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Quote of the Week

"Artists and artist management have to make the decision about Louisiana. This is an incentive we can offer to get them to do that."

— Doug Thornton, Sr. VP, SMG Louisiana, on a tax incentive program to bring tours to his state.

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Greetings,

Welcome to VT Pulse, your weekly guide to the "News Behind the Headlines." Did you enjoy the premiere of Mr. Sunshine on ABC? *Venues Today* caught up with the real Mr. Sunshine, Ernie Hahn, GM for the former San Diego Sports Arena (now the Valley View Casino Center) to get his take on the show. You can listen to audio from the five minute interview on our podcast by clicking [here](#). You can also subscribe to the podcast, and have all future episodes downloaded to your computer or mobile device at the [iTunes store](#). It's free and you'll never miss a show.



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SHORT TAKES

>> **BONNAROO
HEADLINERS ANNOUNCED**
– Eminem, Arcade Fire,
Widespread Panic, Black
Keys and a
reunitedBuffalo
Springfield will headline
this year's festival, June
9-13 in Manchester,
Tenn. Tickets go on sale
Feb. 19.

Contact: Britney
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VT NEWS

BOOKINGS

NOVATOUR OFFERING MONEY BACK TO TOURING ARTISTS WITH 'LOUISIANA SPEND'

The Superdome, New Orleans



If all goes well and the message is clear enough, Louisiana hopes to be launch site for multiple concert tours and rehearsals over the next few years, just as it has captured a big share of the filming industry through tax incentives. Doug Thornton, Sr. VP, SMG Louisiana, and Will French, president, Film Production Capital, were in Los Angeles last week promoting the new joint

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venture, Novatour, and advising promoters, agents and managers that Louisiana is prepared to return or advance money to companies that originate or rehearse upcoming tours in that state.

They called their L.A. reception “Only in Louisiana,” and Thornton said the reaction was disbelief, followed by excitement, when they explained the concept, which is a complicated formula of tax credits for spending money with Louisiana businesses. Novatour’s job is to monitor and monetize the eligible tax credits.

Louisiana has been doing this with the film industry for seven years and has now leveled off at about \$1 billion in film production business annually, French said. His firm, Film Production Capital, started handling tax credit incentives for film in 2003-04 and did \$200 million worth of tax incentive financing or brokering last year, and not just in Louisiana. “We’ve done deals in 10 different states for 90 different film and television productions with aggregate budgets of about \$1 billion,” French said.

Louisiana was one of the first states to enact a tax incentive for the motion picture industry in 2002, French explained. It was modeled after the Canadian tax incentives to lure the U.S. film industry.

Filming in Louisiana started skyrocketing in 2003, from maybe \$20 million in business in year one to \$180 million the next year and double that the next, he recalled.

Today, there are 43 U.S. jurisdictions that offer tax incentives to the film industry, 41 states, D.C and Puerto Rico, French continued. “You have seen about a 40 percent decline in the California film industry in the last five years.” Of the 43, however, only five are top tier. To be effective, the program requires an enabler.

With today’s technology, it’s no longer necessary for filming to take place in Hollywood and Novatour is betting the same is true of live entertainment rehearsals and tour kickoffs. Louisiana has taken tax incentives to the whole entertainment industry, including concert touring, video game development, and interactive web site content for sound recording, French said. “It’s a holistic approach in Louisiana to grow the entertainment industry. Tourism is a big part of Louisiana, and entertainment supports that industry.”

The legislation allowing this kind of tax credit funding has been in place for 18 months, but it took the right confluence of players to launch the initiative - meaning SMG and Film Production Capital – and it will take a few successful tours to get the ball truly rolling. “No one knew how to monetize it,” Thornton said.

In simple terms, Louisiana offers tax credits as an incentive to people in the entertainment business to bring their business to the state. Those tax credits go to a company that has a tax liability in the state already, which would be Novatour, and Novatour in turn monetizes those credits, returning those monies to the promoters or artists who participate in the qualifying “Louisiana spend,” Thornton explained.

It’s tax incentive-based financing to bring business to Louisiana firms and jobs to Louisiana residents. The expenditures have to meet certain qualifying

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

**GetTix.Net, Ariz. - Sales
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**Wroclaw Stadium,
Poland- Director of
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**BI-LO Center, S.C. -
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rules, Thornton said, and the return varies from 15-30 percent of the cost. It depends on the type of service bought and the amount spent in total and would not make sense for very small productions. But for the big tours, there's an even bigger payoff, another 10 percent available for transportation buys, for instance.

