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**The latest in ticketing news and trends.**  
**INTIX Quarterly**  
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# VT PULSE

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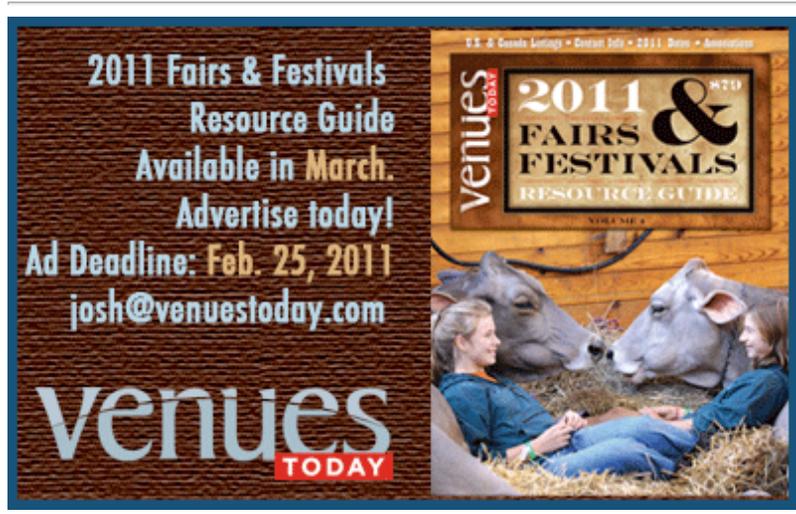
**Quote of the Week**

*“As a result of this deal, there are now two major players in the ticketing space...everything else is in the minor leagues.”*

— New Outbox Technologies CEO Fred Rosen on his company's new agreement to provide ticketing services to AEG's 105 venues.

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Greetings Naz,  
Welcome to VT Pulse, your weekly guide to the "News Behind the Headlines." Mr. Sunshine, the comedy about an arena manager in San Diego airs tonight on ABC. Check your local listings for times.



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**DEPARTMENTS**  
Short Takes

HELP WANTED

CONTACT VT PULSE

### SHORT TAKES

>> **TWC ARENA CHOSEN TO HOST DNC** – The Time Warner Cable Arena in Charlotte, N.C., has been selected to host the Democratic National Convention in February 2012. *Contact: Andrea McGavin, (704) 688-9059*

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### VT NEWS

#### **TICKETS**

#### **ROSEN RETURNS WITH EPIC TICKETING DEAL**



*Fred Rosen*

The man responsible for helping to make Ticketmaster a dominant force has returned to ticketing, signing a grandiose deal capable of turning his Montreal-based ticketing firm into a powerhouse.

Ex-Ticketmaster CEO Fred Rosen and his new firm Outbox have been named the official ticketing company for AEG Facilities. The firm is co-managed by Jean-François Brousseau, who created Outbox in 2005 with Cirque du Soleil, the company's first client.

"What brought me back to [ticketing] was that Ticketmaster has shifted from protecting the buildings to protecting the acts," he said, alluding to the company's 2009 purchase of Frontline Entertainment, the largest artist management firm in the world, now run by Irving Azoff, who doubles as the CEO of Ticketmaster. "The company that is there is not the company I created."

The AEG deal will cover 105 facilities around the globe and instantly makes Outbox one of the largest ticketing platforms in the world as it rolls out the implementation over the next 24 months.

"As a result of this deal, there are now two major players in the ticketing space," he said. Outbox will use a white label ticketing system which will run all ticketing transactions through the venue's individual web site, as opposed to a centralized system. The venue will receive all of the consumer data about ticket buyers and most consumers will have no idea their transaction is taking place on the Outbox platform.

Rosen said his company's white label approach will set him apart from Ticketmaster, which he said "takes all of the data from selling tickets and uses it for their own agenda, versus a model where all of the data that is accumulated is used" for the venue's agenda.

Rosen's bold style certainly has captivated the ticketing business, and miffed a few of the industry players with his comments.

