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Quote of the Week

"We knew that Shanghai was much more of a marketplace that was into live entertainment. But they've never had a facility. The fact that eight million people will go through the arena during the World Expo is awe-inspiring and requires probably some new tile."

— AEG CEO Tim Leiweke on the success of the new Mercedes Benz Arena in Shanghai.

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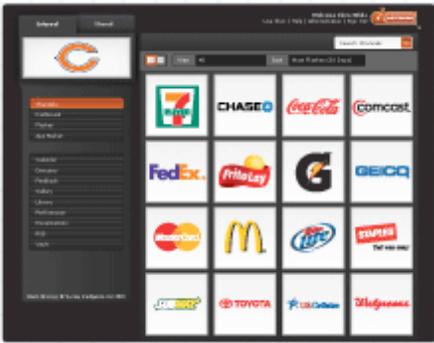
Greetings,

Welcome to VT Pulse, your weekly guide to the "News Behind the Headlines." The deadline to nominate industry professionals for the Hall of Headlines Awards is Friday. Send your nominations to linda@venuestoday.com.

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SHORT TAKES

>> MLB SCHEDULES CUBS/RED SOX SERIES

—For the first time in over 80 years, the Chicago Cubs will travel to Fenway Park in Boston to play three games against the Red Sox, May 20-22, 2011. The teams last battled it out in Boston during the 1918 World Series, which the Sox won in six games with the help of Babe Ruth. The news comes following Tuesday's release of the 2011 Major League Baseball schedule.

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VT NEWS

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

NINE SHOWS BLOW OUT AT SHANGHAI ARENA

John Cappo, president and CEO of AEG China, stands before the Mercedes Benz Arena, Shanghai, which has been hosting 50,000 people a day at the World Expo, which ends Oct. 31.



“The spaceship has landed,” said an enthusiastic John Cappo, president and CEO of AEG China, over the success of the first multi-date concert on-sales for China and for the 18,000-seat, \$400 million Mercedes Benz Arena, Shanghai.

The arena, currently site of a World Expo musical, will host the World Expo closing ceremonies Oct. 31, after which it will be turned over to AEG China to run commercially. The first concert there will be Nov. 19, when Faye Wong ends her five-year hiatus from touring and performs the first of five shows at the Mercedes Benz Arena.

“This reminds me a lot of the O2 in London when we put Scissor Sisters and Bon Jovi on sale and we blew through two or three days quickly. We knew we would sell two or three nights in Shanghai, but we’re a little awed that we sold out nine straight nights in less than a day and probably could have sold out 12 or 13 easily,” declared Tim Leiweke, CEO, AEG.

“I think clearly what it indicates is that the Mercedes Benz Arena is going to be like the Garden (New York), the O2 in London or Staples Center (Los Angeles) – iconic, world class and one of those capital markets that are must-play buildings now for everybody.”

The nine shows include five by Wong and four by Jacky Cheung, with the possibility of adding a fifth. The on-sale was Sept. 15. “Now you’re going to want to play Tokyo, you may want to play a market like Macao, you may want to play Hong Kong, but you have to play Mercedes Benz Arena,” Leiweke said.

Tickets for Wong were sold by Yong Le, the promoter’s chosen ticketing company, Cappo said. The on-sale marks the first five-show run ever for a Chinese artist and Chinese venue, Cappo said.

Cheung’s dates are promoted by Fun Entertainment and tickets are handled by Piao.com.cn. There is no national ticket company in China, Cappo said. Artists and promoters pick their own.

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That fact fits nicely into yet another AEG initiative, its own ticketing company. Leiweke confirmed that AEG hired about half a dozen ticketing pros three months ago with the charge to forge a business plan that will allow AEG to sell its own tickets worldwide, a prospect that includes 20 million tickets and growing. That would certainly work in China, he said. The plan is to be presented by the end of the year.

Meanwhile, in Shanghai, Cheung's run begins Dec. 1. He will also perform at the AEG-managed Wukesong Arena in Beijing. Those tickets go on sale next week, Cappo said, and will hopefully continue the multi-date tradition.

