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2011 Fairs & Festivals Resource Guide  
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# VT PULSE

A WEEKLY PUBLICATION FROM VENUES TODAY

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## Quote of the Week

*"I'm confident that there was no failure of equipment and there has to be another explanation."*

— Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo COO Leroy Shafer on the investigation into a roller coaster accident that left one man dead.

## In this Issue

### THE NEWS

[Roller Coaster Accident](#)  
[Mars Almost 'Perfect'](#)  
[Livestock Show](#)

[Digitour Aims To Capitalize on YouTube](#)  
[Star Power](#)

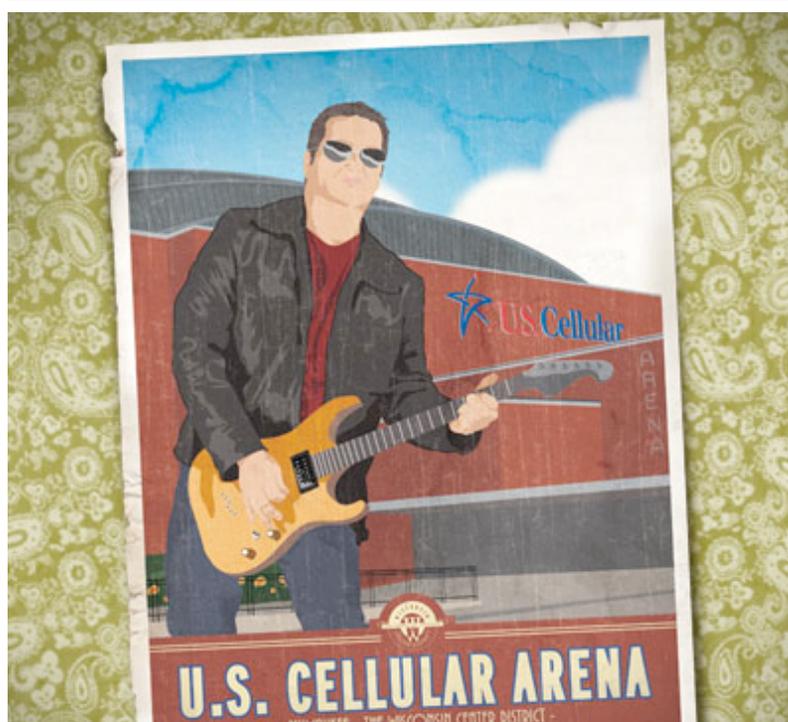
[Wells Fargo Center Breaks Record with NCAA Wrestling Meet](#)

### HOT TICKETS

[Houston Livestock Show Enjoys Another Record Run](#)

## Greetings,

Welcome to VT Pulse, your weekly guide to the "News Behind the Headlines." There will be no VT Pulse next week. Check your inbox on April 6 for the next issue of VT Pulse. In the meantime, stay up to date through our [Facebook page](#). [Sign in, become a fan and help us reach 1,000 followers.](#)



## THE BEAT

[Global Spectrum Europe Consulting on Planned Arena for France](#)

[Zelisko Latest Executive Departure From Live Nation; VenuWorks Shifts Executives To Accommodate Evansville](#)

[Convention Center Legend Jimmie D. Fore Passes Away](#)

## DEPARTMENTS

[Short Takes](#)

[HELP WANTED](#)

[CONTACT VT PULSE](#)

## SHORT TAKES

>> **PACIOLAN ANNOUNCES FREE WEBINAR** – Ticketing company Paciolan is offering a free webinar on April 5 at 10 a.m. PST titled "Selling More During the Customer Lifecycle." The webinar includes Matt Kautz of Paciolan, Deborah Klime from the John Labatt Center in London, Ontario, and Mark DiMaurizio from Comcast Spectacor. [Register by clicking here.](#)