Thornton did not know the threshold exactly, but certainly at a million dollars or more, it starts to get attractive because there is potential for a fairly significant tax credit. A rehearsal can cost as much as \$3.5 million for two or three weeks, including all the expenses - catering, bus transportation, trucking for the gear, sound and light rental, building rental, Thornton added. Not all costs will be eligible.

French said that roughly 50 percent to maybe 75 percent of out-of-pocket tour costs could be offset with even the fairly immature system available in the state. "It doesn't just apply to spending in Louisiana, but also expenditures throughout the duration of the tour as long as you use Louisiana vendors."

Novatour's strategy differs from the groundwork laid by Film Production Capital in that the longrange plan is to provide ancillary services, not just a financing mechanism, through Novatour. Stage one is to book the band; stage two is to find strategic partners to service the client, from busing and trucking to sound and light to staging. Most of those services are provided to the concert industry by national companies, but French is betting those national entities might look at opening an office in Louisiana to join in an entertainment industry boom.

"Those are the deals we're working on," French said. "If there is a bus company that wants to get an edge up on their competition, we're a good way to do it because if they are working with us and we're their strategic partner, then they will be 25 percent cheaper than their competitors. That's how this is going to grow into an industry in and of itself. Anyone in the music industry that services concert tours, if they are based in Louisiana or have a Louisiana connection will, all of a sudden, be less expensive than their competition. I think we'll see an influx of those services, just as we have on the film side with camera, lighting, truck, and post production service companies."

For SMG, the immediate qualifying service is rental of venues they manage in the state, which include Louisiana Superdome, New Orleans Arena and Champions Square in New Orleans; Baton Rouge River Center Arena, Theater and Exhibit Hall; CenturyTel Arena, Bossier City; Pontchartrain Exhibit Hall, Kenner; and Shreveport Convention Center and Municipal Auditorium. Excepting New Orleans, there is plenty of availability and Thornton is also looking at all venues in the state, not just SMG-managed facilities.

Qualifying tours have to have 12 locked dates and either rehearse or originate the tour in Louisiana, or both. "If you're willing to do that and you're going to spend a significant amount of money, what we can do is go through the budget numbers on the front end before the tour starts and we'll give a funding commitment," said French, who is also president of Novatour.

"Artists and artist management have to make the decision about Louisiana," Thornton said. "This is an incentive we can offer to get them to do that. And it's not limited to arena shows. It could be club and theater acts. If you can aggregate expenses over a period of time, you might have potential."

"We'll have a commitment within a month. We're working on four different shows that could rehearse or rehearse and start tours in Louisiana," Thornton added. "We just announced this last Thursday."

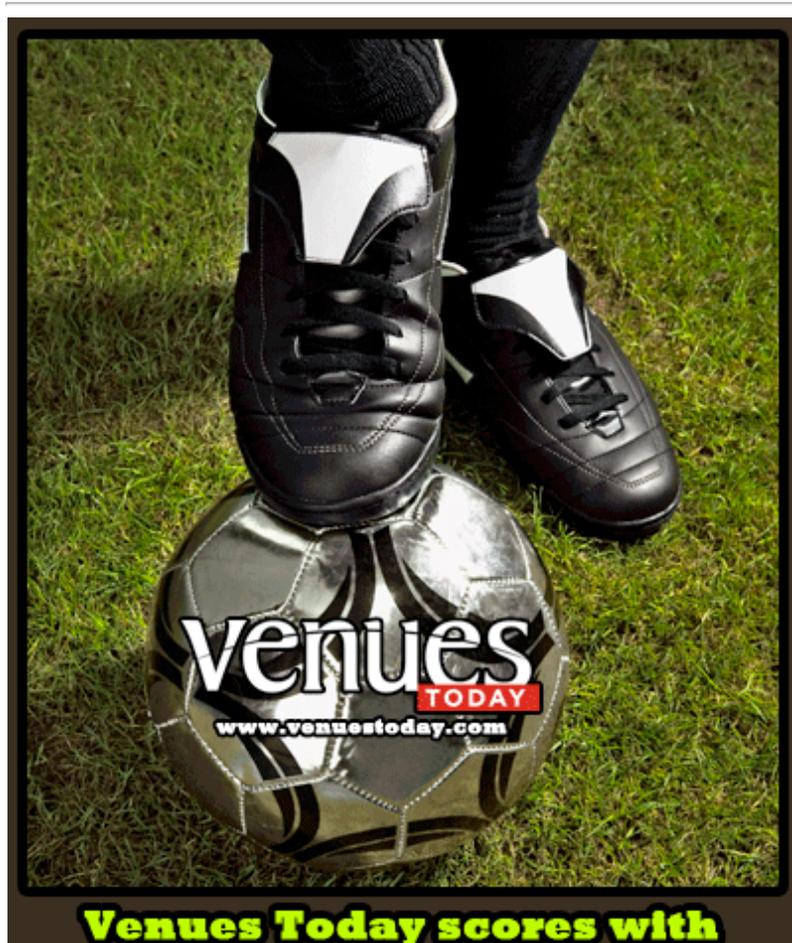
French recalled talking to film producers at the Cannes Film Festival in 2004. “All they said is, ‘Why would we shoot in Louisiana?’ and ‘What the heck is a tax credit?’ It takes time to catch on. But once the big acts, like the big studios, start to use it, it catches on like wildfire. Seven years into the Louisiana program, I’d say there is not one production that takes place in the U.S. these days that does not include tax credits to offset some portion of the budget. For the tour industry, I think it will go faster because you have the film industry track record.”

