

Rick Saas

Subject: FW: Oct. 26, 2005 Newsletter



VENUES**today**

"The news behind the headlines"

Dear Rick,

October 26, 2005 VOL. IV, Number XXXII ISSN 1547-4143

Welcome to your **Venues Today** weekly e-newsletter, full of the latest live entertainment industry news. Look for the latest safety and security trends coming in your November magazine. Managing Editor Natasha Emmons just returned from IAAM's International Convention Center Conference in San Francisco this weekend. Look for coverage here and in the November issue. 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

"From day one, I said you should be able to blindfold a Martian and bring him in here and he would say, 'We must be in Charlotte, North Carolina.'" — Barry Silberman, general manager, Charlotte Bobcats Arena, on the venue's pervasive local theme

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VENUE NEWS

Charlotte Bobcats Arena's Donna Julian, Jamie Banks and Barry Silberman in front of the scoreboard with an 18-foot tall Charlotte skyline



ROLLING STONES OPEN NEW BOBCATS ARENA

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — The Rolling Stones rocked the new Charlotte Bobcats Arena Oct. 21, the debut event with 17,000 in the sold-out house. Levy Restaurants reported concessions sales were a predictable 78 percent drinks, 22 percent food, despite hopes the first crowd in might sample the well-publicized variety of foods. AEG Merchandise manned the souvenir stands.

Pritchard Sports had 60 maintenance people on hand to prepare for the grand opening, with 40-45 staying during the event, according to Pritchard's Don Rankin and Roland Hayden. They started the cleanup Wednesday, Oct. 19, working around the Hunt Construction crew that worked up to the last minute to open early to accommodate the rock and roll legends. The concert was promoted by TNA and Clear Channel Entertainment (CCE). CCE's Wilson Howard had a smile on his face.

Jamie Banks, public relations coordinator, lined the media up outdoors, conducting interview after interview on the plaza because the Rolling Stones require a media lockdown day of show.

Building manager Barry Silberman started his own personally conducted tour of the building on the plaza as well, noting that 1 percent of the construction budget was dedicated to public art, including the "bobbins" out front, tall artistic replicas of that mainstay of the textile industry.

With its downtown location, the hope is the arena will be a daily magnet, revitalizing the district. In a year-and-a-half, light rail will bring guests to the arena from a 20-mile radius north to south. Right now, there is a trolley stop served by three 40-person trolleys, and the transit center is across the street from the plaza.

There are 25,000 parking spaces in a 15-minute radius of the arena, none arena- or city-owned. To accommodate guests, the arena has customized a pre-paid parking

program from Click and Park. Called Print and Park in Charlotte, it is a routing system tied into the Paciolan ticketing system, so fans can pre-pay parking in a package that comes complete with a route to the parking lot. Buyers are not only sent the print-at-home parking permit and the map, they are reminded a day out how to get there.

Silberman said about 400 Print and Park tickets had been sold two days out for the Rolling Stones concert. The arena charges a \$2.50 service charge, which is a break-even proposition, he said. The parking lot owners determine parking prices, which vary depending on location.

To Silberman, the ease of going to an event is an essential part of the customer service he emphasized. He doesn't want patrons worrying about where they'll park, if traffic will be horrible, or any other aspect of the experience that might keep them from leaving home. "It takes the anxiety out of the equation," Silberman said.

The shakedown prior to opening the arena also included an extensive transportation management plan, Silberman said. "Two days ago, we practiced 37 different scenarios," he said Oct. 21. They conjured up many things that might happen, from a wreck tying up a main thoroughfare to how to deal with the limos and taxis. There are 140 security cameras inside and outside the building tied into the building and law enforcement centers. On opening day, there were 60 police officers assigned to the big intersections. They expected the Print and Park wayfinding system to help ease traffic congestion. The police also hired a consultant and held several pre-event rehearsals. The night of the show, it worked. People were not sitting in traffic.

The arena is also starting an ambassador program with City Center Partners, a coalition of downtown businesses. The ambassadors will wear black caps, black bands and gold shirts and will help advise event-goers on where to eat, answer questions and generally smooth the process. They are to man a two-block radius around the arena. Three hundred people volunteered for training. The offering they point out will include four fast-food restaurants on the exterior of the arena, to include Dunkin Donuts, Baskin Robbins, Rod's Barbecue and Matt's Chicago Dogs. "We want them to eat out there," Silberman said. The idea is to make the customer experience a great one and if that means easing lines inside with exterior restaurants, that works for the Bobcats and Levy. There will also be entertainment on the plaza.