>> **PERRY STEPPING DOWN** – Marshall Perry is resigning his post as manager of the Salina (Kan.) Bicentennial Center, effective March 31. Perry has been the manager of the facility since December of 2008, when he replaced Keith Rawlings.  
*Contact: Marshall Perry, (785) 826-7200*

## VT NEWS

### FAIRS & FESTIVALS

#### ROLLER COASTER ACCIDENT MARS ALMOST 'PERFECT' LIVESTOCK SHOW

*A man fell out of the Hi-Miler roller coaster during the 2011 Houston Rodeo & Livestock and died.*



Once again, the Houston Rodeo & Livestock Show ended on a record-breaking run, with 2,262,834 in attendance. 2011 marked a five percent increase over 2010, the reigning record year for the event that ran March 1-20 in 2011.

Paid attendance for the rodeo and concert series was 1,225,323, down about three percent over 2010. The ticket gross for the rodeo was \$36,773,095, up nearly \$5 million over the previous year following a 19 percent spike in ticket prices.

"Early indicators showed it was going to be good. We were just hoping for good weather, and boy did we get it," said Leroy Shafer, chief operating officer for the event. "During our 23-day run, we only had a half-day of rain and that was in the morning, otherwise we enjoyed warmer than normal temperatures. It was just a perfect year."

Well, almost perfect. On the last day of the show, Sunday, a 47-year-old man fell out of his car while riding the Hi-Miler rollercoaster, dropping 28 feet to the pavement. He did not survive the fall.

>> **KEY ARENA PARTNERS WITH IVAR'S** – Seattle's Key Arena has launched three new food concepts through Ivar's Sports and Entertainment division: an Ivar's Seafood Bar, Kidd Valley and two Big Foot Hot Dog Stands. The deal marks the fifth sports facility location for the Seattle based restaurant chain. *Contact: Stevi Boskovich, (206) 428-6305*

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"We have still not determined how this man fell out of the ride," Shafer said, adding that the man, identified as Houston resident Brian Greenhouse, landed on a passerby, severely straining the passerby's ankle.

Since the accident, three independent ride inspectors have looked at the ride, "and they have not seen any malfunction," he said. Houston PD is conducting a homicide investigation, and the coroner's department has begun to conduct an autopsy.

Shafer said the accident has been a real mystery - when the coaster returned, the restraining bar and lap band were still in place. He said the ride was tested with sand bags, and an accelerometer was used to measure gravitational force. Shafer said he pulled, pushed and prodded the safety restraints and wasn't able to make them fail.

"I'm confident that there was no failure of equipment and there has to be another explanation," he said.

Ray Cammack Shows, which operated the 65-ride midway at the fair, first purchased the Hi-Miler Rollercoaster in 1980. Schafer said the death was the first casualty for the carnival operator, who celebrates 50 years of operation in 2011.

The accident marred what was otherwise a spectacular run for the fair. Shafer said that nearly every revenue stream at the fair was up in 2011. The fair's 12 key revenue categories brought in \$84 million in 2011, an increase of 18 percent over 2010.

"We also had \$12 million in sponsorships and \$2 million in corporate contributions, putting us on track to have our first \$100 million year," Shafer said.

Each year, the event kicks off with a three-day World's Championship BBQ contest, and attendance for that event was up 25 percent to 244,184. The Ray Cammack Shows carnival, which sold \$4 million in presale tickets this year, was up 36.4 percent over last year. Carnival food sales were up 36 percent, he said, and grounds-only ticket sales broke a new record, bringing in \$2.9 million.

Shafer also said in-suite alcohol sales were up 30.9 percent, while sales in the Wine Garden exploded, growing 78.9 percent. The rodeo's livestock auction was up 19.6 percent, bringing in \$9.5 million

Shafer said the operational budget for this year's show was about \$62 million, not including the \$7.5 million in repayments made to the agricultural students who raised and auctioned off their livestock. Another \$14-\$16 million is given out in scholarships, while the rest of the money is placed into reserves or used to pay off the event's \$72 million in bond obligations for its portion of Reliant Stadium financing.