The Louisiana Department of Economic Development tax incentive offer is open to anyone, of course. “You don’t have to use Novatour, Film Production Capital or SMG, but to be able to monetize and commit to monetize the tax credit, we have the expertise and the tax liability ourselves. We also have the ancillary lines of business,” French said.

“We feel we missed out on the opportunity on the film side by not buying the trucks, buses and equipment. We want to have a more holistic approach with the concert tour business. In time, we will either align strategically with existing businesses and bring them to Louisiana or start those businesses ourselves.”

“We’re just trying to make something happen that is positive for our buildings and for SMG and figure out a way to leverage these credits to benefit the artist and the building,” Thornton added. — Linda Deckard

Interviewed for this story: Doug Thornton, (504) 587-3827; Will French, (504) 527-6250



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CONSTRUCTION

ST. PETE TIMES FORUM GETS A MAKEOVER

Rendering of renovations planned for St. Pete Times Forum.



Tampa Bay (Fla.) Lightning owner Jeff Vinik will fund a \$35 million renovation of the St. Pete Times Forum, in a continuing effort to transform the National Hockey League team's brand and business.

The capital expenditures plan aimed at modernizing the 21,500-seat venue will take 12 months to complete. The venue will remain in operation during the renovations, and the new design will be unveiled in October, when the Lightning's season begins.

"Jeff Vinik, our new team owner since March 2010, wanted a new vision and brand to make the Lightning a successful organization. It's not just about the hockey team, but the building, too," said Elmer Straub, the Forum's vice president of event booking.

The Forum, owned by Hillsborough County, is managed and operated by Vinik's company, Tampa Bay Sports and Entertainment. Originally opened in 1996, the venue also is home to the Tampa Bay Storm arena football team.

"The venue's concert and event business is a big part of the overall picture, so the project addresses improvements from both the hockey and event side," Straub said. "Improved aesthetics and functionality are the goals."

As part of the renovation, a grand entry will be added on the west side of the Forum. This will include a redesigned ticket office and merchandise shop, in addition to a better connection to the main concourse. More digital signage also will be included in the redesign.

New seats will be added during the renovation, along with an 11,000-sq.-ft. outdoor deck extending from the west side of the arena's Terrace Level overlooking downtown Tampa.

"The party deck overlooks the west plaza and will be a destination and gathering area," said Jessica Eckley, the Forum's marketing coordinator.

Eight suites will be removed on the Plaza level, which will open up the arena

bowl to the main concourse. The remaining seats will receive an overhaul, as well.

The new concourse’s design will provide a view of the arena. “By taking away suites and opening the concourse, fans will be able to view the bowl from this area, which will be great from a concert standpoint,” Eckley said.

Two Terrace level seating sections totaling approximately 550 seats will be removed to create space for a performance stage and pipe organ.

“Most arenas are indistinguishable,” Straub said. “Our goal is to incorporate a little bit of Tampa into the design and renovation. We want the arena to reflect the community, culture and history of the area.”

To accomplish this, Tampa museum curators are involved with the project to help incorporate historical aspects of the city into the design.

