

Rick Saas



VENUES**today**

"The news behind the headlines"

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Welcome to your **Venues Today** weekly e-newsletter, full of the latest live entertainment industry news. Look for the latest safety and security trends and the INTIX Quarterly coming in your November magazine. For a full calendar listing, to view archives or subscribe to *Venues Today*, visit our Web site at www.venuestoday.com.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"The future is going back to the way it used to be." — Tom Consolo, Azoff Music Management, on the resurgence of the local promoter

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VENUE NEWS



Some of the 55,000 attending the Rolling Stones concert at Scott Stadium; the Stones mammoth stage

SAVING TURF & FANS KEY TO STONES' STADIUM SHOW

When the bomb threat was called in to 911 an hour into the Rolling Stones set at Scott Stadium at the University of Virginia, there had already been enough excitement about the event in Charlottesville. But as per emergency preparedness plans, the threat, which was deemed credible, delayed but in the end did not overly disrupt the Oct. 6 concert.

Larry Wilson, SMG's general manager of the under-construction John Paul Jones Arena, which opens on that campus in July 2006, was the point man on the stadium show. SMG does not manage Scott Stadium, but the firm was instrumental in booking the event and was middle-man between the university and promoter, CPI/TNA.

Trey Anastasia opened the show, performing from 7 p.m. to 7:45 p.m. After an intermission, the Rolling Stones took the stage at 8:45 p.m. An hour later, a bomb threat was called in through the Charlottesville Police Department 911 dispatch, Wilson said. The stadium last hosted a concert in 1999, when the Dave Matthews Band performed, but there is a command post set up at every home football game and manned by representatives of five law enforcement jurisdictions — local, state, county, city and university. It was functioning for the Stones event as well.

When the threat was received, the command post was alerted and Wilson, along with the university's Jason Bauman, athletics, and Tres Thomas, director of touring for TNA, were called in. "The specifics of the call made it very credible," Wilson said. "They described certain portions of the steel structure. We thought for the safety of the Rolling Stones and our patrons, we should stop the show and use bomb dogs to make sure we were all clear," Wilson said.

Thomas contacted TNA's Michael Cohl, who was backstage. He got Mick Jagger's attention between songs and Jagger, on advice of the promoter, announced to the audience that the Stones would take a 15-minute break due to technical difficulties, Wilson said. The venue staff and law enforcement then went to work, moving the first 30 rows of patrons, about 3,000 people, back, and searching the stage with dogs. When it was announced the show would resume, the crowd cheered. "There was no bomb, thank God, and [the Stones] played the remainder of the set plus an additional three songs. The fans were fantastic throughout; there was never a sense of panic," Wilson said. "Toward the end of the break they were doing the wave, which was kind of crazy; I haven't seen that for awhile. No one left the stadium."

"Everyone was very patient and very understanding," Wilson added. "In this day of post-9/11, these are just some things we have to deal with."

Thomas cannot recall any other Rolling Stones concert that involved a partial evacuation of the building. "As far as I can remember, the Rolling Stones never had [a threat] after the show had started. Doors have been delayed until the status of a threat was evaluated, or a show has been postponed. But this is the first time we ever interrupted one as far as I can recall."

From the promoter's perspective, it was a matter of playing the cards they were dealt. Thomas said there is an internal procedure set up for the band and entourage for just about any situation "except when they are on stage in the middle of a song." Those procedures are now being "reviewed and polished," he said.

But the premise remains the same. "We're always supportive of law enforcement when there is a public safety issue involved," Thomas said. "It was a credible call and credible threat. We just like to be of assistance. The band has the power of the stage. We like to be part of it, but we definitely defer to the people charged with the [crowd safety] responsibility."

Bomb threats weren't the only challenge with this Rolling Stones date. As with all the stadiums on the tour, protecting the turf was of primary importance and was a big concern when SMG's Mike Evans was booking the date with the university. Both Wilson and Evans pointed out that Scott Stadium was the first stadium on the Stones tour that did not have to re-sod when they left. A few days later, Wallace Wade Stadium at Duke University, Durham, N.C., accomplished a similar feat, but for the pro stadiums on the list, from Boston's Fenway Park to Chicago's Soldier Field, which was also an SMG date, there was significant damage, either due to weather or a shrunken window of opportunity because of the schedule. At Scott Stadium they had nine days from the Stones concert to the next football game, a nationally televised match-up with Florida State to be played Saturday (Oct. 15).

"We're living large right now. We're the first field they didn't have to re-sod," Evans declared after the Charlottesville concert. That was possible because of "a lot of what we already knew. When [TNA's] Gerry Barad and I concocted this idea of playing there, I said before I even go to the university, their first question is going to be about the field." He had to assure the university the field would be ready for football and then he had to reassure them every time a Stones concert messed up a field prior to their

arrival in Virginia. In Boston, where the turnaround was less than two days, portions of the field had to be re-sodded, resulting in a lot of publicity about the different color outfield grass when the Red Sox took the baseball field.

Evans also pointed out to the university that TNA will be a major player in helping book the new John Paul Jones Arena which SMG is managing. To Evans, the whole Rolling Stones concert experience, including dealing with adversity, bodes well for SMG's future working relationship with the university in managing the arena. Evans helped book 13 Rolling Stones dates in SMG buildings (or related clients), with Puerto Rico the next to go on sale.

The Rolling Stone stage is the biggest out there and the challenges erecting it at stadiums have been unprecedented. Wilson said they used three layers of Inkamat, a mesh that actually insulates the field, when loading in in Charlottesville. They had to create a path from the loading entrance to the other end of the field where the stage was erected to load in the show. "We had to build a road [using three layers of 3/4th inch] plywood 40 feet wide by 300 feet long that went from one end of the stadium to the other end of the stadium, the majority of it on the sideline. Then we built a road in front of the stage that was 280 feet long by 50 feet wide out of Bravomat, a hard plastic type mat. We had three 50-ton cranes that assembled the stage that sat on that. Once we were loaded in, we protected the field with Terraplast." Wilson noted that it started raining at 11:15 p.m. the night of the show, which ended about midnight, and over the next three days, they got 3 inches, and still, the field survived.