"I certainly have a lot of respect for Fred Rosen and Jean-François, but we've been offering a white label solution for the last eight years and Paciolan has been doing it for 30 years," said Fred Maglione from New Era Tickets. "To say that there are only two solutions available on the market place is kind of delusional."

Rosen acknowledges that other companies exist in the marketplace, but contends "they're all in the minor leagues," he said. "It's not just about how people sell software. It's about delivering the message."

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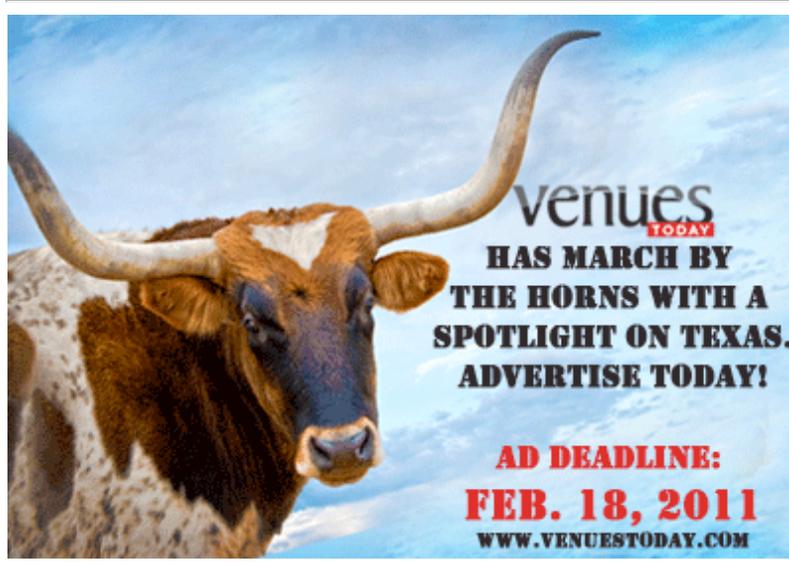
Last year, AEG hired former Ticketmaster executive David Goldberg, along with Blaine Legere and Brian Pike to begin looking at new options for ticketing. Outbox has also hired Ticketmaster's former VP of Venue Relations Neal Gunn, and Don Orris, who handled West Coast operations.

As a concession of its 2010 merger with Live Nation, Ticketmaster had agreed to license its software to AEG until the promoter and facility management company had found a new system to use.

Rosen said his company plans to begin competing for new business immediately.

"You can assume that we're talking to clients and the reason we're going to take 24-30 months to roll out AEG is because we plan to roll out business as we get it," he said. — Dave Brooks

*Interviewed for this article: Fred Rosen, (310) 276-0200; Fred Maglione, (484) 432-5990*



## NAMING RIGHTS

### AEG LANDS NAMING DEAL FOR PROPOSED DOWNTOWN STADIUM

AEG CEO Tim Leiweke (center), and Farmers Insurance Exchange executives Kevin Kelso (left) and Paul Patsis hold footballs after Leiweke announced the naming rights of new football stadium Farmers Field at Los Angeles Convention Center on Feb. 1, in Los Angeles.



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

[rob@venuestoday.com](mailto:rob@venuestoday.com)

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**Vee Corporation,**  
Minneapolis - Show Promoter

**Goldstar, Pasadena, Calif.** - Senior Manager of Venue Relations

**BC Place Stadium, Vancouver, Canada** - Assistant General Manager (Guest Experience)

**Visy Park, Carlton Football Club, Australia** - Venue Coordinator

**Ticketmaster, Australia** - Senior Client Marketing

**BI-LO Center, S.C.** - Event Manager

**GetTix.Net, Ariz.** - Sales Manager

**Wroclaw Stadium, Poland** - Director of Operations

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A highly-anticipated National Football League stadium proposed for downtown Los Angeles now has a name – Farmers Field. Farmers Insurance has bought the naming rights to the stadium in a deal valued at \$700 million over 30 years. Set to open in 2015, the 68,000-seat stadium could finalize the existing \$2 billion L.A. Live project.