The entertainment budget for the show is \$8.3 million, with the March 19 Brad Paisley concert marking the third strongest performance on record with 73,825 tickets sold. Other standouts included 73,811 for Miranda Lambert, 72,709 for Selena Gomez and 72,384 for KISS.

In terms of marketing, "we have been moving rapidly to get on the leading edge of social media, electronic advertising and broadband distribution," Shafer said, shifting 35 percent of the \$6.6 million advertising budget to social media.

Besides the year round RodeoHoustonRadio.com Internet radio station the

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event runs, the rodeo has launched an extensive text message and Facebook campaign. Shafer said the Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo has a database with 65,000 email addresses, 100,000 phone numbers and 100,000 friends on Facebook.

For the first time in 2011, the Houston Rodeo & Livestock show launched a mobile phone app for iPhone OS and Droid, that featured a full calendar of entertainment, plus GPS devices to help find friends or parked vehicles.

Gate admission for the grounds was \$7 for adults and \$5 for kids, "and those prices haven't gone up in 10 years," Shafer said. For the first time in nine years, rodeo ticket prices were up an average 19 percent - 21,000 field seats went from \$21 to \$25, while 18,000 upper bowl seats rose from \$16 to \$18. The venues 13,000 club seats increased from \$28 to \$37, while suite seats rose from \$45 to \$65.

The 2012 show will run Feb. 28 - March 18 – Dave Brooks

*Interviewed for this article: Leroy Shafer, (832) 667-1000*



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## BOOKINGS

### DIGITOUR AIMS TO CAPITALIZE ON YOUTUBE STAR POWER

*YouTube phenom Dave Days is headlining the inaugural Digitour 2011 of online stars.*



You loved them on YouTube, but will you pay money to see them on stage? That's the question facing talent giant ICM on the eve of launching "Digitour 2011." The unique live stage show will debut at the El Rey Theater in Los Angeles on April 12 with a lineup that highlights a who's who of viral video stars, with more than one billion views and six million combined friends among them.

The mostly 21-and-up event (tickets \$10 in advance) will play 27 dates through mid-May and feature headliner Dave Days, the most subscribed musician on YouTube (with more followers than Justin Bieber, Lady Gaga or Taylor Swift). Days, a 19-year-old native of the Philadelphia suburbs, began posting humorous videos in 2007, progressing to original songs, some of which have garnered more than 25 million views, just a fraction of his 200 million views to date, which have resulted in 250,000 iTunes singles sales.

Michael Goodwin, director of Entertainment at the Palms in Las Vegas, which is hosting one of the dates, said the concept was inspired by a conversation he had with ICM's Caroline Yim about putting together a tour of popular web performers.

"It's a test for them as well," he said of the performers, who've garnered nearly 300 million views on YouTube total. "That's huge, but it will be interesting to see if that converts into an audience or not."

The performers will, of course, all work their extensive online followings on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube as part of the show's viral marketing campaign. Goodwin said the core audience was probably too young to attend the midnight show at his venue, but he thought it would get plenty of attention and serve as a low-risk, decent reward proposition in the lounge, which holds 200 people. He put the production costs for a few stagehands, sound and light techs, a DJ and hotel rooms for the performers at less than \$1,000. With a gross potential of only about \$2,000 per show, the remaining \$1,000 would be split between the artists, with the venues relying on drink sales and ticket rebates.

The other acts include the men behind Auto-Tune the News (of “The Bed Intruder Song” fame), as well as another YouTube music sensation, David Choi, the self-proclaimed #1 rapper on YouTube, DeStorm, Christina Grimmie, the Gregory Brothers, the Key of Awesome, Mystery Guitar Man and 17-year-old musician Ricky Ficarelli, with more than seven million YouTube views of his videos playing the drums to popular tracks. Lineups vary at the show, which will hit modest-sized rooms such as the 300-capacity Soho in Santa Barbara, the smaller rooms at a pair of House of Blues venues in Dallas and Houston, legendary punk club Emo’s in Austin, Texas, the Gramercy Theatre in New York (where the show will be all ages), winding up at the Culture Room in Miami.