“Our city has a strong Hispanic background and is known for its cigar factories that founded our communities,” Eckley said. “We also will include design aspects related to our location on the Gulf.”

The renovation will provide a new Chairman’s Club; an enhanced Lightning team locker room; new concourse flooring and concession stands; and substantial improvements to the HVAC system.

Managing the Forum renovations will be architect Ray Chandler, who has been involved in several other stadium and arena projects, including Denver’s Coors Field and St. Paul’s Xcel Energy Center. Architects Tom Proebstle and Mike Kress of Kansas City, Mo.-based Generator Studio and the design firm of Kiku Obata & Co. in St. Louis are part of the design team. Minneapolis-based Mortenson Construction will serve as the construction manager, working with a number of local subcontractors and laborers on the project.

“This is a huge undertaking, since it involves several areas, including suites, concourses and signage. There is a hefty improvement schedule to get the renovations done in a short amount of time,” Straub said. “We are currently organizing the timeline with the architects and deciding which project comes first based on the venue’s existing schedule. I think we will hit our goals.” – Lisa White

Interviewed for this article: Jessica Eckley, (813) 301-6500; Elmer Straub, (813) 301-6500

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. 26.

LINKIN PARK CONTINUES 3-PEAT WITH SELLOUTS IN THE EAST

15,001 or More Seats	10,001-15,000 Seats	5,001-10,000 Seats	5,000 or Less Seats
<p>1) Cirque du Soleil “Dralion” Gross Sales: \$1,180,865; Venue: Value City Arena at the Jerome Schottenstein Center, Columbus, Ohio; Attendance: 18,338;</p>	<p>1) El Caballo Blanco Gross Sales: \$763,276; Venue: Vector Arena, Auckland, Australia; Attendance: 9,836; Ticket Range: \$122.61-\$45.22; Promoter: Hercules Entertainment Pty Ltd.; Dates: Feb. 5;</p>	<p>1) Cirque du Soleil “Alegria” Gross Sales: \$1,056,610; Venue: State Farm Arena, Hidalgo, Texas; Attendance: 15,462; Ticket Range: \$99-\$32; Promoter: Cirque du Soleil; Dates: Feb. 9-</p>	<p>1) Cher Gross Sales: \$9,379,654; Venue: The Colosseum at Caesars Palace, Las Vegas; Attendance: 63,278; Ticket Range: \$250-\$95; Promoter: AEG Live, Concerts West; Dates: Jan. 11-</p>