Besides a new Ritz-Carlton residential tower and hotel by J.W. Marriot, the popular destination anchored by the Staples Center includes over a dozen restaurants, two music venues, a nightclub, a high-end bowling alley and the Grammy Museum. The development of a new stadium not only allows the city to host world-class events, but L.A. Live gives visitors a place to play when they attend the big game.

“It’s an extension of what’s already taking place with the fan festivals around the Super Bowl and the Final Four,” said AEG CEO Tim Leiweke, who said a proposed stadium in downtown L.A. could bring those two events to Southern California and provide plenty of room for activations.

The deal was negotiated between Leiweke, and Farmers executive Kevin Kelso and calls for the stadium to be built on the site of the West Hall at the L.A. Convention Center. Leiweke said AEG plans to rebuild the West Hall before the current facility is destroyed and underwrite the facility’s losses until the bonds on the project have been paid off. AEG also plans to expand the South Hall of the building by 90,000 sq. ft.

A key provision of the deal hinges on AEG’s ability to lure an NFL team - or two - to Los Angeles. Leiweke said it was unlikely that any announcement on a team would occur until after the league reaches a collective bargaining agreement with the players association. In the event that a team does come to Los Angeles, Leiweke said Farmer’s insurance would begin making payments in 2013. If two teams end up using the stadium, the value of the naming rights deal could reach \$1 billion.

“When we first embarked upon trying to find a naming rights partner for this specific facility about six months ago, it was very clear to us early on that we wanted a local company from Southern California,” said Shervin Mirhashemi, COO of AEG Global Partnerships, which negotiated the deal. Without the pre-construction agreement “it would have been a very hard reality for us to accomplish from an AEG standpoint. Privatizing facilities is not an easy chore.”

Total size of the new stadium would be 1.7 million square feet and include a retractable rooftop. For special events, the stadium could be expanded to 78,000 seats, served by approximately 32,000 parking spots within a 10-minute radius.

“We’re currently estimated about 80 events a year for Farmers Field,” said Leiweke.

The plan has been given an early blessing by Los Angeles City Council, which followed the announcement with votes to appoint an independent financial analyst and set up a working group to negotiate the deal. AEG is expected to ask for an exemption from the state’s environmental quality act and \$350 million in municipal bonds to pay for the convention center work, which it will repay with a tax on game day tickets. – Dave Brooks

*Interviewed for this article: Tim Leiweke and Shervin Mirhashemi, (213) 741-*

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**BEHIND THE HEADLINES****BLIZZARD WINDS DAMAGE WRIGLEY'S ROOF**

Although most buildings came away unscathed during Chicago's worst blizzard in 11 years, Wrigley Field, home of the Cubs, was not so lucky.

On Feb. 2, wind gusts of up to 70 miles per hour off of Lake Michigan damaged a panel of the ballpark's roof above the press box, according to a statement from Chicago's Office of Emergency Management and Communications.

"Paneling from Wrigley Field's fiberboard roof broke away, due to the extreme winds accompanying last week's blizzard," said Cubs spokesman Peter Chase.

Following the incident, the Cubs worked with the city to monitor the situation and ensure there weren't any public safety issues.

North Clark and West Addison streets, which border the ballpark, closed late Tuesday, and a security guard was on site to keep an eye on the venue.

"The police blocked off various street/sidewalk areas as a precaution during the storm," Chase said.

Work to repair the paneling is expected to begin this week and take about one week to complete.

At press time, there was still no estimate as to the cost of the repairs.

"That data is not immediately available, as the bidding process is still underway," Chase said.

The damage to the roof was more a result of the winds as opposed to the

snow.

“Wind gusts at the lakefront were reported in excess of 70 miles per hour, perhaps even stronger by the ballpark, thus causing the damage, which ultimately is fairly minimal,” Chase said. There was no interior damage reported at the ballpark as a result of this incident.