China has not had the luxury of air-conditioned, modern arenas with all the amenities, Cappo said. Most artists have performed outdoors at stadiums, some not so comfortable. The public is responding well to the concept of first-class entertainment venues, evidenced by the fact they are willing to pay the price. The average ticket price is about \$100, Cappo said. "This is a new lifestyle destination."

Mercedes Benz Arena is part of a complex, not unlike London's O2, also an AEG-managed, iconic arena. Cappo said the complex includes a six-screen movie theater, an ice hockey rink, 20,000 sq. ft. of retail and a music club where artists will perform, sign autographs and hang out before and after shows.

The arena also has 82 suites, all sold out for the World Expo, with about 15 percent left to be sold after Expo. By the end of the World Expo, 8 million people will have passed through the Mercedes-Benz Arena in one year.

"We knew that Shanghai was much more of a marketplace that was into live entertainment. But they've never had a facility. The fact that eight million people will go through the arena during the World Expo is awe-inspiring and requires probably some new tile. We always knew that Shanghai and the Mercedes Benz Arena were going to be the capital building for live entertainment in all of Asia," Leiweke said.

After the initial concerts is the official grand re-opening of the Mercedes Benz Arena on Jan. 15 with a multi-act package. Cappo said AEG has budgeted for 45-50 shows in the first year of commercial operation but, given that he has 26 events contracted from November to February, he expects to exceed that. "We will over-perform our expectations," he said.

He is talking to several promoters about a boxing event and has booked a dog show and several corporate events. Walking with Dinosaurs is also scheduled for 2011.

NBA China is a minority partner in Shanghai, but will not have an exhibition game or team in that facility the first year. Shanghai Media Entertainment Group is the lead partner.

"We're feeling awful good about our investment today," Leiweke said, including the fact that they now have eight founding partners, also a sellout. "It is gratifying. This is a new idea, a new concept and a new economic model over there." — Linda Deckard

Interviewed for this story: John Cappo, +86 21 612 63088; Tim Leiweke, (213) 741-7101; Michael Roth, (213) 742-7155

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Dairy Farmers Stadium,
Townsville, Australia
-Manager

Sprint Center, Kansas
City, Mo - Account
Executive

Exhibition Park,
Canberra, Australia
-Sales Coordinator

The Trusts Stadium
Arena, Waitakere City,
New Zealand - Chief
Executive Officer

City of Walnut Creek
(Calif.) Leshner Theatre
-Senior Ticket Office
Clerk

AEG Live, Las Vegas
-Marketing & Interactive
Coordinator (Full-Time)

[VIEW THE FULL LISTINGS](#)



The banner features the acronym 'SEVT' in large, red, distressed letters at the top. Below it, a blue banner reads 'Sport Entertainment & Venues Tomorrow'. The background is a textured, light brown color with faint pencil sketches of a stadium, a star, and other architectural elements. A large red box at the bottom contains the text: 'REGISTER NOW NOV. 17-19, 2010 Columbia, S.C. Register by Oct. 20, 2010 & Save \$50! www.sevt.org SPORT ENTERTAINMENT & VENUES TOMORROW CONFERENCE'.

FAIRS & FESTIVALS

DOWN WITH WEBSTER AND DEEP-FRIED BUTTER OFFSET RAIN AT CNE

Down with Webster rocked this year's CNE.



Seven days of rainy weather or the threat of rain probably will prompt a decrease in attendance compared to last year's 1,320,000 at the Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto when final numbers are tabulated next month.

"I don't think we'll be at last year's numbers," said GM David Bednar. "We had really good numbers for the last two years. We were doing great this year until the last weekend. In a good year, we do 25 percent of our attendance in the last weekend."

But the final Saturday and Labor Day Monday of the Aug. 20-Sept. 6 fair either had rain or threatened rain. "The Sunday was the one decent day and it wasn't enough to make up for the loss," Bednar said.

Jackson, Miss.-based North American Midway Entertainment placed 58 rides on the midway, Bednar said, including the new Zamperla Skater, as well as the Drop, the Swing Tower, the Crazy Mouse roller coaster and the flume ride.

“It was a very good line-up,” Bednar said.

Like fair attendance, Bednar expects the ride numbers to be a bit down over last year.