"We've been learning as we go along," Thomas added. It helped that Scott Stadium was not the first of the 15 stadiums hosting 17 shows on this Stones tour of 52 U.S. dates. The tour started with six stadium dates in a row and Thomas was on hand every time. He has been studying the right combination of turf protections to use. He's learned that new plywood performs better than worn plywood, for instance. It's worth the expense to save the turf. In both Charlottesville and Durham, there was minimal damage due to ruts or compression despite rain. "You are going to have browned out grass," he said.

There's always something to learn from every show, no matter how long you've been promoting them, he added. In Moncton, N.B., TNA created a mammoth concert venue in the middle of nowhere, with a reported 85,000 in attendance. "I learned that earth movers are expensive," Thomas said of that outing.

In Charlottesville, with the bomb threat, he learned "established communication is vital to the relationship between the venue and promoter and artist. If you have that established, however shaky it may start out, it ends very well."

Wilson learned the ins and outs of the university bureaucracy he will be working with when the arena opens next year. SMG committed considerable resources to making this a smooth event. Staff on hand, besides Wilson and Evans, included SMG bigwigs Wes Westley, John Burns and Bob Cavaliere. "The university relied on our expertise. Part of the agreement was that we have an adequate staff when we loaded the stadium in," Wilson added. SMG also brought in Scott Zimmerman and Ticketmaster to handle all ticketing. Wilson made the stadium home for a week prior to the show. "We helped settle the show on behalf of the university. We basically took the role of facility manager, even though we don't manage the stadium." Wilson said the per cap on food and drink, without alcohol but with a bonus intermission, was about \$4.

"We went through three or four cuts to get the show. The band has an active say in where they play," Wilson said. The Stones were looking for unusual venues, Thomas added. This fit the bill. The university made money on rent and concession, Thomas said, declining to specify how much rent was paid. — Linda Deckard

Interviewed for this story: Larry Wilson, (434) 243-4958; Tres Thomas, (416) 960-7605; Mike Evans, (215) 592-6640

From left, Bill Rhoda, Steve Allison, Brad Schrock, Chris Lamberth, moderator, 360 Architecture, Cameron Curtis and Jack Wrightson (VT Photo)



'FLEXIBLE' REPLACES 'BIGGER' IN TOMORROW'S ARENAS

DALLAS — Arenas located in urban or master-planned environments, state-of-the-art amenities in terms of circulation, restrooms and electronics, and smaller seating capacities are among construction trends cited by a panel of architects and developers during IAAM's Sept.

24-28 Arena Management Conference here.

To the arena of the future, "flexibility will be key," said Brad Schrock, 360 Architecture, referring to building spaces that can be changed out as the seating options evolve, as is happening with suites turned into loge boxes in some arenas today. That also applies to retractable seating and curtaining systems, he said.

"People aren't building bigger and bigger arenas," said Jack Wrightson, WJHW. Most of the National Basketball Association and National Hockey League teams have their new 20,000-seaters. Today's arenas are smaller and often in secondary markets, though there are some notable exceptions, like Tulsa, Okla., which is building an 18,000-19,000-seat venue.

The Tulsa arena is a source of community pride. Bill Rhoda's firm, CSL International, did the feasibility study for Tulsa. "We said 12,000-13,000 seats. The client said, 'Eighteen-thousand and one. Oklahoma City has 18,000, so we need 18,001,'" he recalled. Rivalries like that, and including Dallas and Houston or St. Louis and Kansas City, still drive design decisions. The second-tier cities are building icons for their communities, he said. It's a matter of community pride.

The client in Tulsa also pointed out that a 12,000-13,000-seat arena would not get them the NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) first and second round basketball tournaments. They were replacing a 13,000-seater. At \$150 million, it is probably one of the most expensive municipal buildings to date, Rhoda said.

Steve Allison, Ellerbe Becket, said size is still, in general, trending smaller. He expects to see a pullback. "We're at the peak of bigness, complexity and amenities," he predicted. "We will see now arenas that are smaller and customer-tailored to the community."

"More high tech, more comfortable, more high end" is the trend as observed by Cameron Curtis, Turner Construction. Curtis pointed to the race to build in New York City, from a Brooklyn arena to major renovations to Madison Square Garden and Nassau Coliseum in Uniondale, N.Y.

Steve Allison brought up the increased sophistication of the college market, with suites

and improved staging and rigging capabilities.

"We're starting to see video displays at all high school games," Wrightson added. "There is a constant migration of technology and how you produce an event. It is rolling downhill."

Along the same lines, Wrightson doesn't see any way to "future-proof" a building, but with the right nuts and bolts, it can be changed more easily. Everything is headed toward fiber-optic, for instance, and that capability should be added throughout the building for whatever future use surfaces.

Seating options are definitely an evolving issue, as arenas with luxury suites and club seats — the old, basic formula — find tastes change. The Rose Garden, Portland, Ore., is one that is exploring changes, Rhoda said. The building is \$200 million in debt. The resident NBA Trail Blazers sold out the 12,000-seat Memorial Coliseum. When the new arena was built, they sold out the club seats with nine-year contracts. It was a hot ticket, the only way to get in. But now, seats are opening up in the lower bowl and the club seat holders are seeking better locations downstairs. Forty of 80 suites and 50 percent of club seats are on the market. The most viable solution is to change the options for some of that inventory. The same thing happened in Phoenix, Rhoda said. They now have 32 loge boxes in the end zone. Ditto for the Minnesota Timberwolves, where they took out end zone seats to create a club seat environment.

"Ten to 15 years after opening, these arenas need a massive upkeep contribution," Rhoda said.

"Plan ahead for change; every year there's a project," Allison echoed.

"There is a lot going on with arena seating," Schrock said, with seating areas evolving from general reserve to club seats to suites and now to loge boxes. "You need to create a special product for everything that's out there." The trend seems to be having an option to get up and move around, which means a party platform with a view of the playing surface.