Marlene Hendricks, guest services, had 225 workers on hand to greet guests the first night. They had 11 hours of training. The mantra is smile and be happy.

Besides customer service, the emphasis has been on sense of place. Silberman and the Bobcats team have spent time and money on art and signage that makes it clear this arena is in Charlotte. It starts with the "bobbins" out front. Silberman said 99 percent of the people will enter through the main lobby, two-thirds in the Trade Street entrance and one-third from Fifth Street. They were greeted, one and all, with a themed lobby and themed concourses that "reflect where we are in the world," Silberman said. "We are totally themed out."

In the main lobby, there are "greetings from" postcard-style art that has images of North Carolina. The names of every town of 10,000 or more population are etched in glass, displayed in the lobby. "From day one, I said you should be able to blindfold a Martian and bring him in here and he would say, 'We must be in Charlotte, North Carolina.'" There are historical banners depicting the history of Charlotte, likenesses of Queen Charlotte as she might be today and as she was historically, street names on concourse corners coinciding with the city outside, and, of course, the Charlotte skyline on the giant scoreboard.

On the convenience side, the seating bowl offers a large menu of options, including club seats that are close to the action since the primary audience is rabid sports fans more interested in sightlines than amenities. "We went with the real estate slogan: location, location, location," Silberman said. Other options include five founders suites, two of which are doubles owned by Wachovia and Bank of America and seat 44 people each; royal boxes which are a deluxe offering without privacy or the amenities of a suite, ledge seats which include dinner in the all-inclusive ticket package, luxury suites (16-24 people) and four party suites (50-person capacity). The Bobcats opted to put restroom facilities outside, not inside, suites. Excluding premium seating, there are a total of 16,000-16,500 seats for basketball. Silberman said the terrace tables, which seat four, six or eight, are "the 2005 version of a baseball box seat."

Rock the Rooftop, a public party space on the upper level, had not opened in time for the Stones, but was to be rocking by Bobcats basketball. That area can be removed and replaced with portable risers to increase capacity to 21,200 for ACC basketball, he noted.

The house sound and light systems are first class, Silberman said, pointing to the intelligent lighting system on the center truss as an example. There are 48 lights that can light the audience and the scoreboard. "The NBA said we had more lighting day in and day out than they had for the All-Star Game," Silberman said.

The curtaining system is also elaborate. They can bring it straight down to cover up all 10,500 seats in the upper bowl for the theater setup. They can curtain a proscenium-stage theater from 3,500 to 7,500 capacity. The Bobcats Arena is part of the ArenaNetwork and the Arena Network Theater Group.

Jim Schumacher, city engineer, remarked on how well the team, Hunt Construction, the architect Ellerbe Becket and the city worked as a team. He said the building has lots of "creative tension," resulting in the give and take that makes a project great. — Linda Deckard

Interviewed for this story: Barry Silberman, (704) 329-4120

Don Riccardi, Mark Zimmerman, Shura Lindgren, Jerry Daigle, Rich Singer, Tucson (Ariz.) Convention Center, and Barry Strafacci, Global Spectrum



ICCC PANEL: EXTRA SERVICES, EVENTS & SPONSORSHIP PAD REVENUE

SAN FRANCISCO — Additional services, new events and sponsorship opportunities were all discussed as ways to increase revenue at convention centers during a session at the IAAM

International Convention Center Conference (ICCC) in San Francisco Oct. 20-22.

Jerry Daigle, deputy general manager of the Orange County Convention Center (OCCC) in Orlando, Fla., described the remote skycap services his venue offers. "I strongly suspect this will catch on very quickly," he said.

OCCC uses a service called Baggage Airline Guest Services (BAGS) (www.airportbags.com), which charges \$10 to take an attendee's bags to the airport and put them on their plane, a fee that Daigle does not mark up. One group paid up front for its 4,800 attendees to use the service, he said. "You could obviously have any kind of revenue model you want," he added.

Mark Zimmerman, general manager of the Georgia World Congress Center Authority, Atlanta, brought the results of a new -event brainstorming session with 100 staff members: wine tasting, movies in theater, black tie charity events, monthly antique/car shows, and Latin America and Asian community events. Other ideas included expanding the gift shop, allowing credit cards at all food outlets, more retail and food carts, adding a massage/spa area, renting out Segway scooters, and offering wireless Internet and video conferencing.