The show is slated to visit The Saloon in Charlotte, N.C., on April 26 and the venue’s director of marketing, Constantine Mouzakitis said he was interested in booking it because it allows the club to stretch its audience and bring in something unique to the 250-300 capacity room. “We thought it was a great opportunity and it’s at a time (7 p.m.) that allows us to do something that can attract all ages to come and enjoy a show as opposed to interfering with the nighttime bar atmosphere,” he said of the event, which will run \$20 once Ticketmaster fees are added. “Young folks can come with their parents and friends and it doesn’t require a big room.”

So far, the venue has spent “some” money on hiring street teams to pass out flyers as well as posting the event on social media including Facebook and Twitter, as well as marketing blasts to its list of 20,000-30,000 subscribers. “We don’t expect to make a huge amount on a show like this,” he said, noting that the revenue split will have the tour promoters taking the door receipts while the club will keep all food and beverage sales. “It’s just really a way to set an example for how we can be diverse.” – Gil Kaufman

Contacted for this story: Michael Goodwin, (702) 944-3435; Constantine Mouzakitis, (704) 962-7874



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**BOOKINGS**

**WELLS FARGO CENTER BREAKS RECORD WITH NCAA WRESTLING MEET**

*The configuration for the NCAA Wrestling Championship at the Wells Fargo Center in Philadelphia.*



The Wells Fargo Center in Philadelphia hosted a record breaking Wrestling Championship for the National Collegiate Athletic Association, bringing in 104,260 fans for the six-session event.

The total shatters the previous record of 97,334 set in 2009 at the Scottrade Center in St. Louis, but not enough to shatter the single session record set by the Palace of Auburn Hills (Mich.) in 2007 of 17,780. The highest single session attendance at this year’s event was 17,687 during the final match on March 19.

Tickets ranged from \$165-\$135 for the package, which included access to all six sessions. Comcast-Spectacor Chief Operations Officer John Page said the facility’s rental agreement with the NCAA allocates 10 percent of ticket sales to the facility to cover the rental fees.

Page said he’s still calculating the building’s food and drink per cap, “although it’s not going to be anything amazing. We have to follow NCAA rules which ban the sale of alcohol during their events,” he said. “There’s a big tail-gating component. We had great weather and many brought their motorhomes.”

Approximately 330 collegiate athletes in 10 separate weight classes competed in the event. On the first day of wrestling, the arena floor hosted eight separate mats, dropping down to six and four mats the following day, and then a single mat canvas the final days for the championship round.

“A lot of the event is dictated by the organizing committee,” Page said. “Typically you have a local institution that works with the venue - in this case we had Rider University in the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference.”

The major components of the bid were hotels, transportation and organization of the fan fest, Page said, adding that 15,000 guests came

from out of town, requiring 10,000 hotel rooms.

“We were in California in 2005 bidding on this event,” Page said. “We had bid prior to that and were not successful, so this was our second go-round in getting them to recognize that there was a tremendous amount of interest in vying for this event.”

Page said collegiate wrestling, traditionally dominated by Midwest powerhouse schools like the University of Iowa, have seen a shift to the East. This year’s tournament champions were Penn State, marking the first time in 58 years that a school from the East Coast took the title. The school put three wrestlers in the finals, including one champion and five All-Americans.

“It’s a very labor intensive event because of the work required to prep the arena,” said Page. “You have to take out the ice, then you have to remove a number of your lower level seating sections so you can have the floor space to accommodate the eight-mat setup.”