<p>Ticket Range: \$100-\$28; Promoter: Cirque du Soleil; Dates: Feb. 9-13; No. of Shows: 8</p> <p>2) Linkin Park Gross Sales: \$871,110; Venue: Air Canada Centre, Toronto; Attendance: 12,836; Ticket Range: \$74.30-\$43.97; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: Feb. 8; No. of Shows: 1</p> <p>3) Linkin Park Gross Sales: \$837,497; Venue: Bell Centre, Montreal; Attendance: 12,677; Ticket Range: \$74.30-\$43.97; Promoter: evenko; Dates: Feb. 7; No. of Shows: 1</p> <p>4) Linkin Park Gross Sales: \$812,120; Venue: Madison Square Garden Arena, New York; Attendance: 15,170; Ticket Range: \$70-\$40; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: Feb. 4; No. of Shows: 1</p> <p>5) Maroon 5 Gross Sales: \$471,532; Venue: Coliseo De Puerto Rico, San Juan; Attendance: 5,964; Ticket Range: \$90-\$60; Promoter: Jose Dueno Concerts; Dates: Jan. 30; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p>No. of Shows: 2</p> <p>2) Joe Cocker Gross Sales: \$369,417; Venue: Vector Arena, Auckland, Australia; Attendance: 4,922; Ticket Range: \$94.32-\$55.67; Promoter: Michael Coppel Presents; Dates: Jan. 27; No. of Shows: 1</p> <p>3) Kid Rock Gross Sales: \$321,582; Venue: Intrust Bank Arena, Wichita, Kan.; Attendance: 6,972; Ticket Range: \$87.50-\$23; Promoter: DCF Concerts, Inc., Jam Productions, Mammoth, Outback Concerts; Dates: Feb. 1; No. of Shows: 1</p> <p>4) Avenged Sevenfold Gross Sales: \$199,642; Venue: i wireless Center, Moline, Ill.; Attendance: 5,886; Ticket Range: \$37.25-\$22.50; Promoter: Frank Productions, Knitting Factory Entertainment; Dates: Feb. 2; No. of Shows: 1</p> <p>5) 6th Annual St. Louis Blues Festival Gross Sales: \$179,201; Venue: The Chaifetz Arena, St. Louis; Attendance: 3,523; Ticket Range: \$59.50-\$49.50; Promoter: Spirit of Excellence Church of God in Christ; Dates: Feb. 12; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p>13; No. of Shows: 7</p> <p>2) Heart Gross Sales: \$264,661; Venue: K-Rock Centre, Kingston, Ontario; Attendance: 3,931; Ticket Range: \$70.24-\$50.54; Promoter: Paul Mercs Concerts, PMC Entertainment; Dates: Feb. 12; No. of Shows: 1</p> <p>3) JAMZ Youth Cheerleading Gross Sales: \$245,591; Venue: Orleans Arena, Las Vegas; Attendance: 15,992; Ticket Range: \$25.25-\$15.25; Promoter: JAMZ Cheer and Dance; Dates: Jan. 27-31; No. of Shows: 5</p> <p>4) Celtic Woman Gross Sales: \$137,639; Venue: The Lakeland (Fl.) Center; Attendance: 2,997; Ticket Range: \$56-\$38; Promoter: Madstone Productions; Dates: Feb. 4; No. of Shows: 1</p> <p>5) Thomas and Friends Live! "Thomas Saves The Day" Gross Sales: \$137,209; Venue: Constant Convocation Center, Norfolk, Va.; Attendance: 5,380; Ticket Range: \$37-\$14; Promoter: AEG ThemeSTAR; Dates: Feb. 5-6; No. of Shows: 4</p>	<p>23, Jan. 25-Feb. 5; No. of Shows: 16</p> <p>2) Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater Gross Sales: \$907,782; Venue: Fox Theatre, Atlanta; Attendance: 25,723; Ticket Range: \$60-\$10; Promoter: Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater; Dates: Feb. 10-13; No. of Shows: 7</p> <p>3) Shrek The Musical Gross Sales: \$682,392; Venue: Wharton Center For Performing Arts, East Lansing, Mich.; Attendance: 12,517; Ticket Range: \$67.50-\$32.50; Promoter: In-house; Dates: Feb. 8-13; No. of Shows: 8</p> <p>4) The Color Purple Gross Sales: \$377,901; Venue: Landmark Theater, Richmond, Va.; Attendance: 6,822; Ticket Range: \$65-\$35; Promoter: Jam Theatricals; Dates: Jan. 28-30; No. of Shows: 5</p> <p>5) The Sleeping Beauty Gross Sales: \$353,051; Venue: Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre, Atlanta; Attendance: 7,104; Ticket Range: \$120-\$20; Promoter: Atlanta Ballet; Dates: Feb. 11-13; No. of Shows: 4</p>
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Compiled by Josh Huckabee. To submit reports, e-mail HotTickets@venuestoday.com or fax to (714) 378-0040.

THE BEAT

TRAVELOG

BOLD IDEAS POWER THIS YEAR'S PACNET

REPORTING FROM NEWPORT BEACH, CALIF. — Over 400 attendees gathered at the Marriott in Newport Beach for PACnet, the annual user conference for ticketing firm Paciolan.

It's been a little over one year since Paciolan was purchased by Comcast-Spectacor, part of a Department of Justice agreement to allow the merger of Ticketmaster and Live Nation. Since leaving the Ticketmaster umbrella, the firm has re-signed over 20 clients and signed new contracts with the Long Center for the Performing Arts in Austin, Texas and the Smith Center for the Performing Arts in Las Vegas.

During his keynote address, CEO Dave Butler said the company was expanding its technology offerings, from an advanced CRM program, to a new mobile app for online ticket sales. The company has also announced partnerships with firms like Buddy Media to facilitate ticket purchases within Facebook, as well as integrations with dynamic ticketing companies like Qcue and Digonex.

But increasing revenues doesn't always require a third-party partner. During the conference's Industry Vision Panel on Monday, Paciolan clients shared their success stories of how they increased revenue through innovation and out-of-the-box thinking.

For Jim Donovan, director of Athletics at the University of Hawaii, the idea came when he was visiting a fish market in Sydney, Australia. Donovan had been wrestling with how to price his stadium's 1,825 parking spots for home games to the nearly 8,000 ticket buyers who had regularly inquired about buying spaces.