Dubbed the Blizzard of 2011, the storm came in three parts. The first system brought between 14 and 16 inches of snow to the city, followed by an unusual thundersnow weather incident, which produced another 2 to 4 inches. A lake effect system followed the next day, dumping another 2 to 4 inches of snow in the region.

The storm took place in a period of about 24 hours, producing hazardous weather in 31 states and affecting more than 100 million people in the U.S.

The blizzard virtually shut down the city for a day and a half. Most businesses shut their doors on Feb. 3, due to impassable roadways and sidewalks marred with 5 to 10 ft. high snow drifts produced by the high winds. In addition, approximately 1,000 cars were reported stranded on Lake Shore Drive, a main thoroughfare along Chicago’s lakefront.

The storm was the third worst in terms of snowfall in Illinois history, only surpassed by the historic snowstorm of 1967 and 1999 New Year’s Day blizzard.

Wrigley Field, built in 1914, is the second oldest Major League Baseball Park behind Boston’s Fenway Park. - Lisa White

*Interviewed for this article: Peter Chase, (773) 404-2827*

## 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 Jan. 12.

### LINKIN PARK GRABS THREE TOP SPOTS AT U.S. ARENAS

15,001 or More Seats	10,001-15,000 Seats	5,001-10,000 Seats	5,000 or Less Seats
<p>1) Enrique Iglesias Gross Sales: \$897,644; Venue: Coliseo De Puerto Rico, San Juan; Attendance: 13,320; Ticket Range: \$99-\$15; Promoter: SBS Ent.; Dates: Jan. 29; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p>1) Cirque du Soleil “Dralion” Gross Sales: \$1,039,835; Venue: Sears Centre, Hoffman Estates, Ill.; Attendance: 16,483; Ticket Range: \$100-\$28; Promoter: Cirque du Soleil; Dates: Jan. 26-30; No. of Shows: 8</p>	<p>1) Cirque du Soleil “Alegria” Gross Sales: \$1,154,225; Venue: Budweiser Events Center, Loveland, Colo.; Attendance: 19,042; Ticket Range: \$94-\$28; Promoter: Cirque du Soleil; Dates: Jan. 26-30; No. of Shows: 8</p>	<p>1) The Lion King Gross Sales: \$5,430,383; Venue: Durham (N.C.) Performing Arts Center; Attendance: 81,883; Ticket Range: \$130-\$22; Promoter: Nederlander, PFM; Dates: Jan. 4-30; No. of Shows: 32</p>
<p>2) Linkin Park Gross Sales: \$743,870; Venue: Wells Fargo Center, Philadelphia; Attendance: 12,000; Ticket Range: \$72.50-\$42.50; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: Jan. 31; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p>2) Cirque du Soleil “Dralion” Gross Sales: \$811,855; Venue: The Mitchell Center, Mobile, Ala.; Attendance: 14,177; Ticket Range: \$95-\$24; Promoter: Cirque du</p>	<p>2) Jimmy Buffett Gross Sales: \$477,315; Venue: Hordern Pavilion, Sydney; Attendance: 3,298; Ticket Range: \$176.56-\$120.75; Promoter:</p>	<p>2) Les Miserables Gross Sales: \$1,715,530; Venue: Broward Center For The Perf. Arts, Fort Lauderdale, Fla.; Attendance: 34,627; Ticket Range: \$69-\$25; Promoter: Broadway</p>

**3) Linkin Park**  
Gross Sales: \$711,328;  
Venue: **United Center, Chicago**; Attendance: 11,519; Ticket Range: \$72.50-\$42.50;  
Promoter: Jam Productions; Dates: Jan. 26; No. of Shows: 1

**4) Linkin Park**  
Gross Sales: \$592,629;  
Venue: **Xcel Energy Center, St. Paul, Minn.**; Attendance: 10,001; Ticket Range: \$72.50-\$40.50;  
Promoter: Jam Productions; Dates: Jan. 28; No. of Shows: 1

**5) Monster Jam**  
Gross Sales: \$568,524;  
Venue: **Verizon Center, Washington**; Attendance: 28,282; Ticket Range: \$63-\$10;  
Promoter: Feld Motor Sports; Dates: Jan. 28-29; No. of Shows: 3