The championship aired on ESPN and ESPNU. Page said he plans to bid for the event again. — Dave Brooks

*Interviewed for this article: John Page, (215) 389-9558*

## 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 March 2.

### HOUSTON LIVESTOCK SHOW ENJOYS ANOTHER RECORD RUN

15,001 or More Seats	10,001-15,000 Seats	5,001-10,000 Seats	5,000 or Less Seats
<p><b>1) Houston Livestock Show &amp; Rodeo</b> Gross Sales: \$36,773,095; Venue: <b>Reliant Stadium, Houston</b>; Attendance: 1,225,323; Ticket Range: \$300-\$10; Promoter: Houston Livestock Show &amp; Rodeo; Dates: March 1-20; No. of Shows: 20</p>	<p><b>1) Cirque du Soleil “Alegria”</b> Gross Sales: \$858,477; Venue: <b>North Charleston (S.C.) Coliseum</b>; Attendance: 13,186; Ticket Range: \$94-\$28; Promoter: Cirque du Soleil; Dates: March 17-20; No. of Shows: 7</p>	<p><b>1) Janet Jackson</b> Gross Sales: \$1,976,484; Venue: <b>Radio City Music Hall, New York</b>; Attendance: 17,662; Ticket Range: \$245.50-\$55; Promoter: Live Nation, MSG Entertainment; Dates: March 18-21; No. of Shows: 3</p>	<p><b>1) Hair</b> Gross Sales: \$681,524; Venue: <b>Orpheum Theatre, Minneapolis</b>; Attendance: 12,941; Ticket Range: \$78-\$28; Promoter: Hennepin Theatre Trust; Dates: March 1-6; No. of Shows: 8</p>
<p><b>2) Elton John</b> Gross Sales: \$3,471,360; Venue: <b>Madison Square Garden Arena, New York</b>; Attendance: 36,338; Ticket Range: \$152-\$32; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: March 16, 20; No. of Shows: 2</p>	<p><b>2) Sugarland</b> Gross Sales: \$427,082; Venue: <b>Bi-Lo Center, Greenville, S.C.</b>; Attendance: 8,887; Ticket Range: \$53.50-\$25; Promoter: AEG Live, The Messina Group; Dates: March 10; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p><b>2) Cirque du Soleil “Dralion”</b> Gross Sales: \$1,659,739; Venue: <b>Cedar Park (Texas) Events Center</b>; Attendance: 26,814; Ticket Range: \$100-\$32; Promoter: Cirque du Soleil; Dates: March 10-20; No. of Shows: 15</p>	<p><b>2) Porgy &amp; Bess</b> Gross Sales: \$608,714; Venue: <b>Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre, Atlanta</b>; Attendance: 10,269; Ticket Range: \$139-\$24; Promoter: The Atlanta Opera; Dates: Feb. 26-March 6; No. of Shows: 4</p>
<p><b>3) 2011 Mountain</b></p>	<p><b>3) Sugarland</b> Gross Sales: \$351,128; Venue: <b>Jacksonville</b></p>	<p><b>3) Cirque du Soleil “Quidam”</b> Gross Sales: \$1,206,427;</p>	<p><b>3) Kem</b> Gross Sales: \$518,134; Venue: <b>Fox Theatre,</b></p>