Gate admission of \$16 Canadian (\$15.56 U.S.) was up \$2 Canadian from last year.

“We were planning a \$1 raise but the province did a harmonization of sales tax that took the admission tax from 5 percent to 13 percent,” Bednar said.

Some tax credits alleviated the brunt of that so the full 8 percent increase was not felt, Bednar said.

“But we estimated that it was going to be \$550,000 to \$600,000, so we adjusted the admission fee. But we did other promotions to offer people other ways of getting in.”

Admission for ages 13 and under and 60 and above was \$12 Canadian (\$11.67 U.S.)

Other promotions were an opening day “\$8 at the Gate,” which was \$8 for everybody and essentially a half-priced deal for ages 14-59; “\$5 after 5” on Mondays through Thursdays; and a “little, almost stealth, promotion we did in the local neighborhood,” which was free admission during lunchtime for patrons who are in after 11 a.m. and out by 2 p.m. Patrons actually pay admission and it’s refunded for those who leave on time.

“It’s an idea we picked up from South Carolina,” Bednar said, referring to the state fair in Columbia. “It’s not nearly as big as theirs is, but it’s fun to do.”

Once patrons of The Ex pay their admission fee, most attractions other than the carnival are free. That includes the musical entertainment at the bandshell, where acts included Debbie Reynolds, Bobby Vinton, a Michael Jackson tribute act called King Michael and a band called Down With Webster that between the time they were signed and the CNE, were nominated for a Canadian Juno Award for New Group of the Year.

“They went through the roof,” Bednar said. “Never, never in my 12 years here have I seen this. There were teenage girls here at 8:30 in the morning in front of the stage, maybe a dozen of them. They were not moving. They were going to take turns going to get a bottle of water so they would have their position in front of the stage.”

During the concert, Bednar witnessed an estimated 8,000 of the 10,000 or 11,000 fans forming a “W” with their hands and holding their hands above their heads pulsing to the music for two or three songs. And then during one song, they asked everyone to pull out their cell phones, which fans waved in the air instead of lighters.

The bandshell seating is an open field so attendance is difficult to count, but Bednar estimates that it maxes out at about 11,000.

Other entertainment at The Ex included tribute bands nearly daily at the Budweiser Midway Stage, honoring such acts as Aerosmith, Led Zeppelin, Billy Joel, Frankie Valli & the Four Seasons, Bryan Adams, KISS, Tina Turner, The Tragically Hip, Genesis, Pink Floyd, Elvis Presley and more.

Patrons also could attend twice daily ice skating shows, "Rock on Ice," presented by a group out of Quebec and featuring on six of those days 2002 Olympic gold medalist figure skating duo Jamie Sale and David Pelletier.

Last year, the ice show, presented in the 11,000-seat Ricoh Coliseum, featured Olympic silver medalist Elvis Stojko because The Ex had gotten \$3 million Canadian (\$2.9 million U.S.) stimulus funds from the Canadian government, similar to what the United States government did in an effort to get the economy cranking.

In addition to Stojko, last year The Ex brought in Bill Clinton for a paid appearance, an extra \$1 million for marketing, plus an International Friendly Soccer Match between Portugal and Scotland.

This year, the CNE only got \$750,000 Canadian (\$729,000), which officials at The Ex used to purchase five trams, with a capacity of 54 riders each, to transport fair patrons from one end of the grounds to the other.

"The old ones were dated from the mid-1980s and were pulled by tractors with manual transmissions," Bednar said.

In marketing, the CNE has a very active Facebook page. "We had the most success we've had with social media," Bednar said. "We held trivia contests on Facebook in which we'd ask a simple question and get all the answers and draw for a winner and somebody will win passes. We know from watching that that when you post something like that and get 15 answers in 20 minutes, there are people who are watching you, which is what you want."

The year-round budget at the CNE is \$22 million or \$21.3 million U.S., Bednar said. About \$800,000 or \$777,800 U.S. was spent on paid advertising.

One food item actually turned into a huge marketing tool - deep-fried butter, which was unveiled last year at the State Fair of Texas and which Bednar saw at the Florida State Fair. He then asked concessionaires at The Ex to step up and one did, and the media attention that ensued was overwhelming. In a normal year, Bednar does maybe one, if that, French-language radio interview. This year he did three. The Toronto Star even did an article with the headline, "Did butter-balls save the CNE?"