It's not just a seat and it's not just a sightline anymore. It's an experience, and everyone has a different idea of the perfect experience. Some can afford exactly what they want, which would explain why Miami, which already had everything from seats to loge boxes to star boxes, added four seats on the court next to coach Pat Riley which sell for \$500,000 a year. A "bunker suite" (inside room) goes with the package and the owner can literally drive his car up to the back side of the box, Schrock said. That's a special experience for a handful of fans, and that's what major league teams are maximizing these days.

"Just because you can doesn't mean you want to," Wrightson warned. Interactive displays at each seat are one example. "There is no business model that can support that," he said. While it's possible, it doesn't seem to be profitable. The technology is evolving toward transmitting to individual's Blackberry or Palm Pilot. "Everyone is going to have that anyway." So adding a terminal at the seat has no value to the customer in reality, he suggested.

Asked about seat sizes, Allison mentioned the trend is bigger seats and deeper treads. While a 33-inch tread has been standard, equaling three 11-inch steps, new arenas are going to 34- and even 35-inch treads. It adds to the roof span, which is a big deal, but it's happening anyway. As to seat width, 20 inches has become the new minimum, though some 19-inch seats are still being installed.

Construction cost overruns also surfaced, though panelists said there is no market average. New construction cost escalation has been pegged at about 6 percent per year, but that's going to change post-Hurricane Katrina. Costs will go up 10-12 percent per year for the next two years because of the massive destruction in the Gulf Coast, they predicted.

Beyond that, cost overruns have a lot to do with politics and ownership. Here in Dallas, the American Airlines Center started with a \$250 million budget and ended up costing \$400 million, Wrightson pointed out. On the good side politically, the city only paid its half of the original \$250 million. The escalation resulted from several factors, including a change of ownership of one of the teams. Generally, the reasons are "what you might call a lack of discipline," Wrightson said. "People just don't hold the line. They get the budget and then they go back to the store. We had \$100 million worth of change orders."

On the other hand, the result was phenomenal. Rhoda took an NBA owner's advance team on a Texas tour of the new arenas in San Antonio, Houston and Dallas. The first two were impressive, "then he walked into Dallas," Rhoda said. The advance team feared bringing the owner to Dallas, and Rhoda assured them they had good reason to worry. "Your owner is a billionaire; he's going to want this." That's why cost overruns are hard to average. — Linda Deckard

Interviewed for this story: Steve Allison, (816) 561-4443; Brad Schrock, (816) 531-3003; Bill Rhoda, (972) 769-2477; Cameron Curtis, (703) 864-9907; and Jack Wrightson, (972) 934-3700

Dunkin' Donuts Center renovation plans



STATE BUYS THE DUNK, \$60 MILLION RENOVATION UNDERWAY

It will take \$60 million to renovate the Dunkin' Donuts Center, but the project manager says that's really just providence in Providence, R.I. At less than half the cost of new construction, the facelift is expected to extend the 32-year-old building's useful life another 20-30 years.

"As any facility of that age would be, it's kind of worn out," said Project Manager Steve Duethman

of Minneapolis-based architects Ellerbe Becket.

The 14,600-seat arena will get new seating, a new scoreboard, new sound system and renovated locker rooms with larger areas for press interviews. There will be updated concession spaces with more points of sale, more restrooms and a new lobby to alleviate congestion. Outside, there will be pedestrian links to the convention center across the street and the parking garage.

And the plan calls for the addition of 10 private suites on each side of the bowl and party suites at the top of one end.

But the most visible changes will come to the arena's face. "I think the street-side presence will be the most noticeable," Duethman said. "Right now it's kind of a brutal-looking grey concrete with dark bronze paneling and dark windows." The design will use lighter colors, more masonry and newer glazing systems. "There's going to be an entirely new dynamic," he said.

That will be good for tenants — The American Hockey League's Providence Bruins and the Providence College men's basketball team. The arena also attracts its share of concerts and ice shows.

But the State of Rhode Island has hopes of bringing major sports events, like NCAA basketball and hockey tournament games, back to downtown Providence. The state is buying the arena from the City of Providence for \$28 million, giving control to the Rhode Island Convention Center Authority, which already handles the convention center and parking garage. The state legislature also approved the convention authority's request to issue the \$62 million bond package that will finance the renovation.

There was a time when such events were common in Providence, but the aging facility no longer meets the standards required by the NCAA. The arena is so far out of contention that neither Providence College nor The Dunk even bothered to bid for NCAA tournament games in the last round.

Duethman said that Ellerbe Becket's lead designer James Poulson and Senior Project Architect Pat Clancy are working on programs and schematics, while the convention center authority is preparing a Request for Proposals that will go out to builders in 30-60 days. Construction will start in the spring and is scheduled for completion in the fall of 2008.

That could be perfect timing to snare some of those NCAA basketball games; the site selection process for the 2009-2011 tournaments begins next year.

"We'll be going after those events, for sure, and in an aggressive fashion," said James McCarvill, the convention center authority's executive director. "What we're hoping for is first-round NCAA men's basketball. Providence has hosted a number of these events in the past and had success with positive patron experiences. Secondarily we're looking for NCAA men's and women's hockey playoffs — Frozen Four games and regional games. And there's a large market in grassroots sports, like cheer and dance competitions. It doesn't have to be a nationally televised event to be a significant piece of business."

They've already started. The state sold the nearby Westin Providence hotel to a private developer for \$95.5 million this year, but only under the condition that an additional 200 rooms would be added, increasing lodging inventory near the arena. The convention center authority will begin co-marketing the arena and convention center, hoping to capitalize on their combined size, as soon as renovations are underway. "We think there's a good opportunity to marry the two facilities," said McCarvill. "People can come and have their meetings seminars and events all together."

Both facilities will be managed by SMG, with Sportservice handling concessions at the arena and SMG doing concessions in-house at the convention center. — Ted Streuli

Interviewed for this story: Steve Duethman (816) 360-4448; James McCarvill (401) 458-6000

YEAR END DEADLINES - NOTE YOUR CALENDAR

We're getting ready to wrap up 2005!