"Every year we would throw a dart at a board and try to figure out the prices," he said. But when he traveled to the fish market, he watched as fish sellers offered their top cuts of fish first, priced as high as people would pay, and then dropped the prices as demand and quality ebbed downward.

It wasn't long before Donovan cut a deal with PayPal and set up a reverse auction of his 1,825 parking spaces. On a weekday at 8 a.m., all parking spots were made available for sale at \$900 per space, with the best spots going to the initial buyers. Each following day, the price on left over spots dropped \$25. He estimates that 40-percent of the spots were gobbled up in the first day.

"And we incrementally increased our revenue from \$300,000 annually to \$500,000. The customers determined the price when they wanted to opt in and purchase," he said. "There were a lot of people who said they didn't want to worry about the stress of not being able to get the parking stall they wanted."

For Brian Sayre at PlayhouseSquare in Cleveland, the focus was bringing back existing customers.

"We were very challenged to renew first year subscribers. Many would simply buy up a season because they wanted to see a hit show and then not renew," Sayre said.

The PlayhouseSquare team decided to dig deep into their data and separate their subscribers into 11 different buyer segments. From there it began targeting messages to different segments, crafting different sales pitches and different messaging for each group.

"We saw a renewal rate of 82 percent after the campaign, which was a 12 percent boost over last year," he said. "And our first time subscribers saw a rise in sales of eight percent. We didn't have a blockbuster this season, and we attribute the bump to analyzing and understanding who our guests are."

Chris Plonsky from the University of Texas, Austin, said her school is now focused on its blockbuster media rights deal with ESPN, inked in January. Under the deal, ESPN will pay the school \$300 million over 20 years to distribute its television and online rights throughout North America.

"We actually sort of forced the change on our own employees," she said, adding that staff that wanted to stay in traditional athletic department roles "are now writing articles, doing videos, creating podcasts and writing for different mediums and media. They're feeding our website and they're going to be helping establish a different network that won't just be a sports network, but a campus wide network. We've got to give people the opportunity to change for the collaborative good." – Dave Brooks

Interviewed for this article: Jim Donovan, (808) 956-7301; Brian Sayre, (216) 348-5310; Chris Plonsky, (512) 471-1444

DEALS **VENUWORKS LANDS NEW EVANSVILLE ARENA**

Rendering for VenuWorks-managed arena in Evansville, Ind.



A new arena slated to open in Evansville, Ind., will be managed by VenuWorks after the Evansville Redevelopment Commission voted unanimously Tuesday to direct Arena Project Director John J. Kish to begin negotiations.

VenuWorks CEO Steve Peters said he hopes to sign a naming rights contract for the 11,000-seat arena before it opens its doors in November — there are two local partners in the works. And while the financial terms of the city-owned facility are still being negotiated, the deal is good for five years and covers management, booking and concessions.

The RFP was put out on the building last fall and the VenuWorks team was interviewed on Jan. 6. The firm's main competition was SMG, which currently manages the 12,500-seat Roberts Stadium, which the new arena will replace.

"We're going to be sending people down there constantly to ramp up," Peters said, adding, "there's a lot of work to be done. Typically we like to have a year to negotiate these types of deals, but now we have about eight months to get this building open."

The architect for the arena is Populous and the general contractor is Hunt Construction. The arena will have three main tenants — the University of Evansville men's and women's basketball teams, and the IceMen of the Central Hockey League.

The city's redevelopment commission will oversee the VenuWorks contract. Beyond booking the center's opening events, the VenuWorks team will sell the facility's 18 suites and club rooms, and sell ad inventory on its concourse level.

The new arena is neighbors to The Centre for Vanderburgh County, which includes a convention center and 2,500-seat theater, and is managed by SMG through 2015. SMG Evansville also manages Mesker Amphitheater there. — Dave Brooks

Interviewed for this article: Steve Peters, (515) 231-1249

NAMING RIGHTS REPORT



Alaska Airlines Arena at Hec Edmundson Pavilion, University of Washington, Seattle

Date Announced: Jan. 20

Buyer: Alaska Airlines

Owner/Tenant: University of Washington/Husky basketball

Terms: \$400,000 annually over five years, with a renewal option, plus benefits.

Brokered: Locally

Comments: Alaska Airlines has signed a five-year

naming rights deal with University of Washington for the former Bank of America Arena at Hec Edmundson Pavilion.