The group also suggested charging \$20 more per exhibitor, replacing the dining room with a sports bar and renting out the parking shuttle busses to events. And they suggested turning shuttles, elevators and bathroom doors into ad space.

Shura Lindgren, Global Spectrum general manager at the new St. Charles (Mo.) Convention Center, kept potential revenue streams in mind every step of the way. The venue offers a wall with places for 14 ads and pamphlets, which rent for \$100-\$200 per month, plus a plasma screen. It also offers a kiosk that connects only to sponsor Web sites. There are also spots on the venue marquee for ads, one of which was bought by Budweiser.

SBC handles telecommunications as a sponsor. "We have to have all of this stuff...what can we get in exchange for that because it's obviously a revenue generator for another company," was the thinking, she said. "It stretched our budget."

Lindgren even sold the boardroom to a nonprofit group, Partners for Progress, that supports local business.

Don Riccardi, general manager of the Santa Clara (Calif.) Convention Center, went on a sponsorship spree in 2003. Up until that point, the venue did not have any sponsorship because the boom in Silicon Valley kept the coffers full. "The rainy day came in 2001," Riccardi said. "Our revenue decreased by 50 percent in one year."

Riccardi chose to hire an outside firm, Spot Focus, to handle the sponsorship. "We really wanted to have a 'wow' program. We just allowed Spot Focus group to come in and install, run, operate and sell."

They added portable signage that could be sold to meeting planners, which they, in turn, could sell to exhibitors, "which has really turned out to be a windfall for most of them," Riccardi said. There are also plasma screens in the registration area that can run rotating animated ads. And there are plasma screens wall-mounted in the conference rooms. — Natasha Emmons

Interviewed for this story: Jerry Daigle, (407) 685-9820; Mark Zimmerman, (404) 223-4000; Shura Lindgren, (636) 669-3000; Don Riccardi, (408) 748-7018

Michael Hughes



ANALYSIS SHOWS STRONG CONVENTIONS MARKET

SAN FRANCISCO — The convention center business is

finally seeing a return to growth, according to a welcome report given to IAAM's International Convention Center Conference (ICCC) attendees over this past weekend (Oct. 20-22).

Michael Hughes, director of research for *Tradeshow Week*, was the bearer of good tidings for an industry that has been offended by a well-publicized Brookings Institution report that theorized that convention center space was overbuilt for limited demand.

"The rate of demand for exhibit space is matching exactly with supply," Hughes said. His research indicates there will be 5,000 trade shows in the United States and Canada in 2006.

Hughes said that more people are educated in convention centers every year than all of the colleges in the country. "The power in this industry is shifting quickly and dramatically to attendees," he surmised. "We're really seeing an attendee-led recovery over the next 12 months."

Conventions dropped sharply in 2002 during the economic recessions following the terrorist attacks on the United States. Since then, attendance has increased faster than exhibitor participation, at a rate of 3.6 percent vs. 1.2 percent in 2005.

Hughes suggested that convention centers focus on being more attendee-friendly with better signage, more robust greeter programs, concierge services, airport baggage check-in, and Web sites that are helpful to attendees, not just event planners.

The convention center building boom, however, has resulted in increased competition for events. The deciding factor for the majority of meeting planners is hotel space. "The differentiator, unfortunately, is not under your control."

On the show floor, the availability of information on the Internet has led to a decreased emphasis on new product demonstrations on the trade show floor, and more focus on personal interaction. "They're really trying to size up the people behind the brand," Hughes said. "The rapid power shift to attendees has really changed the game."

Exhibitors are in a state of confusion about how to best market their products, Hughes said. "[Customers] can access faster, better cheaper information before they go into a store or a trade show. ...They're further along in the buying process when they get to the show."

The average convention center now has 187,066 square feet of exhibit space, which can handle 70-75 percent of shows looking for space. And the average number of meeting rooms is 26. About 80 percent of municipal convention centers have marketing budgets separate from their city's Convention & Visitors Bureau and the average annual marketing budget is \$400,000, all according to Hughes' statistics.

There is about 7.3 million square feet of new convention center space in the pipeline, Hughes estimated. "This industry is in a perpetual expansion and boom mode," he said. "Most of the activity today is smaller or second-tier convention centers." There is 82.3 million square feet of convention center space in 440 centers open now, and there will be 89.6 million by 2009, he said.

Hughes also discussed the high quality of new convention centers coming online. "Today, we're really at a level where there are two types of venues — civic icons...and the 'super hotel,' like Mandalay Bay, The Venetian, the Gaylord properties," he said.