Our December issue will contain our popular year end **Hot Tickets** and **Top Stops** reports, as well as our first annual **Hall of Headlines Awards**

The deadline to submit concert and event grosses for inclusion in the year end Hot Tickets & Top Stops is Oct. 24. The events considered must have taken place between Oct. 16, 2004 and Oct. 15, 2005. E-mail reports to HotTickets@venuestoday.com or fax to (714) 378-0040.

Know someone who bettered the industry in a big way in 2005? Be sure to submit your nominations for the first annual **Hall of Headlines Awards** for the following categories: **News, Marketing, Concessions & Bookings**. Include the name of the person or company, affiliation or location, and a brief description of the achievement that took place in 2005. The deadline to submit nominations is **Oct. 15**. E-mail nominations to: Linda@venuestoday.com or fax to: (714) 378-0040.

(Due to the amazing response and management surrounding Hurricane Katrina, we've received many nominations in the "News" category. However, don't forget the newsmakers in the other categories: **Marketing, Concessions, & Bookings**.)

Send your nominations today!

BOOKINGS



HOTtickets

NEIL, ELTON & PAUL LEAD THE PACK

HOT TICKETS is a weekly summary of the top acts and ticket sales as reported to **Venues Today** e-newsletter. Following are the top 20 concerts and events, the top 5 in each seating capacity category, which took place since Sept. 14, 2005. To submit reports, e-mail HotTickets@venuestoday.com or fax to (714) 378-0040.

The **Hot Tickets** this week as reported to **Venues Today**:

15,001 or More Seats

1) *Gross Sales:* \$4,380,245; *Event:* Neil Diamond; *Venue:* **Staples Center, Los Angeles**; *Attendance:* 63,656; *Ticket Range:* \$95-\$55; *Promoter:* AEG Live, Apregan Group, Inc., Goldenvoice, Nederlander, Sal Bonafede; *Dates:* Sept. 29–Oct. 2; *No. of Shows:* 4

2) *Gross Sales:* \$4,123,815; *Event:* Elton John; *Venue:* **Madison Square Garden Arena, New York**; *Attendance:* 46,708; *Ticket Range:* \$125-\$45; *Promoter:* Ron Delsener Presents (CCE); *Dates:* Sept. 21–24; *No. of Shows:* 3

3) *Gross Sales:* \$3,814,392; *Event:* Paul McCartney; *Venue:* **TD Banknorth Garden, Boston**; *Attendance:* 29,582; *Ticket Range:* \$250-\$49.50; *Promoter:* AEG; *Dates:* Sept. 26; *No. of Shows:* 1

4) *Gross Sales:* \$2,648,935; *Event:* Elton John; *Venue:* **TD Banknorth Garden, Boston**; *Attendance:* 31,164; *Ticket Range:* \$125-\$45; *Promoter:* Tea Party Concerts (CCE); *Dates:* Sept. 16–17; *No. of Shows:* 2

5) *Gross Sales:* \$2,277,952; *Event:* Paul McCartney; *Venue:* **St. Pete Times Forum, Tampa, Fla.**; *Attendance:* 15,268; *Ticket Range:* \$251.75-\$51.75; *Promoter:* Cellar Door Concerts (CCE), In-house; *Dates:* Sept. 17; *No. of Shows:* 1

10,001 - 15,000 Seats

1) *Gross Sales:* \$859,005; *Event:* Luis Miguel; *Venue:* **Mandalay Bay Events Center, Las Vegas**; *Attendance:* 8,864; *Ticket Range:* \$150-\$50; *Promoter:* House of Blues Concerts; *Dates:* Sept. 16; *No. of Shows:* 1

2) *Gross Sales:* \$524,874; *Event:* Tim McGraw; *Venue:* **Mullins Center, Amherst, Mass.**; *Attendance:* 7,338; *Ticket Range:* \$79-\$49; *Promoter:* Joe Fletcher Presents; *Dates:* Sept. 15; *No. of Shows:* 1

3) *Gross Sales:* \$511,235; *Event:* Daddy Yankee; *Venue:* **Patriot Center, Fairfax, Va.**; *Attendance:* 7,375; *Ticket Range:* \$98-\$58; *Promoter:* Solo Entertainment; *Dates:* Sept. 30; *No. of Shows:* 1

4) *Gross Sales:* \$460,418; *Event:* Maze featuring Frankie Beverly; *Venue:* **Chronicle Pavilion, Concord, Calif.**; *Attendance:* 10,268; *Ticket Range:* \$75.75-\$37.50; *Promoter:* Bay Area Productions, Bill Graham Presents (CCE); *Dates:* Sept. 24; *No. of Shows:* 1

5) *Gross Sales:* \$437,497; *Event:* The Killers; *Venue:* **Long Beach (Calif.) Arena**; *Attendance:* 13,452; *Ticket Range:* \$37.50-\$19.50; *Promoter:* AEG, Goldenvoice; *Dates:* Oct. 6; *No. of Shows:* 1

5,001 - 10,000 Seats

1) *Gross Sales:* \$3,133,975; *Event:* Luis Miguel; *Venue:* **Gibson Amphitheatre At Universal CityWalk, Universal City, Calif.**; *Attendance:* 32,000; *Ticket Range:* \$155-\$60; *Promoter:* House of Blues Concerts; *Dates:* Sept. 20–25; *No. of Shows:* 6

2) *Gross Sales:* \$887,850; *Event:* The White Stripes; *Venue:* **KeySpan Park, Brooklyn, N.Y.**; *Attendance:* 20,721; *Ticket Range:* \$45; *Promoter:* Ron Delsener Presents (CCE); *Dates:* Sept. 24–25; *No. of Shows:* 2

3) *Gross Sales:* \$474,570; *Event:* Brad Paisley; *Venue:* **Gibson Amphitheatre At Universal CityWalk, Universal City, Calif.**; *Attendance:* 10,618; *Ticket Range:* \$45-\$35; *Promoter:* House of Blues Concerts; *Dates:* Aug. 6; *No. of Shows:* 2