"The deep-fried butter just took off in the popular imagination," Bednar said. "It went nuts. I couldn't tell you the numbers of interviews we did and the comments and the number of people who asked about deep-fried butter. It was only available at one booth and that poor guy - he was doing well financially, but he was there until an hour after the midway closed."

Next year's dates will be Aug. 19-Sept. 5. - Mary Wade Burnside

Interviewed for this article: David Bednar, (416) 263-3800.



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UNIVERSITIES

POTENTIAL PAC-12 CHAMPIONSHIP IN SEARCH OF NEW HOME

The hunt is on to find a venue to host the championship for the West Coast's premier collegiate Division I conference, following its expansion from 10 teams to 12. The Pac-10 will soon be the Pac-12 after picking up the University of Utah, Salt Lake City and University of Colorado, Boulder, joining programs like the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, Arizona State in Tempe and the University of Washington in Seattle. The newly expanded league plans to launch a new television network and online portal. Now the commissioners of the league are looking at where to play the championship game.

Pac-12 commissioner Larry Scott and a group of five athletic directors met in early September, eventually agreeing upon a conference championship's existence. The debate now is whether to hold the game at a neutral site or at what Scott calls "the NFL style playoff home-field," where the team with the best record hosts the championship.

The NCAA's rule to only allow conferences with at least 12 teams to play a conference championship played a role in the Pac-10's decision to recruit two more schools, said Chris Hill, athletic director for Utah. The championship won't be played until at least 2011, though it could be pushed back if Colorado elects to join the Pac-12 in 2012 instead of their original plan to join in 2011.

"There are still a lot of things to be worked out before we choose a

championship site, but obviously we will be looking for a facility with the modern amenities to capture the revenues associated with a high profile game,” Hill said.

The major hold-up for Colorado is money. If the school joins the Pac-10 in 2011, it could be forced to pay a penalty fee – the school is contracted to play in the Big 12 through 2011 and television deals could prevent it from leaving.

When the Atlantic Coast Conference expanded to 12 teams, ABC and ESPN signed a deal worth \$40 million per year to hold the ACC championship and other “big games.” Of course, with the fast pace of college football, the winner would only have five days to schedule a championship game, but Pac-10 spokesman Jim Muldoon said it can be done.

“The logistics are good,” he said. “You have a staff in place that can stage a game. And it would ensure nice crowds.”

The University of Phoenix Stadium in Glendale, Ariz., is among the venues actively campaigning to woo the Pac-12 championship to its confines. “We were built and specifically designed to host a wide array of events, and certainly what I’ll term ‘mega events,’” said Peter Sullivan, who manages the stadium for Global Spectrum.

Other potential championship homes include Qwest Field in Seattle (capacity of 67,000), Qualcomm Park in San Diego (71,500) and Invesco Field in Denver (76,125). Many stadiums within the Pac-10’s geographic zone already host Bowl Games – the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, Calif., is home to the BCS Championship, while AT&T Park in San Francisco is home to the annual Emerald Bowl.

“We’re still waiting for Colorado State to make their decision, and once they join our conference, we can decide on whether to host a home-championship, or bring a game to a neutral site,” Muldoon said. – Matt Cellar & Dave Brooks

Interviewed for this article: Chris Hill, (801) 581-3508; Jon Lee, (213) 765-6357; James Muldoon, (925) 932-4411; Peter Sullivan, (602) 379-0102

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 Aug. 25.