So convention centers have to compete at that level. "I'm amazed at how few

convention centers have boardrooms they rent out, smaller alcove areas with comfortable chairs."

Most of the growth is in consumer shows, which is something a convention center can initiate much easier than a new trade show, Hughes said. Also, events are often more locally based, such as corporate and community gatherings, rather than international in scope. "You're really going to see some creativity there moving forward," he said.

"If you're investing for the community, you need to serve the community. You've seen that post-Katrina, though not in the way [expected]."

Hughes also suggested that the industry look at streamlining their pricing structures to help meeting planners because they vary widely from venue-to-venue. The most widely used (52 percent) pricing structure is renting entire halls on a flat-fee, per-day basis. But others break cost down by square footage (net or gross) or on a per-event basis.

Hughes also suggested that venue managers figure out what other destinations are their "competitive set" and keep on top of what those are doing, both their strengths and weaknesses.

Since business is so closely linked with hotels, Hughes suggested venue managers acquaint themselves with the owners and keep them abreast of their business. —

Natasha Emmons

Interviewed for this story: Michael Hughes, (213) 965-5317

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BOOKINGS



HOT tickets

PAUL MCCARTNEY & U2 DOMINATE THE WEEK

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 Oct. 5, 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: \$9,658,009; Event: U2; Venue: **Madison Square Garden Arena, New York**; Attendance: 93,275; Ticket Range: \$165-\$49.50; Promoter: Ron Delsener Presents (CCE), The Next Adventure; Dates: Oct. 7-14; No. of Shows: 5*
2. *Gross Sales: \$4,733,526; Event: Paul McCartney; Venue: **The Palace Of Auburn Hills (Mich.)**; Attendance: 33,511; Ticket Range: \$252-\$52; Promoter: Palace Sports & Entertainment, Inc.; Dates: Oct. 14-15; No. of Shows: 2*
3. *Gross Sales: \$4,087,404; Event: Paul McCartney; Venue: **United Center, Chicago**; Attendance: 32,647; Ticket Range: \$49.50-\$20; Promoter: AEG Live, Concerts West, Marshall Arts, MPL; Dates: Oct. 18-19; No. of Shows: 2*
4. *Gross Sales: \$3,773,053; Event: U2; Venue: **Wachovia Complex, Philadelphia**; Attendance: 39,305; Ticket Range: \$165-\$49.50; Promoter: Electric Factory Concerts (CCE), The Next Adventure; Dates: Oct. 16-17; No. of Shows: 2*
5. *Gross Sales: \$2,379,629; Event: Paul McCartney; Venue: **Air Canada Centre, Toronto, Ontario**; Attendance: 16,924; Ticket Range: \$232.64-\$49.93; Promoter: Clear Channel Entertainment; Dates: Oct. 14; No. of Shows: 1*

10,001 - 15,000 Seats

1. *Gross Sales: \$454,699; Event: Gwen Stefani; Venue: **Cox Arena at Aztec Bowl, San Diego**; Attendance: 9,792; Ticket Range: \$61.50-\$32; Promoter: House of Blues Concerts; Dates: Oct. 20; No. of Shows: 1*
2. *Gross Sales: \$396,820; Event: Santana; Venue: **Don Haskins Center, El Paso, Texas**; Attendance: 8,023; Ticket Range: \$59.50-\$39.50; Promoter: Jack Utsick Presents, Stone City Productions; Dates: Oct. 8; No. of Shows: 1*
3. *Gross Sales: \$310,349; Event: Michael Flatley; Venue: **MTS Center, Winnipeg, Manitoba**; Attendance: 5,586; Ticket Range: \$76.03-\$42.05; Promoter: Clear Channel Entertainment; Dates: Oct. 11; No. of Shows: 1*
4. *Gross Sales: \$297,896; Event: An Evening with Bill Clinton; Venue: **John Labatt Centre, London, Ontario**; Attendance: 4,872; Ticket Range: \$85.22-\$73.13; Promoter: TINEPublic; Dates: Oct. 17; No. of Shows: 1*
5. *Gross Sales: \$280,804; Event: Celtic Tiger starring Michael Flatley; Venue: **John Labatt Centre, London, Ontario**; Attendance: 4,158; Ticket Range: \$77.18-\$51.67; Promoter: Clear Channel Entertainment; Dates: Oct. 6; No. of Shows: 1*

5,001-10,000 Seats

1. *Gross Sales: \$963,130; Event: Luis Miguel; Venue: **Dodge Arena, Hidalgo, Texas**; Attendance: 9,856; Ticket Range: \$175-\$45; Promoter: CCE Viveló; Dates: Oct. 12; No. of Shows: 1*