4) *Gross Sales:* \$473,011; *Event:* David Gray; *Venue:* **Radio City Music Hall, New York**; *Attendance:* 11,511; *Ticket Range:* \$50-\$25; *Promoter:* Radio City Entertainment, Ron Delsener Presents (CCE); *Dates:* Oct. 5–6; *No. of Shows:* 2

5) *Gross Sales:* \$452,328; *Event:* Santana; *Venue:* **Nokia at Grand Prairie (Texas)**; *Attendance:* 6,460; *Ticket Range:* \$92.50-\$49.50; *Promoter:* AEG Live; *Dates:* Sept. 30–Oct. 1; *No. of Shows:* 2

5,000 or Fewer Seats

1) *Gross Sales:* \$1,403,982; *Event:* Madea Goes to Jail; *Venue:* **Fox Theatre, Atlanta**; *Attendance:* 30,626; *Ticket Range:* \$57-\$44; *Promoter:* Peachez, Inc.; *Dates:* Oct. 4-9
No. of Shows: 6

2) *Gross Sales:* \$1,152,840; *Event:* Maureen McGovern in Little Women; *Venue:* **Sacramento (Calif.) Community Theatre**; *Attendance:* 24,331; *Ticket Range:* \$65-\$15; *Promoter:* California Musical Theatre; *Dates:* Sept. 28–Oct. 9; *No. of Shows:* 12

3) *Gross Sales:* \$616,385; *Event:* Hairspray; *Venue:* **Chrysler Hall Theatre, Norfolk, Va.**; *Attendance:* 10,398; *Ticket Range:* \$65-\$52.55; *Promoter:* BACI, Jack Utsick Presents; *Dates:* Sept. 27–Oct. 2; *No. of Shows:* 6

4) *Gross Sales:* \$493,771; *Event:* Hairspray; *Venue:* **Chevrolet Theatre, Wallingford, Conn.**; *Attendance:* 9,577; *Ticket Range:* \$78-\$28; *Promoter:* Jim Koplik Presents (CCE); *Dates:* Sept. 13–18; *No. of Shows:* 6

5) *Gross Sales:* \$451,326; *Event:* Alejandro Fernandez; *Venue:* **The Colosseum at Caesars Palace, Las Vegas**; *Attendance:* 4,148; *Ticket Range:* \$175-\$65; *Promoter:* AEG live, Concerts West, In-house; *Dates:* Sept. 15; *No. of Shows:* 1

Compiled by Rick Saas, HotTickets@venuestoday.com

AGENTS & PROMOTERS STRESS RELATIONSHIP SKILLS AT IEBA

- NASHVILLE — Sometimes stepping into the future is as easy as looking backwards, according to a panel of veteran agents, managers and promoters at the 35th annual International Entertainment Buyers Association's IEBA Live! held here Oct. 2-4.

"The future is going back to the way it used to be," said Tom Consolo, Azoff Music Management. "The trend is going back to promoters that are region specific. It is important to work with those promoters regionally and work them into the system."

Rob Light, Creative Artists Agency agreed, nodding to the packed ballroom in Nashville's Hilton Hotel, where many of the almost 370 attendees (up from 320 last year) were sitting. "About 15 percent of our business comes from the very large acts, the rest, the day to day, come from you. U2 will always play for Clear Channel. I'm over it. I'd rather do 20 ZZ Top dates every single year than do one act every few years. ZZ Top grossed \$11 million this year. You just keep the supply chain going."

Consolo and Light were joined by panelists Arny Granat, Jam Productions; Jim Gosnell, APA; Doc McGhee, McGhee Entertainment; and Doug Isaac, Worldwide Entertainment/Jack Utsick Presents Northeast. Bill Reid, Rising Tide Productions, was the moderator. He asked the panel if national companies are good for the industry.

"No," said Granat. "National companies don't have the knowledge like the regional and local promoters do."

Isaac's answer was more tempered. "I don't think there is any clear-cut answer," he said. "We are not a Clear Channel, but we do buy multiple dates and we work with local promoters. We have to fight for our dates."

Reid asked if the panel thought national promoters do a better job.

"I don't think national promoters do a better job than an agent," Gosnell said. "I don't think national promoters think about all the ancillaries. I don't think a national promoter will always put the act in the right venue."

Light agreed that agents need to be kept in the game. "I think an agency will have a wider vision for what acts can do in other settings than just touring, like movies, casinos, corporate dates," Light said. "I don't think there is any national promoter that can bring that into the mix. I think agencies are now morphing again. Agencies are saying here is what we can bring to the table as far as marketing. They continue to morph to try to find their place in the market."

McGhee said in the last 10 years, the agency business has really evolved. "We all keep reinventing ourselves," he said. "We have had to. I have used agents and relationships with all promoters out there. Local promoters know their areas. It is a team. I wouldn't do anything without an agent."

Reid asked if the role of a manager has changed recently.

"Yes, dramatically, in the last five years," McGhee said. "We're still carrying crayons for the act, but we are working harder now to get each individual promoter involved."

Consolo agreed. "I think it is obvious that it takes more than one person to get this done. It takes good symmetry."

And relationship building is important, too. "I think most of us have been in a position where you have someone on MTV and they will sell out," McGhee said. "For the manager who rode only one horse out one year and went alone, then the next year, when they want on board with someone else, that answer will be no. It's all about relationships."

Reid asked them what they thought is a fair deal.

Gosnell said what is fair in the marketplace. "And always leave something on the table for the promoter," Gosnell said. "You have to be fair. I don't think agents should stick their heads in the sand. If you see a promoter in a difficult position, what can you do to make it more fair? What is booked in March may look a lot different in August."

"This has to get back to a more cultural thing," McGhee said. "If you don't teach your artists to be responsible, you can bet they are going to turn on you. You have to be the best promoter you can be and get back [to] when you can trust the agent and manager."