<p><b>West Conference Championship</b> Gross Sales: \$2,428,390; Venue: <b>Thomas &amp; Mack Center, Las Vegas;</b> Attendance: 83,222; Ticket Range: \$600-\$25; Promoter: Mountain West Conference; Dates: March 8-12; No. of Shows: 7</p> <p><b>4) Lady Gaga</b> Gross Sales: \$1,678,962; Venue: <b>KFC Yum! Center, Louisville, Ky.;</b> Attendance: 17,270; Ticket Range: \$175-\$49.50; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: March 12; No. of Shows: 1</p> <p><b>5) Lionel Richie</b> Gross Sales: \$1,348,835; Venue: <b>Acer Arena, Sydney;</b> Attendance: 9,709; Ticket Range: \$254.48-\$109.34; Promoter: Frontier Touring Company; Dates: March 22; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p><b>(Fla.) Veterans Memorial Arena;</b> Attendance: 7,767; Ticket Range: \$51.50-\$24; Promoter: AEG Live; Dates: March 12; No. of Shows: 1</p> <p><b>4) Mike Epps</b> Gross Sales: \$327,610; Venue: <b>Cintas Center, Cincinnati;</b> Attendance: 6,889; Ticket Range: \$53-\$39; Promoter: North American Entertainment Group; Dates: March 11; No. of Shows: 1</p> <p><b>5) Rick Ross</b> Gross Sales: \$103,989; Venue: <b>AmericanBank Center, Corpus Christi, Texas;</b> Attendance: 1,917; Ticket Range: \$77-\$27; Promoter: Lottery Soda; Dates: March 12; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p>Venue: <b>Comcast Arena at Everett (Wash.);</b> Attendance: 20,286; Ticket Range: \$94-\$28; Promoter: Cirque du Soleil; Dates: March 16-20; No. of Shows: 8</p> <p><b>4) Elton John</b> Gross Sales: \$892,075; Venue: <b>Constant Convocation Center, Norfolk, Va.;</b> Attendance: 8,335; Ticket Range: \$135-\$25; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: March 18; No. of Shows: 1</p> <p><b>5) Stone Temple Pilots</b> Gross Sales: \$449,440; Venue: <b>Hordern Pavilion, Sydney;</b> Attendance: 5,318; Ticket Range: \$90.32; Promoter: Frontier Touring Company; Dates: March 20; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p><b>Atlanta;</b> Attendance: 8,097; Ticket Range: \$102-\$47; Promoter: AEG Live; Dates: March 10-11; No. of Shows: 2</p> <p><b>4) Stomp</b> Gross Sales: \$502,951; Venue: <b>Fox Theatre, Atlanta;</b> Attendance: 15,603; Ticket Range: \$64-\$24; Promoter: Theater of the Stars; Dates: March 2-6; No. of Shows: 8</p> <p><b>5) Grease</b> Gross Sales: \$461,051; Venue: <b>DeVos Performance Hall, Grand Rapids, Mich.;</b> Attendance: 9,430; Ticket Range: \$77-\$30; Promoter: Broadway GR; Dates: March 1-6; No. of Shows: 8</p>
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Compiled by Josh Huckabee. To submit reports, e-mail [HotTickets@venuestoday.com](mailto:HotTickets@venuestoday.com) or fax to (714) 378-0040.

## THE BEAT

### DEALS

#### GLOBAL SPECTRUM EUROPE CONSULTING ON PLANNED ARENA FOR FRANCE

The newest entry in the modernization of European arenas, the Lyon/Villeurbanne Arena in France, is projected to open in 2014. The privately financed arena, being built on public land, will host the professional basketball games of ASVEL Basket Lyon-Villeurbanne, which is owned by Gones and Sports which also owns Societe de Projet Salle Multifocion (SPSM), S.A.S., the entity developing the arena.

Marshall Glickman, principal, G2 Strategies, is senior advisor to SPSM and helped bring Global Spectrum Europe to the project. A consultant deal with GSE, a joint venture between NEC and Global Spectrum, was announced March 10. The agreement anticipates it will turn into a longterm management deal when the arena opens, Glickman said.

Neither the price nor the architect have been revealed locally, Glickman said. More announcements are pending by May. He did say the arena will be designed to host anything from a 1,500-seat theater set up to north of 14,500 for a concert.

“One of the cool features is that it is very flexible,” Glickman said. He noted the 1,500-seat set up is not just curtained, but set up in “a convincing way.”

“The developer is associated with the holding company of the basketball team here, ASVEL,” Glickman said. “One of their shareholders is Tony Parker, the NBA player.” The project started five years ago but died out due to political and economic issues, he said. It was recently revved up again and Glickman came on board to organize the development team.