'STRAIT' TALK GROSSES \$2 MIL IN NASHVILLE AND COLUMBUS

15,001 or More Seats	10,001-15,000 Seats	5,001-10,000 Seats	5,000 or Less Seats
1) George Strait Gross Sales: \$1,175,600; Venue: Bridgestone Arena, Nashville, Tenn.; Attendance: 14,240; Ticket Range: \$89.50-\$69.50; Promoter: AEG Live, The Messina Group, Varnell	1) Justin Bieber Gross Sales: \$595,650; Venue: Maryland State Fairgrounds Racetrack Field, Timonium; Attendance: 12,540; Ticket Range: \$47.50; Promoter: AEG Live, 24-7 Entertainment, Paul Manna; Dates:	1) Cirque du Soleil "Alegria" Gross Sales: \$2,234,456; Venue: Save On Foods Memorial Centre, Victoria, B.C.; Attendance: 32,180; Ticket Range: \$102.54-\$46.14; Promoter: Cirque du Soleil; Dates:	1) Supernatural Santana Gross Sales: \$1,379,561; Venue: The Joint, Las Vegas; Attendance: 14,722; Ticket Range: \$151-\$51; Promoter: AEG Live; Dates: Aug. 25-Sept. 5; No. of Shows: 8

Enterprises; Dates:
Sept. 11; No. of Shows:
1

2) **George Strait**
Gross Sales: \$932,581;
Venue: **Nationwide
Arena, Columbus,
Ohio**; Attendance:
13,301; Ticket Range:
\$89.50-\$20; Promoter:
AEG Live, The Messina
Group; Dates: Sept. 9;
No. of Shows: 1

3) **Justin Bieber**
Gross Sales: \$837,275;
Venue: **New York State
Fair Grandstand,
Syracuse**; Attendance:
16,787; Ticket Range:
\$55-\$45; Promoter:
AEG Live, New York
State Fair; Dates: Sept.
1; No. of Shows: 1

4) **Justin Bieber**
Gross Sales: \$778,946;
Venue: **Madison Square
Garden Arena, New
York**; Attendance:
14,529; Ticket Range:
\$69.50-\$29.50;
Promoter: AEG Live;
Dates: Aug. 31; No. of
Shows: 1

5) **Jonas Brothers**
Gross Sales: \$773,832;
Venue: **Bell Centre,
Montreal**; Attendance:
9,162; Ticket Range:
\$95.99-\$28.46;
Promoter: evenko, Live
Nation; Dates: Sept. 4;
No. of Shows: 1

Sept. 5; No. of Shows:
1

2) **Justin Bieber**
Gross Sales: \$370,660;
Venue: **Coca Cola
Grandstand @
Champlain Valley
Exposition, Essex
Junction, Vt.**; Attendance:
8,048;
Ticket Range: \$55-\$35;
Promoter: AEG Live,
Champlain Valley
Exposition; Dates: Sept.
3; No. of Shows: 1

3) **Megadeth, Slayer**
Gross Sales: \$353,287;
Venue: **Long Beach
(Calif.) Arena**; Attendance:
8,880;
Ticket Range: \$45.50-
\$10; Promoter: Live
Nation; Dates: Aug. 30;
No. of Shows: 1

4) **Toby Keith**
Gross Sales: \$310,040;
Venue: **I wireless
Center, Moline, Ill.**; Attendance:
6,912;
Ticket Range: \$62.50-
\$16.25; Promoter: Live
Nation; Dates: Aug. 26;
No. of Shows: 1

5) **Curious George
Live!**
Gross Sales: \$108,866;
Venue: **Patriot Center,
Fairfax, Va.**; Attendance:
3,718;
Ticket Range: \$75-\$16;
Promoter: In-house,
VEE Corporation; Dates:
Aug. 27-29; No. of
Shows: 8

Sept. 8-12; No. of
Shows: 9

2) **Justin Bieber**
Gross Sales: \$489,858;
Venue: **Coca Cola Park,
Allentown, Pa.**; Attendance:
10,242;
Ticket Range: \$49-\$39;
Promoter: AEG Live,
The Great Allentown
Fair; Dates: Sept. 4;
No. of Shows: 1

3) **Bullet For My
Valentine**
Gross Sales: \$363,849;
Venue: **Hordern
Pavilion, Sydney**; Attendance:
5,442;
Ticket Range: \$74.02;
Promoter: Soundwave
Festival; Dates: Sept.
10; No. of Shows: 1

4) **The Cat Empire**
Gross Sales: \$220,704;
Venue: **Hordern
Pavilion, Sydney**; Attendance:
4,424;
Ticket Range: \$55.78-
\$44.63; Promoter: The
Cat Empire Touring;
Dates: Aug. 29; No. of
Shows: 1