Other IEBA highlights this year included award presentations. They were: William Morris Agency, Agency of the Year; The Oak Ridge Boys, Living Legend Award recipient; Ryman Auditorium, Nashville, Venue of the Year; Cheap Trick, Lifetime Achievement Award recipient; Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo, Fair, Festival or Special Event of the Year; Vince Gill, Humanitarian Award recipient; Barry Jeffrey, William Morris Agency, Talent Agent of the Year; Doc McGhee, McGhee Entertainment, Industry Achievement Award recipient; Barbara Hubbard, Mother Hubbard Scholarships, Presidents Award recipient; Mike Smardak, Outback Concerts of Tennessee, Talent Buyer of the Year; and Joe Guercio, Nashville Music Design, Founders Award recipient.

Next year's IEBA Live will again meet at the Hilton Hotel. Dates are Oct. 15-17. — Pam Sherborne

Interviewed for this story: Rob Light, (310) 288-4545; Arny Granat, (312) 266-6262;

Jim Gosnell, (212) 582-1500; Doc McGhee, (310) 358-9299; Doug Isaac, (305) 604-8700; Bill Reid, (757) 622-9877, Tom Consolo, (310) 209-3100

MARKETING

Corferias, a 50-year-old fair and exposition center in Bogota



BOGOTA GETS AGGRESSIVE WITH CONVENTIONS CAMPAIGN

With five centuries of history behind it and a rich cultural legacy, the city of Bogota, in Colombia, is ready to attract conventioners from the region and abroad.

Local travel agencies, hotels and the local chamber of commerce have come together to form the Bureau de Convenciones y Visitantes de Bogotá (BCVB),

Bogota's Conventions and Visitors Bureau. Its goal is to promote the city as a center for conventions and expos. Local airline companies are already negotiating to become members. The first phase will cost about \$80,000 (U.S.).

"Bogota has not been positioned as a center for conventions so far," said Javier Cardona, executive director of the bureau. "So we want to take advantage of its rich cultural history and start promoting it through tour operators."

Although it only started operations this year, the bureau could have a big impact on the city's finances in a very short time. "We are not expecting a big impact for this year. But we estimate that the hotel occupancy will grow 4 percent next year," said Andres Alarcon, manager of Hotel Casa Dann Carlton, a founding member of the bureau. That expected growth is in part thanks to the bureau's planned promotional campaigns, he said.

Bogota has 71 hotels between three and five stars and a total offer of 8,237 rooms.

The city has experienced important changes in recent years, attracting major industries that have left their original locations to concentrate their production and sales in Bogota. Over 60 percent of Colombia's industries are now based in Bogota and the business flow of the city is expected to grow even more after the free trade agreement with the United States is signed later on this year.

The city has become a stop for busy personalities like former U.S. president Bill Clinton, Intel CEO Paul Otellini, U.S. National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice and model Naomi Campbell.

Over 80 percent of the people that arrive in Bogota are there on business, but only 9 percent of them attend conventions, according to local reports. That could be a clear sign that the industry is in its early stages and has tremendous growth potential. To take advantage of it, the bureau plans to launch marketing efforts including direct mail,

videos, promotional CDs and an e-bulletin with information about the city, the bureau's members and upcoming events.

"The city has a large hotel infrastructure," said Cardona. More than half of Colombia's convention venues are located in Bogota, with the cities of Medellin and Cartagena coming second with an approximate 26 percent market share.

The infrastructure has been strengthened even more by the government of Colombia's president Alvaro Uribe Velez, said Alarcon. "There is a growing interest in the Andean region and Central America to come to Bogota because it has a lot to offer," he said.

Bogota's main meeting venues include the Gonzalo Jimenez de Quesada Convention Center and Corferias, both of them 15 minutes from the Eldorado International Airport. The 25-year-old convention center has a capacity of 5,000 and holds about 300 events annually. The 50-year-old Corferias, a fairgrounds, has a total area of 1.9 million square feet distributed over 27 pavilions. It holds about 25 events annually. Smaller venues and meeting spaces are also available throughout the city.

"Bogota, a city of 8 million people, is a place where all the activity that goes on sometimes goes unnoticed," said Cardona. "It is our job to bring notoriety to the conventions and fairs activities." — María Agustina Guerrero

Interviewed for this story: Javier Cardona, 57-1-3349111; Andrés Alarcón, manager, 57-1-6001313

CONCESSIONS



Anaheim Angels merchandise stand, left, and Boston Celtics plush prototype

AEG SUCCESSFULLY MONKEYS AROUND WITH MLB ANGELS MERCH

The Major League Baseball (MLB) Anaheim Angels saw a 15 percent increase in its merchandise gross this season due to expanded sales outlets, a redesigned gift shop and a wider variety of items at lower prices, according to the head exec at the club's new retail management firm, AEG Merchandising.

For example, a fitted baseball hat, like those worn by the players, retailed at \$24.95, about \$10 below comparable teams' prices, said Alan Fey, AEG's vice president of Merchandising. "A lot of things are down 10 to 15 percent," he said. The only items that increased in retail cost were those that increased in wholesale cost.

AEG built on the existing line of Family Value items, which offered hats at \$7-\$10, stuffed rally monkeys at \$10 (down from \$15 last year) and baseballs and bats for \$4 and \$5, Fey said. Over 100,000 units were sold in this category.

"We believe in fair market pricing, quality products and good customer service," Fey said. "Those are the things we hang our hat on."

AEG won the contract, replacing FMI, in January, so the company only had two months to accomplish top priorities before spring training began in March. One of these was moving the cash registers in the main gift shop at the stadium to a side wall to alleviate congestion and to increase points of sale in the store to eight to lessen long lines.

Anaheim Angels items were also now available at AEG outlets, including the two-year-old Team LA store at Universal CityWalk, and the existing Team LA stores in Staples Center in Los Angeles, and The Home Depot Center in nearby Carson, Calif. Angels items were also added to Team LA's Web site, but that's "not the biggest part of our business," Fey said.

More women's and children's products were added, especially to the children's store located in the lower-priced seating in the outfield, Fey said.

Core items, such as jerseys, especially playoff game specific jerseys, are still top sellers, as are "fandemonium" items. "I keep thinking that bobbleheads and foam fingers and pennants are going to go out of style, but I think my buyers would shoot me if I said not to buy them because they sell them like crazy," Fey said. "Anything to wave and cheer."