They interviewed all the usual suspects for a management deal, Glickman said, and settled on Global Spectrum Europe because “this company is the right company. We like the joint venture they have with NEC. We like the guys that are based here - people in Amsterdam and in Birmingham in the U.K. They are all very much at the table. They are an ideal service provider. And we like the fact they are not a promoter; they are promoter neutral. They are more than happy to do business with anybody.”

“We feel that one of the advantages of Global is that they are not in the business of owning content but they are in the business of working with all content providers.”

Glickman thinks the 2014 opening date is reachable. “The city has the land and the relationship with the city is strong - not consummated but close,” he said. There is about 18 months of work before financing is complete.

Mich Sauers, senior VP of business development for Comcast-Spectacor, parent company to Global Spectrum, noted this is GSE’s first foray into Europe apart from NEC managed venues and it is the first modern, state-of-the-art arena being built in France. When U.S.-based shows like WWE and Feld Entertainment go to France, they play 5,000-6,000 seat Zenith facilities, arenas which were built by the French government years ago. Most cities have one, Sauers said. This new arena will be an alternative for some of the touring shows and, in speaking with potential tenants, the response has been very positive, he added.

“France is the second largest market in Europe for WWE,” Sauers noted. “All the shows do well here.”

Glickman explained the lay of the land. The arena is being built in the Rhone-Alps region, inside of which is the Grand Lyon region, inside of which is Lyon, which is next door to Villeurbanne, thus it is the Lyon/Villeurbanne Arena.

“It’s clearly, from a quality and functionality perspective, on par with the best American arenas,” Glickman said of the plans. “It’s sized appropriately for the market.”

The pro forma anticipates 150 events annually, of which about 35 would be basketball. They will also host some hockey games for a local team that currently plays in a 3,000-seat arena.

“It will be a very busy building. It will be one of handful of buildings in Europe that reach high standards. Most of the money in venue infrastructure in Europe is soccer, so this is a pretty big move forward,” Glickman said.

In keeping with trends worldwide, the arena will anchor a broader mixed-use development that will include a public plaza, team practice facilities, a public cultural and sports hall and links to nearby transit. — Linda Deckard

*Interviewed for this story: Marshall Glickman, (541) 633-7088; Mich Sauers, (727) 456-1171*

## **FACES & PLACES**

### **ZELISKO LATEST EXECUTIVE DEPARTURE FROM LIVE NATION; VENUWORKS SHIFTS EXECUTIVES TO ACCOMMODATE EVANSVILLE**



*Danny Zelisko*

After 10 years with Live Nation, Phoenix based promoter Danny Zelisko is branching out on his own with a new promotion venture titled Danny Zelisko Presents.

Zelisko said his contract with Live Nation expired in February and the two were unable to reach an agreement, so they parted ways. His last concert with Live Nation was Sarah McLachlan on Feb. 12 at the Comerica Theater in Phoenix.



Since 2007, Zelisko served as the chairman of Live Nation Southwest. He first began promoting concerts in 1977 when he left Chicago to work in Phoenix. His new office is inside Alice Cooperstown, a Phoenix restaurant he co-owns with the rocker.



*Scott Schoenike*

VenuWorks has shifted some employees around to accommodate new business. Scott Schoenike will be leaving Cedar Rapids, Iowa, to become the executive director at the under-construction New Evansville (Ind.) Arena in Evansville. The 11,000-seat, \$127 million arena opens in November.

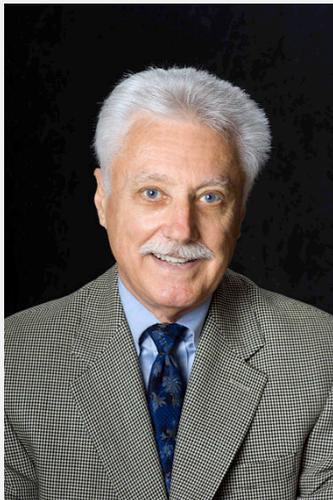
Schoenike has more than 21 years of experience in the entertainment and hospitality industry, including four years as executive director of the U.S. Cellular Center, Paramount Theatre and Cedar Rapids Ice Arena.