5) **Funkfest featuring
Morris Day**
Gross Sales: \$176,040;
Venue: **Greek Theatre,
Los Angeles**; Attendance:
4,545;
Ticket Range: \$79.50-
\$25; Promoter:
Nederlander; Dates:
Aug. 28; No. of Shows:
1

2) **Chelsea Handler**
Gross Sales: \$277,847;
Venue: **The Colosseum
at Caesars Palace, Las
Vegas**; Attendance:
4,066; Ticket Range:
\$99.50-\$49.50;
Promoter: AEG Live;
Dates: Sept. 4; No. of
Shows: 1

3) **Tears For Fears**
Gross Sales: \$88,247;
Venue: **Ruth Eckerd
Hall, Clearwater, Fla.**; Attendance:
1,886;
Ticket Range: \$75-\$38;
Promoter: In-house,
AEG Live; Dates: Sept.
1; No. of Shows: 1

4) **Natalie Merchant**
Gross Sales: \$87,985;
Venue: **Broward Center
For The Perf. Arts, Ft.
Lauderdale, Fla.**; Attendance:
1,625;
Ticket Range: \$60-\$35;
Promoter: AEG Live SE,
In-house; Dates: Aug.
25; No. of Shows: 1

5) **Kenny Rogers**
Gross Sales: \$79,253;
Venue: **Morris Perf.
Arts Center, South
Bend, Ind.**; Attendance:
1,733;
Ticket Range: \$55-\$35;
Promoter: Stonebridge
Entertainment; Dates:
Aug. 27; No. of Shows:
1

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

THE BEAT

TRAVELOG

FROM GENERATIONAL PERKS TO TICKET QUIRKS, ARENA MANAGERS COVER THE GAMUT

Representing four of the five generations found in the workplace are, from left, Matt Batson, student, University of Florida, Gainesville; Colleen Byrnes, The Ryan Center, Kingston, R.I.; Ruey Peck, Spalding Basketball Equipment; Kim Bedier, Comcast Arena at Everett (Wash.); Lisa Chamness, Freedom Hall, Johnson City, Tenn.; and Kevin Twohig, Spokane (Wash.) Arena. (VT Photo)



REPORTING FROM TULSA, Okla. – Dealing with generational issues, both with employees and patrons, from tattoos to touch screens, was a running theme through the Arena Management Conference here Sept. 11-14. Communication is a new ballgame throughout the industry strata.

Asked about future trends in the arena world, answers thrown back from attendees included Ping and other technology, more social networking, more family-oriented entertainment, more reality shows on the road, and fewer stairs as an older marketplace rebels at climbing up and down. Kevin Twohig, Spokane (Wash.) Arena, envisioned multi-level arenas where no one had to climb up or down more than six steps, and he was more than half serious. The arena of the future will have larger lobbies, more storage, interactive touch screens everywhere, convenient restrooms, and friendly production capabilities.

Attendance at this year's AMC totaled 192 including walkups, down from three years ago, but up from last year, according to Brenda Pennington of the International Association of Assembly Managers, which presents the event. The name change to International Association of Venue Managers is under construction, but this event was not so branded.

Kim Bedier, Comcast Arena at Everett (Wash.), moderated the panel on "Best of the Best of Generations A to Z," noting that there are now four or five generations in one workplace more of the time and that leads to a wider variety of problem-solving techniques and preferences. She identified Traditionalists, born before 1945; Baby Boomers, 1946-1954; Generation X (1955-1977); Generation Y, born after 1977; and the newest, Nexters, aged 18-25 and now entering the workplace. Matt Batson, a student in Hospitality and Tourism at the University of Florida, Gainesville, represented the Nexters on the panel.

Both Matson and Colleen Byrnes, senior event manager, Ryan Center, Kingston, R.I., confirmed that their generations (Byrnes qualified as Generation Y) are taught by professors and teachers that it's normal to have seven jobs. "Every day I'm told you're not going to find your career with your first job. You always think there is something else out there," Matson said.

"We're funky," Byrnes added, though she has been at Ryan Center for five years, having started as a student. Twohig said he is astounded by that attitude and, as an employer, he has to deal with it every day. "On our staff, there is no issue until we get to the Millennials (born 1980-2000), where we suddenly drop to a 50 percent retention rate. That generation are on their second and third jobs already." Byrnes added that she went to school to get into this industry and Batson is specializing in event management, but they appear to be the exceptions.