Majestic, Nike and New Era are top suppliers, but a new MLB sanctioned supplier, R.W.L. Millennium Inc., out of Santa Monica, Calif., provides one of the hottest items — the rally monkeys. "We sold thousands and thousands of monkeys this year," Fey said. "We made some red monkeys with wigs and stuff like that. We try to take advantage of the monkey forces."

Monkey-maker Maggie Rothschild, founder of R.W.L., was, in fact, encouraged early on in her career by Fey.

Rothschild's first sports client was the Los Angeles Dodgers' Mike Nygren. He wanted to do a beanie bear giveaway of 25,000, but Ty, by far the leading company in beanie bears, would only agree to a run of 10,000 because more bears lowered the value in the eyes of collectors.

So Nygren called Rothschild, whose claim to fame until that point was that she created a bear with a clock that counts down to the end of the millennium. Nygren's next big order from Rothschild was a stadium full of blue wigs for fans, which was not her area of expertise, but she obliged. The wigs were a hit, garnering huge publicity for the team.

That's when Fey called Rothschild and said he wanted wigs for the National Basketball Association Los Angeles Lakers for their victory parade.

She soon received calls from both the MLB and NBA offering to license her items for all the league's teams.

Rothschild combined the success of the wigs with her beanie bears, and came up with troll-haired beanie bears from a dream she had one night, which Fey turned down because Angels fans prefer monkeys. So she put the hair on monkeys, and a hit was born. Rothschild said the monkeys sell at the rate of 3,000 a game. She sells the monkeys wholesale for \$8. The monkeys and their tags carry sponsorship messages. "Everything has nine or 10 patents on it," she added.

Rothschild is now frantically importing more monkeys from her factories in China for the Angels playoff games. And another team has asked her to import curly wigs so fans can have hair like one of the star players.

Rothschild is also hard at work dreaming up the next big fad, which she thinks may be plush versions of mascots. She just finished a prototype of the NBA Boston Celtics leprechaun yesterday. — Natasha Emmons

Interviewed for this story: Alan Fey, (213) 742-7100; Maggie Rothschild, (818) 906-2069

Los Angeles County Fair ads touted fair food



LOS ANGELES COUNTY FAIRGOERS GORGE ON 12% MORE FOOD THIS YEAR

POMONA, Calif. — The overall food gross at the Los Angeles County Fair at the Fairplex in Pomona this year was \$15.8 million, up from \$14 million last year. Per cap was \$11.90.

There was more to this success than the good weather, however, according to Rey O'Day, director of Food & Beverage. The key is "creature comforts," she said. More seating areas have been added each year, and the 240 concession stands that were booked into the fair were

required to have counter space for guests to linger. "There are a couple of things that just make more money — one is seating and one is counters," she said.

These areas were added at the expense of several stands. The stands that got the ax were the lower-grossing ones, which, more often than not, offered healthy fare, such as salads, sandwiches and crepes. "When people come to the fair, they give themselves permission to eat things they're not supposed to eat," she said.

The fair was spread out longer this year, and closed on Mondays and Tuesdays, to add one more weekend and ease weekend crowds, which also helped food sales, O'Day

said.

Overall fair attendance was 1.33 million, up from 1.30 million in 2004.

The top grossing stands this year, and every year, at the L.A. County Fair offered barbecue. Top three were Duggan's Concessions All American, Dugans (a different company) Chuckwagon and J.J. & Sons Piggly Wiggly. "You can see the food cooking, smell the food, it's very sense-oriented," O'Day said.

Ambiance is important to O'Day. She doesn't allow handwritten signs. She requires bright colors on stands for the daytime and lights at night. She also encourages themed music at stands. For example, one Italian stand has a Frank Sinatra CD playing, a Mexican joint has a Latino band, and the barbecue stands have honky-tonk and rockabilly music.

Mexican fare is also hot at the fair. Rose's Concessions Mexican food was in the top five, and the Fairplex, which owns 40 food outlets itself under the Cornucopia Foods LLC banner, converted an Italian stand to a Mexican stand, Border Grill, this year.

Fairplex took over its own food and beverage operations from longtime concessionaire C&C Concessions in April 2004. "It's been a wild ride," said O'Day, who serves as general manager of the division. "We didn't own a fork before that."

The reason behind the change was to allow the fairgrounds management more flexibility and the ability to change menus with different demographics. And it's working, according to O'Day.

The division employs about 400 during the fair when all of the stands and restaurants are open, and about 100 off-season. Off-season events can be catered in the 500-seat Avalon restaurant and 100-seat Top of the Park restaurant, which were both open during the fair. Las Costillas de Sancho and the Vineyard Market were other restaurant concepts open during the fair.

Vineyard Market was new this year, located in the air-conditioned wine tasting area and offering high-end deli plates. Top sellers were the turkey pita and Caprese salad.

Cornucopia catered six or seven picnics on Picnic Hill on the grounds, and a massive 6,000-attendee event for Pomona Valley Hospital on the infield of the racetrack.

New concepts on the midway this year were pulled pork, which was the most popular new item; deep-fried avocados, which received the most press coverage; apple fries, which were "tasty," according to O'Day; and blended ice cream. "What I'm surprised about is that the [deep fried] Twinkies and Oreos still have legs under them," she added.

One new marketing angle that was added this year, and will be expanded next year, is offering items made from the fair's award-winning recipes. For example, after the patrons wander through the community baking competition exhibit, samples of the award-winning cookies and brownies are available to buy. Award-winning wines and olive oils are also used throughout the fair food stands.

Drinks sold in take-home margarita shakers were hits this year, O'Day said. And the fair sold 80,000 souvenir cups with the fair's mascot Summer on them.

Although items on sticks are still popular, as people start taking time to relax at tables more, items without sticks are gaining steam. "A family will go to four different stands

and bring the food to one table," she said.

O'Day works hard year-round to make the fair successful. She holds four meetings each year with a rotating panel of representatives from the concessionaires. "We meet and talk and work a lot on how to continually improve what we do, and do a better job of selling," she said. "What makes people more comfortable and want to be here? The longer they are here, the more they purchase."