Soleil; Dates: Feb. 2-6;  
No. of Shows: 7

**3) Kenny Rogers**  
Gross Sales: \$599,723;  
Venue: **Vector Arena, Auckland, New Zealand**; Attendance: 6,981; Ticket Range: \$115.40-\$72.30;  
Promoter: Bluehawk Presents, Pacific Entertainment; Dates: Jan. 21; No. of Shows: 1

**4) Kid Rock**  
Gross Sales: \$555,034;  
Venue: **Van Andel Arena, Grand Rapids, Mich.**; Attendance: 10,972; Ticket Range: \$89.50-\$49.50;  
Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: Jan. 25; No. of Shows: 1

**5) Brad Paisley**  
Gross Sales: \$530,551;  
Venue: **John Labatt Centre, London, Ontario**; Attendance: 7,957; Ticket Range: \$74.62-\$49.58;  
Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: Jan. 27; No. of Shows: 1

Chugg Entertainment; Dates: Jan. 26; No. of Shows: 1

**3) Cirque du Soleil "Alegria"**  
Gross Sales: \$470,768;  
Venue: **Laredo (Texas) Entertainment Center**; Attendance: 7,165; Ticket Range: \$99-\$28;  
Promoter: Cirque du Soleil; Dates: Feb. 2-6; No. of Shows: 6

**4) Kid Rock**  
Gross Sales: \$386,580;  
Venue: **Huntington Center, Toledo, Ohio**; Attendance: 7,291; Ticket Range: \$89-\$49.50; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: Jan. 26; No. of Shows: 1

**5) Tool**  
Gross Sales: \$354,077;  
Venue: **Neal S. Blaisdell Center, Honolulu**; Attendance: 4,965; Ticket Range: \$79.50-\$59.50; Promoter: AEG Live, Goldenvoice; Dates: Jan. 14; No. of Shows: 1

Across America; Dates: Jan. 18-30; No. of Shows: 16

**3) Supernatural Santana**  
Gross Sales: \$1,393,831;  
Venue: **The Joint, Las Vegas**; Attendance: 14,112; Ticket Range: \$151-\$51; Promoter: AEG Live; Dates: Jan. 5-16; No. of Shows: 7

**4) Blue Man Group**  
Gross Sales: \$1,261,698;  
Venue: **Fox Theatre, Atlanta**; Attendance: 24,742; Ticket Range: \$65-\$20; Promoter: Theater of the Stars; Dates: Jan. 18-23; No. of Shows: 8

**5) West Side Story**  
Gross Sales: \$919,669;  
Venue: **Fox Theatre, Atlanta**; Attendance: 21,766; Ticket Range: \$67-\$18; Promoter: Broadway Across America; Dates: Jan. 25-30; No. of Shows: 8

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

## THE BEAT

### TRAVELOG

#### LEAGUES SHARE CHALLENGES AT SMA CONFAB

The keynote panel at the Stadium Managers Association conference included (from left) Dan Mullin from Major League Baseball, Milt Ahlerich from the National Football League and Bill Hancock from the Bowl Championship Series. (VT Photo)





REPORTING FROM HUNTINGTON BEACH, CALIF. – The three major sports leagues that use America’s stadiums are actively working to improve their images. For the National Football League, that means improving fan behavior, while baseball is working to clean up its clubhouses after nearly a decade of steroid allegations. The Bowl Championship Series, which has relied on a complicated and oft-criticized system for selecting top teams, plans to continue using the system when its agreement with colleges expires next year.

The three leagues laid out their plans to improve their images during the opening keynote panel at the Stadium Managers Association conference at the Hyatt Regency in Huntington Beach, Calif. Milt Ahlerich from the NFL, who plans to retire in 2011 after two decades of service, said that the league has made great gains in its effort to make football more family-friendly with its Fan Code of Conduct initiatives.