Each generation is defined by the media they use. Nexters have even gotten to the point they express themselves by appearance. One in three now have tattoos or piercings. Employer response varied from Twohig – "I'm not a tattoo fan. In our market it's not the right impression. It's a negative to me." – to Byrnes, "It can't be visible."

Ruey Peck, Spalding Basketball Equipment, (Generation X), noted that his firm supplies equipment to the National Basketball Association where "some of the ink on players is unbelievable," but for professional purposes, they still say, if you have a tattoo, you should be able to cover it up.

"This business is relationship based," noted Lisa Chamness, Freedom Hall, Johnson City, Tenn., referring to employees and customers and clients. "Your own integrity must be intact."

Motivating all generations of workers is also relationship based. Byrnes said she sets goals and motivates the event staff with the carrot and the stick. "If you ever want an usher position on the floor, I will consider your record," she tells them.

"Motivation is in the trust we're given," Batson said.

On the client relationship side, Bedier posed the question, "How far will you go?"

Peck said his firm donated basketball equipment to President Barack Obama's White House because they saw that it meant recognition and opportunity and "it saved the taxpayers money."

"We'll buy it, promote or co-promote," Twohig said. "Right now I'm looking for a rock show for the fall. It's what our community wants."

"I'm not above begging," Chamness said. Hers is a leased facility, she cannot promote, but she brings other value-adds to the table. "We're willing to go the other step."

Eschewing the negative, Twohig wrapped it up noting that despite the economic crisis, "we're having the best year we've ever had. It's a bright time in the industry for us."

Not for others, though. Bob Skoney, Nashville Municipal Auditorium, and Sue DeVries, Metrapark, Billings, Mont., talked about recovery from floods in Tennessee and tornados in Montana on another panel. Skoney said he spent the week after the floods booking events from his home. Fortunately, though the arena had no power nor entry, he had a backup calendar.

The city is slowly recovering since the May 1 flood, he said. The Schermerhorn Symphony Center hopes to open again by the end of January, having sustained \$45 million in damage. The Opry House, with \$16 million in damage, opens this month (VT Pulse, Sept. 5), and Municipal Aud was up and running after eight days out of the building.

The tornado in Billings was June 20, and DeVries said it was the first F2 (scale of intensity) tornado there in 50 years. The 186-acre grounds was hosting events the day after the tornado hit, but the Rimrock Auto Arena, where it did at least \$40 million in damage, won't reopen until April 1, 2011. On the plus side, it will be a much improved arena, DeVries said, with more bathrooms, sound improvements, more than one elevator, additional signage, a new entryway and possibly a new bridge from the parking lot.

Grand openings were also revisited, including Intrust Bank Arena, Wichita, Kan., where Scott Neal, assistant general manager, said lessons learned included knowing what the venue means to the community, scheduling time in the facility before the grand opening (they had two months), managing expectations, and having a good pair of community boots on hand for construction site tours.

Steve Miller, general manager, Huntington Center, Toledo, Ohio, agreed that managing expectations is key. Huntington Center replaced the 1952-era Sports Arena, which had no air conditioning and glass that was four feet tall for hockey. The \$105 million facility took 20 months to build and has hosted 425,000 people so far.

Bookings and discounted tickets were the hot topic during the Town Hall for 10,000-plus seat arenas. Some bemoaned Live Nation relations, saying the promoter apparently has "a list" of 70 buildings they regularly do business with and woe to the arena that's not on the list.

"You have to make a co-pro deal," said Michael Marion, Verizon Arena, North Little Rock, Ark., in response to the list worries. "Let's not be coy."

Marion also noted an increase in experimentation with ticket pricing. "I'm not a fan of discounting, but sometimes it happens," Marion said.

Several were also not fans of all-in tickets, including most family show producers and those who have a fee-free box office option. Most so-called "all-in" prices are still advertising the base price on the

Ticketmaster web site and there has to be at least one place where buyers can pay that price, many attendees opined.