The airline will pay \$400,000 annually for each of the five years, plus give the university \$25,000 in travel trade to be used for official athletic department travel, 20 MVP Gold memberships for the university's head coaches, valued at \$5,000 each, and \$175,000 in sponsorship opportunities that includes print, radio, digital media and hospitality, according to O.D. Vincent, senior associate athletic director.

The deal was brokered internally.

“We have donors with great business contacts, and we started with Bill Ayer [CEO] and Bradley Tilden [president],” Vincent said. “We met in November, and it happened quickly.”

Vincent called the deal as much about emotion for the university as it was about return on investment. “The company has 3,000 employees in the Seattle area.

Activation includes three signs on the building, and the airline's logo on the court. They will also have first right of refusal on naming rights for the football field, which is about to start construction.

Contact: O.D. Vincent, (206) 543-2246

Whitaker Bank Ballpark, Lexington, Ky.

Date Announced: Jan. 21

Buyer: Whitaker Bank

Owner/Tenant: Lexington Professional Baseball Company, LLC/Lexington Legends

Brokered: Locally

Terms: 10 years, with a 5-year option, financials not disclosed

Comments: Whitaker Bank, the 11th largest bank in Kentucky, has purchased naming rights for the former Applebee's Park in Lexington.

“It is a 10-year deal, with a contingency that could raise it to 15 years,” said Jake Thayer, corporate account executive for the Lexington Legends. “They also have first right of refusal.”

Thayer said the deal includes a luxury suite and a group of season tickets in the club area, which the bank will use for employees and clients. Bank employees will also be able to purchase tickets at the group rate.

A new Whitaker branded LED sign has been installed outside the ballpark, and signage on the interstate, on way-finding signs on city streets, and in the ballpark has been changed over.

After each home win, the team will hang a Whitaker “W” logo flag on the outside wall, Thayer said.

The bank has 3.73 percent of the Lexington market share. According to Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. Statewide, they are the 11th largest bank in Kentucky, with a 1.86 percent market share, and 56 locations in 17 counties.

Thayer said the deal was brokered internally. Whitaker was the second name on a short list of prospects after Applebee's opted not to renew their deal with the team.

Contact: Jake Thayer, (859) 422-7888

Northeast Delta Dental Stadium, Manchester, N.H.

Date Announced: Jan. 31

Buyer: Northeast Delta Dental

Owner/Tenant: New Hampshire Fisher Cats, Double-A Eastern League affiliate of the Toronto Blue Jays

Brokered: Locally

Terms: 10 years, with a 5-year option, financials not disclosed

Comments: Longtime sponsor Northeast Delta Dental has purchased naming rights for the former Merchantsauto.com Stadium, home of the New Hampshire Fisher Cats.

The deal includes a luxury suite, a large sign on the highway outside the stadium, and interior and exterior signage on the stadium, on the field, and on the outfield sign, said Rick Brenner, team president.

“They are a phenomenal company, and it is great to do good things with good people,” Brenner said. “We share a vision for Manchester, New Hampshire and Northern Massachusetts.”

The deal was brokered internally.

“I called and said let's have a chat,” Brenner said. “The opportunity came up and it seemed like the logical next step.”

The former naming rights sponsors, the Singer family, owners of Merchants Auto, attended the press conference and will remain involved with the team on a smaller scale, Brenner said.

Contact: Rick Brenner, (603) 641-2005

Segerstrom Center for the Arts, Costa Mesta, Calif.

Date Announced: Jan. 11

Named For: The Segerstrom family, major donors

Owner/Tenant: Orange County Performing Arts Center

Terms: Permanent

Comments: As it begins its 25th anniversary celebration, the former Orange County Performing Arts Center has changed its name to honor long-time donors instrumental to its founding – the Segerstrom family. The complex's new name is Segerstrom Center for the Arts.

The family donated land and \$6 million for the original performing arts center, which opened in 1986. In 1998, they donated adjacent land for the center to expand to include South Coast Repertory and a new concert hall. In 2000, Henry Segerstrom and his wife, Elizabeth, donated \$40 million toward the construction of the concert hall, and an additional \$10 million when the facility opened in 2006.

As part of the 25th anniversary celebration, the center is launching an “access for all” initiative, selling 10,000 tickets throughout the season for \$10. They are also commissioning a new dance work to be

choreographed for Bolshoi Ballet stars Natalia Osipova and Ivan Vasiliev.

Contact: *Tim Dunn and Terry Dwyer, (714) 556-2122*

– Liz Boardman