Gene Felling will assume the duties Schoenike leaves behind in Cedar Rapids, while continuing in his role as VenuWorks Western Regional Vice President. Tammy Koolbeck, VenuWorks Regional Vice President will serve as the

corporate liaison. The U.S. Cellular Center is undergoing renovation over the next 12-18 months. – Dave Brooks and Linda Deckard

Contact: Danny Zelisko, (602) 252-2915; Scott Schoenike, (319) 213-7575

## **FINAL CURTAIN** **CONVENTION CENTER LEGEND JIMMIE D. FORE PASSES AWAY**



*Jimmie Fore*

Jimmie Fore, 73, well known and respected convention center manager, died in his sleep March 19 at his home in Marble Falls, Texas, where he had retired after leaving the Morial Convention Center, New Orleans, in 2007.

Fore's son, Kris, said his dad had returned home from working on his ranch, where he raised quarter horses and exotic game, fed the horses, had dinner with his wife, Darlyne, and went to bed, dying in his sleep.

Fore spent more than 40 years in the convention center industry, starting in Houston. Doug Ducate, president and CEO, Center for Exhibition Industry Research, recalls those beginnings well. Chet Wilkins was running the Houston Convention and Visitors Bureau and went into a country/western bar in San Antonio where he spotted a singer, Jimmie D. Fore, whom he got to know and later hired, Ducate said. Soon after, he loaned Fore to the Albert Thomas Convention Center in Houston to help fill the void when then-manager Francis

Deering died suddenly. Fore helmed the new venue during its first national convention in September of 1968. That was the Society of Petroleum Engineers and Ducate was the director of that group. Both Fore and Ducate were new to the business...and on their way up.

Fore's career included stints with the New Orleans Convention Bureau, the Astrodome in Houston; McCormick Place, Chicago; and the New Orleans Morial Convention Center.

Fore tended to prefer a low-key approach to the business, but his influence was felt. Ducate noted that Fore was a hall manager who came out of sales and he always believed and promoted that the venue manager needed to be part of the sales process. Fore also helped promote formation of the International Convention Centers Conference, believing convention center managers needed a separate conference to discuss their specific issues. That group later merged with what is now the International Association of Venue Management.

Tom Mobley, vice president of convention centers for Global Spectrum, followed Fore as manager of

McCormick Place in 1992. "Jimmie was always very kind to me. He took a rookie and shared a lot of good thoughts," Mobley said of his mentor.

Fore was very well known in the industry even before that event in 2005 that defined his career thereafter - Hurricane Katrina. Fore was managing the Morial Convention Center when the hurricane struck and stayed with the venue for those four days it housed the stranded and homeless and sometimes lawless survivors of the storm. Afterwards, he led the massive cleanup and reopening plan. The building's \$60 million renovation partially reopened in February 2006 and by November was fully operational again.

Fore described those days after Katrina vividly for Venues Today in October 2005, remembering the looting and scavenging, the hopelessness and lawlessness, while he and three other managers along with six staff remained with the ship. After four days, they were ordered to evacuate, but did not go far, returning every day until the National Guard asked for refuge and in turn cleared the venue of holdouts and hideouts, so Fore and company could regroup and repair the convention center.

Fore received the Lifetime Achievement Award in October 2007 from the International Association of Venue Managers (IAVM) at the International Convention Center Conference (ICCC) in Boston.

Funeral services are set for tomorrow, March 24, at 1 p.m. at Edgar Funeral Home in Marble Falls.

His is survived by his wife, Darlyne; sons, Kristopher Dee Fore and Darren Dee Fore; daughters, Robin Darnell and husband, Rick, Melissa and husband Jeb Hensarling; brother, Dr. Frank Neal Fore and his wife, Leigh Ann, and four grandchildren.

*Interviewed for this story: Doug Ducate, (972) 687-9219; Tom Mobley, (267) 496-4281*