“Frankly, it’s a business decision. It’s dollars,” said Ahlerich of the three-year-old program. “The amount of money we charge pushes the envelope, so we’ve got to do as much as we can.”

The Fan Code of Conduct essentially bans bad behavior at football games - fighting, rough-housing in the stands, aggressive shouting, excessive drinking and profanity. Fans who witness or are being disturbed by other people’s bad behavior are encouraged to text message security and report the problem.

To test the effectiveness, the National Football League surveyed fans at every stadium in the country. The result is that the overall opinion of fan conduct has improved from 57 to 75 percent positive.

“And we believe fan conduct is not just in the bowl, but in the parking lot, and it needs to be managed like two events - inside the stadium and outside the stadium,” Ahlerich said. “You’ve got to put energy into the outside because that’s where bad things can happen.”

Ahlerich said his survey found that 82 percent of fans thought behavior in the parking lots had improved, and the perception that the NFL was doing a better job responding to bad behavior had increased from 51 percent to 76 percent.

“We also found that 75 percent of fans said they had the ability to report negative fan behavior,” he said. “Our message to the fans is to take ownership of the problem.”

Ahlerich said the numbers of arrests and ejections have stayed flat, but the number of reported incidents have tripled from 4,000 to 12,000. “We think it’s because we’re getting a security guy down there, dealing with the problem and saying, ‘Mr. Fan, do you want to stay and have a good experience? Then calm down.’”

In baseball, the league is taking a number of steps to clean house. With one third of players being foreign-born, the league has experienced a rash of identity scams with players lying about their age or eligibility. One pitching prospect from the Dominican Republic claimed to be 16 years of age, only to be brought into the league and later discovered to actually be 21 and past his prime. There also have been allegations of players bribing government officials to change identification papers.

“One thing we’re considering is an international player’s draft which would stop some of the signing issues we’ve dealt with and potentially subject all players to the same rules,” said Dan Mullin, senior VP for Major League Baseball. Other rules include mandatory background checks for clubhouse employees, and a new urban youth initiative to reintroduce baseball to inner cities.

Bill Hancock from the BCS said his organization and the 11 participating collegiate conferences he represents are mostly happy with the complex championship selection process they’ve instituted to

determine who gets to play in the big game. The plan will be reviewed and potentially renewed after the 2012 BCS title game.

“Anything that we do that changes things in the future will have to be better than what we have today,” he said. – Dave Brooks

*Interviewed for this article: Milt Ahlerich, (212) 450-2268; Dan Mullin, (212) 931-7889; Bill Hancock, (913) 341-8151*

#### **FACES & PLACES**

#### **CARTMELL AND CARLOTTO MOVING ON; GLOBAL SPECTRUM ELEVATES SEVERAL; CSC REORGANIZES AT THE TOP**

*Damon Zumwalt, CEO, and Mark Glaser, senior VP, operations, for Contemporary Services Corporation check out the latest Venues Today magazine at the Stadium Managers Association conference in Huntington Beach, Calif. (VT Photo)*



Liza Cartmell, group president of Aramark Sports & Entertainment, has resigned. There is no word yet on her future plans, except that she is travelling for the next two weeks. Cartmell started in the business in finance 20 years ago and is among the Aramark managers who have equity in the company. She was honored as a 2010 Venues Today Woman of Influence (Venues Today, July 2010)

Lynn Carlotto, general manager of the Webster Bank Arena at Harbor Yard, Bridgeport, Conn., will be leaving that role with Centerplate when a new deal is struck with the city for the Sound Tiger hockey club to take over venue management. Centerplate will continue its food and beverage deal with the arena.

This is the second arena management contract Centerplate has re-assigned, the first being the Bi-Lo Center, Greenville, S.C. Bob Pascal, Centerplate SVP, marketing, said the deal has been in the works for awhile and is part of a strategic plan to focus on Centerplate's core business of hospitality. Arena management was "somewhat of an orphan business" for Centerplate, Pascal said. The deal must still be approved by the Bridgeport City Council, which will meet on the matter the week of Feb. 21.