Paperless ticketing will require a lot of education, it was suggested. Marion said people still lined up at the box office to get the “ticket” for a Brooks & Dunn paperless show to the point that they posted employees to head them off so they didn’t stand in line twice.

Alternative events are also on the rise and most of those mentioned revolved around food. Rupp Arena, Lexington, Ky., did an Incredible Food Show featuring celebrity chefs and drawing 8,000 attendance in two days. Growers, producers and suppliers exhibited. Rich MacKeigan, Van Andel Arena, Grand Rapids, Mich., hosts a Wine & Food Festival, which features 80 wineries and drew 10,000 people in two days. Jo-Ann Armstrong, Honda Center, Anaheim, Calif., said their Orange County Foodie Fest featured 50 gourmet food trucks and drew 8,000 attendance in one day (Venues Today, September 2010 issue).

“Food is a growth area right now,” MacKeigan said. – Linda Deckard

Interviewed for this story: Kevin Twohig, (509) 279-7002; Kim Bedier, (425) 322-2611; Lisa Chamness, (423) 461-4855; Matthew Batson, (239) 887-4979; AJ Boleski, (316) 440-9015; Ruey Peck, (800) 435-3865 x2406; Colleen Byrnes, (401) 788-3205; Sue DeVries, (406) 256-2412; Michael Marion, (501) 975-9030; Bob Skoney, (615) 862-6393

NAMING RIGHTS REPORT



UCCU Events Center, Orem, Utah

Date Announced: Sept. 2

Buyer: Utah Community Credit Union

Terms: 10 years, \$2.5 million

Brokered: In-house

Ownership/Tenant: Utah Valley University/UVU's Woverine Basketball

Comments: At a time when the Utah Valley University is struggling with a 25 percent enrollment increase and a 12 percent cut in state

funding, the school has inked a naming rights deal with the Utah Community Credit Union for the former McKay Events Center. The 10-year, \$2.5 million deal was announced Sept. 2.

“We are out of space on campus, and don’t have the revenue to hire professors, so things are getting tight,” said Van Hale, UVU’s vice president for institutional advancement. “We have had a partnership with them for the last three or four years. They have a branch on campus, and the student card – which serves as an ID, bus pass, employee key and debit card, if they choose – serves 8,000 employees and students.”

As part of the deal, the credit union’s name will be inside the arena, and on the LED billboard along busy Interstate I-15, which abuts the venue, and serves 150,000 cars a day.

“There are not many other components,” Hale said. “The [LED sign] location was very appealing to them.”

The venue was previously named for the Latter Day Saints Church leader David O. McKay. In 1995, his family donated \$3 million for perpetual naming rights.

“His grandson, who was the major donor years ago, said ‘you need additional revenue, move his name to the education building, and you will be able to sell naming rights,’” Hale said. “We were thrilled.”

A life-sized bronze statue of McKay that stood outside the ticket office will also be moved into that building.

UCCU began as a credit union service for Brigham Young University students, and many of its current members attend Utah Valley. Hale said 85 percent of the school’s graduates remain in Utah after

graduation.

“This was absolutely a brilliant move on their part,” Hale said. “Odds are, they will stay here and be loyal credit union members.”

Contact: Van Hale, (801) 863-8335

Treasure Island Field, Xcel Energy Center, St. Paul

Buyer: Treasure Island Resort & Casino

Terms: Three years, financials not released

Ownership/Operator/Tenant: City of St. Paul/Minnesota Sports & Entertainment/Minnesota Swarm, Minnesota Wild

Comments: In an effort to highlight the historic link between lacrosse and Native Americans, the Minnesota Swarm has inked a new naming rights deal for their lacrosse field at the Xcel Energy Center with Treasure Island Resort & Casino, the Welch, Minn.-based gaming company operated by the Prairie Island Indian Community.

“Lacrosse is a native sport - Native Americans created the sport and played the game to heal the sick and solve disputes within the tribe,” said Andy Arlotta, co-owner and vice president of the Minnesota Swarm.

About 23 percent of the National Lacrosse League’s players are Native Americans, Arlotta said, but in Minnesota, there are no Native Americans on league teams.

Contact: Andy Arlotta, (651) 602-6000

– Liz Boardman

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