Another task of this committee is to bid on large quantities of items such as bread and paper for all of the concessionaires. "We have the cheapest ice anywhere — \$5 a bag," O'Day said.

O'Day also gives out internal awards to concessionaires each year. This year's Best of Show winner was L&L Concessions, which offers a variety of items including Philly cheesesteak, funnel cake and soft serve ice cream. "Their signage is professional, their folks have uniforms, their product tastes good, they tried some branded things that worked for them. They made mock-ups for their menus so you can walk up and see what they're offering," she said. "They're still pushing themselves to improve and be as good as they can be."

This was O'Day's 18th Los Angeles County Fair. "I'm an event junkie," she said. "I like that we are creating something for a guest. It's like throwing a big party."

She also credits Fairplex management with her success. "They want us to rock the boat. They want us to try new things, keep pushing ourselves," she said.

O'Day already has pages of ideas for next year's fair. "As soon as the fair started, I made a folder for 2006," she said. The event is tentatively scheduled for Sept. 8-Oct. 1.
— Natasha Emmons

Interviewed for this story: Rey O'Day, (909) 865-4513

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SHORT TAKES

WATERLESS URINAL COMPANY OFFERING DISCOUNTS TO HURRICANE VICTIMS

Vista, Calif.-based Waterless Co. LLC is offering \$500,000 in discounts on its water conservation urinal product line for all facilities in the affected hurricane area in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Texas and Florida. Waterless will offer substantial discounts to building owners, schools, colleges, cities, counties, state agencies, the military and other facilities for its Waterless No-Flush urinals. In commercial environments, Waterless No-Flush urinals save approximately 45,000 gallons of water per urinal per year.

Contact: Waterless Co., 1-800-244-6364

TOYOTA BUYS NAMING RIGHTS FOR TWO KENNEWICK VENUES

The Three Rivers Coliseum in Kennewick, Wash., has signed a 10-year, \$2.1-million naming rights deal with Toyota. That venue will now be Toyota Center and Three Rivers Ice Arena will be Toyota Arena. The Toyota Center, Toyota Arena and the Three Rivers Convention Center are located on the Three Rivers Campus in Kennewick's Vista Entertainment District. Toyota Center is home to the Tri-City Americans minor league hockey team and the National Indoor Football League Tri-Cities Fever. Compass Facility Management Inc. handles operations for the three venues under a management agreement with the Kennewick Public Facilities District and through an inter-local agreement with the City of Kennewick.

Contact: Tom W. Cornwall, executive director of the Three Rivers Campus, (509) 222-2201

NASSAU COLISEUM EMBROILED IN DEVELOPMENT DEBATE

Three new proposals have been filed for redevelopment of the Nassau Coliseum site in Uniondale, N.Y., joining the \$1 billion plan proposed by billionaire Charles Wang and Reckson Associates early this year. The New York Mets of Major League Baseball, and two prominent Long Island developers, filed separate proposals on Oct. 4 with County Executive Thomas Suozzi to develop the 77-acre site. The proposals range in cost from \$725 million to \$1.4 billion. The Mets proposal envisions a minor league baseball stadium there. Wang owns the New York Islanders hockey team, which plays at the Coliseum. The 16,234-seat Coliseum was built in 1972. In March, Suozzi sent lawmakers a deal he negotiated privately with Wang to develop the site in return for paying \$1.5 million annually in rent, extending the Islanders contract to play in Nassau from 2015 to 2025, and spending at least \$150 million to renovate the arena. He subsequently agreed to accept competing proposals. SMG has a contract with the country to manage the coliseum through 2015.

Contact: Nassau Coliseum, (516) 794-9303

COLLEGE PAC NAMED FOR MAJOR DONORS

The Southwestern Oregon Community College's Performing Arts Center in Coos Bay was renamed Hales Center for the Performing Arts, honoring two former donors, Forrest and Marian Hale, at ceremonies Oct. 7. The two donated more than \$1.5 million to the college and the Southwestern Foundation — the college's fund-raising arm. Both Hales died earlier this year. Southwestern launched the capital campaign for its \$4.4

million performing arts center in 1997. The Hales were the first to contribute and became the largest private donors the center had.
Contact: SOCC, (800) 962-2838

ARAMARK SERVING UP DRINKS FOR CLEAR CHANNEL EMPLOYEES

Clear Channel Communications Inc. awarded Aramark Refreshment Services Inc. a national contract to supply coffee and filtered water for Clear Channel's 25,000 employees in more than 350 locations. Under the terms of the agreement, Aramark will supply employees with their choice of Starbucks, Seattle's Best, Flavia, Folgers or Cory Coffee. Employees also will be able to order various teas and drink water funneled through the company's proprietary AquaMark water filtration system. Aramark Refreshment Services is a subsidiary of Philadelphia-based Aramark Corp. (NYSE: RMK).

Contact: ARS, (800) 233-3181

DON VAUGHN RETIRES FROM FREEMAN AFTER 27 YEARS

Don Vaughn, executive vice president, corporate events, retired from Freeman Sept. 1 after a 27-year career. Vaughn has been a longtime member of the Center for Exhibition Industry Research, International Association for Exhibition Management, Exhibit Designers & Producers Association, Healthcare Convention & Exhibitors Association, and the Convention Industry Council. Prior to joining Freeman, Vaughn worked with Kiwanis International, the National Association of Home Builders; and jthe Astrodome, Houston. He first joined Freeman in 1974 as executive vice president and relocated to Dallas, a move that coincided with the relocation of Freeman's headquarters to Dallas from Des Moines, Iowa. He was in and out of the company, including stints creating a new industry organization called the Trade Show Bureau to promote the benefits of the exposition industry to corporate America and a few years with the Houston CVB as president. After several years there and in Washington, D.C., Vaughn re-joined Freeman in 1991 as executive vice president, corporate accounts, to begin the development of their corporate event services capabilities.

Contact: Ellen Beckert, (214) 670-9089

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