Carlotto has worked for four venues, all in the state of Connecticut, over the last 20 years and has spent the last eight and a half years at the Bridgeport arena, which just found a naming rights partner. She said

she will resign as soon as the city approves the new contract.

At Global Spectrum, promotions are resulting in several management shifts. Tim Murphy, currently manager of Wells Fargo Center, Philadelphia, for the firm, has been promoted to regional VP, overseeing several Global Spectrum management contracts.

Matt Homan has been tapped to return to Philadelphia and replace Murphy, which has lead to selection of Chris Connelly, GM of the Roanoke (Va.) Civic Center for Global Spectrum, to move to replace Homan as general manager of the multi-venue Iowa Events Center, Des Moines, Iowa.

Homan and Connelly started out together with Global Spectrum in Philadelphia in the late 90's. Homan said he will work with Connelly through mid-March in Des Moines, then return to Philadelphia to take on his new responsibilities.

Murphy is a 30-year veteran of the industry. Prior to joining Global Spectrum in 2002, Murphy was general manager of both the Philadelphia Kixx (Major Indoor Soccer League) and the Philadelphia Charge (Women's United Soccer Association).

Homan, a 14-year Global Spectrum employee and a second-generation industry executive, began his career at the Spectrum as a part-time box office ticket seller. Homan's father, David, is the Chief Operating Officer of New Era Tickets, a subsidiary of Comcast-Spectacor.

Connelly will now oversee the four-facility Iowa Events Center, including the Wells Fargo Arena, a 17,000-seat multi-purpose arena, the Polk County Convention Complex, Hy-Vee Hall and the Veterans Memorial Auditorium.

His assistant general manager in Roanoke, Robyn Schon, has been promoted to general manager.

At Contemporary Services Corp., Damon Zumwalt has stepped down as president, though he remains CEO, and Jim Granger has been named president. Granger began his career at CSC in 1991 as director of operations for the Los Angeles branch office. His most recent promotion prior to this one was to SVP in 2005. Mark Glaser, who had been VP of Operations and regional manager of the West Coast branch offices, has been promoted to senior vice president of operations.

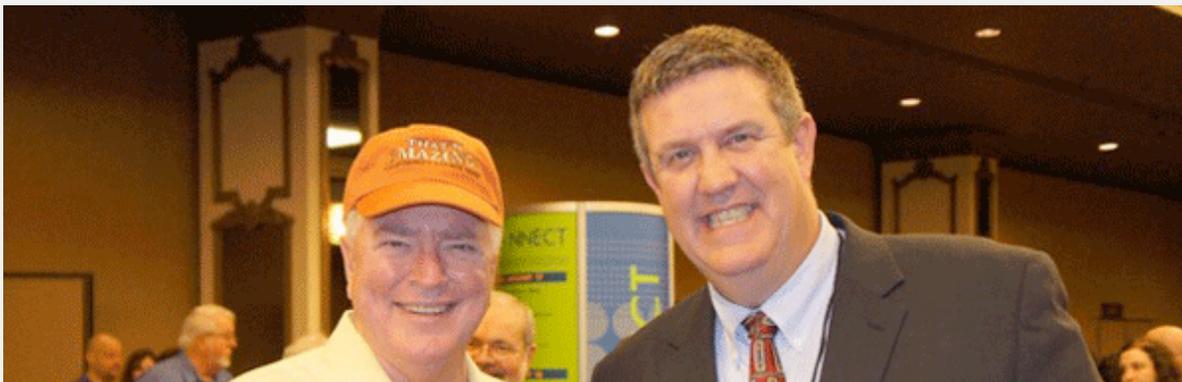
Seen at the Stadium Managers Association conference in Huntington Beach, Calif., this week, Zumwalt was enthusiastic about the promotions, especially because it will free him up to give more time to construction of a \$40 million sports complex at his Woodside Ranch Resort, Mauston, Wis. Improvements will include a 70,000-sq.-ft. indoor sports facility and housing for 1,500, plus several sports fields. Woodside Ranch is also the site of the annual Collegiate Athletic Operations Seminar (CAOS), which will be held June 7-10 this year and is limited to 80-100 applicants. — Linda Deckard

