to split their broadcast deals – the Mountain West Conference allows CBS college sports to license and distribute all of its content, while the Big 10 Conference scrapped its TV deal and runs its own cable network and online campaign. – Dave Brooks

*Interviewed for this article: Chris Kesicke & Ben Godwin, (877) 967-3444; Jennifer Martin, (205) 348-7731*

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