*Interviewed for this article: Bob Pascal, (203) 975-5943; Lynn Carlotta, (203) 345-2301; Matt Homan, (203) 345-2301; Damon Zumwalt, (818) 885-5150*

## **FAIRS & FESTIVALS**

### **WESTERN FAIRS LOOK FOR WAYS TO CONTROL THEIR DESTINIES**

*TV personality Huell Howser is seen here with Steve Chambers, executive director for Western Fairs Association. (VT Photo)*





REPORTING FROM RENO – State budget cuts and privatization were a hot topic in the hallways as marketing and management tactics were detailed during sessions at the Western Fairs Association convention here Jan. 16-19. Despite the economy, the outlook was upbeat and the attendance of 1,133 beat last year's 960 and even 2009's 1,086.

TV's Huell Howser was the keynote speaker and told how he "ate his way around California" visiting 11 fairs for programs called "California's Golden Fairs" to be aired on PBS stations throughout California in the spring. The project was sponsored by WFA and California's Division of Fairs & Expositions.

Howser will visit one more fair, the California State Fair, Sacramento, on opening day, July 14. The series is viewed as an excellent marketing tool for all fairs, particularly California fairs.

Outside the meeting rooms, the discussion about state funding, both from California and from Washington, was top of mind for most fair managers. Both states have declared funding in jeopardy.

The annual trauma has lead managers like Dan Jacobs, Antelope Valley Fair, Lancaster, Calif., to think about different governing mechanisms for fairs. "It's tough being part of the state," he said. "Eighteen months ago, we decided to change the way we do business." To that end, State Senator George Runner introduced legislation to allow the fair to leave the state and become self-governing, leasing its land back from the state.

The goal was to avoid the red tape that comes with being a state agency and to be able to control costs and respond to issues in a timely and businesslike fashion, Jacobs said. The 50th District Agricultural Association would still be a state agency, but a newly formed Joint Powers Authority could operate the fair and fairgrounds for the DAA. That would bring the power to the local level, Jacobs said.

The Antelope Valley Fair moved seven years ago and "the last two years have been a struggle," he said. The fair has a \$5 million operating budget, of which 50 percent is generated during the fair. It has shown a profit of \$200,000 to \$300,000 over the last two years. The state process for hiring, firing and reporting costs the fair an extra 20 percent a year, he said, a lot of that spent on reporting. Becoming a JPA is not so much about generating more income as it is about cutting costs and divorcing the fair from state hiring freezes and laws that do not apply to the day-to-day business model of a viable fair.

Jacobs said the Antelope Valley Fair is in the early stages of its hoped-for change. The Orange County Fair, Costa Mesa, Calif., is in the final stages of its proposed change.

Guy Lemmon attended WFA representing Facilities Management West, the firm which hopes to privatize the Orange County Fair. The issue is still in the courts and could ultimately be vetoed by Gov. Brown, but Lemmon was hopeful his group would succeed in buying the Orange County Fairgrounds. "It's a sensitive process," he said, "but we're here because we think we will be in this business."

FMW also believes that every fair is dependent on every other fair, Lemmon said, and his goal is to learn from and find ways to help the entire fair industry. After all, he said, they will be paying \$250 million over time for the fairgrounds, if the sale goes through. The businessmen behind the deal believe in privatization and see the fairgrounds as missing out on its potential as a low cost alternative for entertainment in Southern California. The facility is underutilized and an entrepreneur could reverse that problem, he said.

Protests from the “Orange County Friends of the Fair” believe privatization would destroy the integrity of the fair and have taken the opinion of the three appellate courts.

The 2012 WFA conference will be held at the Marriott in Anaheim, Calif. — Linda Deckard

*Interviewed for this article: Dan Jacobs, (948) 6060 X101; Guy Lemmon, (949) 644-1860*