2. *Gross Sales:* \$811,551; *Event:* Luis Miguel; *Venue:* **El Paso (Texas) County Coliseum**; *Attendance:* 17,166; *Ticket Range:* \$98.50-\$50; *Promoter:* CCE Viveló; *Dates:* Oct. 7–8; *No. of Shows:* 2
3. *Gross Sales:* \$330,769; *Event:* Journey; *Venue:* **Greek Theatre, Los Angeles**; *Attendance:* 5,059; *Ticket Range:* \$84.50-\$35; *Promoter:* Nederlander; *Dates:* Oct. 9; *No. of Shows:* 1
4. *Gross Sales:* \$311,631; *Event:* Black Eyed Peas; *Venue:* **Westpac Centre, Christchurch, New Zealand**; *Attendance:* 5,687; *Ticket Range:* \$59.89; *Promoter:* Frontier Touring Company; *Dates:* Oct. 6; *No. of Shows:* 1
5. *Gross Sales:* \$306,788; *Event:* Dead Can Dance; *Venue:* **Radio City Music Hall, New York**; *Attendance:* 5,961; *Ticket Range:* \$59.50-\$34.50; *Promoter:* RCMH, Ron Delsener Presents (CCE); *Dates:* Oct. 8; *No. of Shows:* 1

5,000 or Fewer Seats

1. *Gross Sales:* \$10,315,000; *Event:* Elton John; *Venue:* **The Colosseum at Caesars Palace, Las Vegas**; *Attendance:* 58,533; *Ticket Range:* \$250-\$100; *Promoter:* AEG Live, Caesars Palace, Concerts West; *Dates:* Oct. 4-23; *No. of Shows:* 15
2. *Gross Sales:* \$839,006; *Event:* Joseph & The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat; *Venue:* **Fox Cities Performing Arts Center, Appleton, Wis.**; *Attendance:* 11,226; *Ticket Range:* \$64-\$34; *Promoter:* Clear Channel Entertainment, In-house; *Dates:* Oct. 4–9; *No. of Shows:* 8
3. *Gross Sales:* \$403,993; *Event:* Riverdance; *Venue:* **Chevrolet Theatre, Wallingford, Conn.**; *Attendance:* 8,096; *Ticket Range:* \$71-\$14.70; *Promoter:* Jim Koplik Presents (CCE); *Dates:* Oct. 4–9; *No. of Shows:* 6
4. *Gross Sales:* \$388,478; *Event:* Verdi's La Traviata; *Venue:* **The Boisfeuillet Jones Atlanta Civic Center**; *Attendance:* 7,492; *Ticket Range:* \$135-\$19; *Promoter:* The Atlanta Opera; *Dates:* Oct. 13-16; *No. of Shows:* 3
5. *Gross Sales:* \$370,320; *Event:* Jethro Tull; *Venue:* **Carnegie Hall, New York**; *Attendance:* 5,576; *Ticket Range:* \$80-\$40; *Promoter:* Ron Delsener Presents (CCE); *Dates:* Oct. 8–9; *No. of Shows:* 2

Compiled by Rick Saas, HotTickets@venuestoday.com

MARKETING



Wembley National Stadium CEO Michael Cunnah, left, and Microsoft UK Business & Marketing Officer Nick Barley; Wembley Stadium under renovation

MICROSOFT IS FOUNDING PARTNER AT WEMBLEY STADIUM

Wembley National Stadium, the UK's premier stadium, has chosen software giant Microsoft as its first founding partner in a deal worth an estimated \$10 million.

"Microsoft was chosen because we're looking to associate with leading brands in their sectors," explained Clive Richards, Wembley Stadium head of Sponsorship.

Wembley Stadium is not releasing the exact sum of the five-year deal, but Richards said that the market price for a founding partner pact until 2010 oscillated around the \$9.7 million mark.

As part of the deal, Microsoft UK will supply information technology for the stadium, which is in the final stages of construction. "Microsoft doesn't tend to do sports sponsorship of this nature so they are clearly making a statement. They'll be looking at putting most of their software into the project, maybe the ticketing system or on the CRM side," said Mark Roberts, senior business sports consultant, Sports Business, Deloitte. "Wembley does have a unique profile with lots of content apart from sport."

Due for completion next year, the new 90,000-seat stadium is not only the home of the English football team and venue for the FA Cup Final and The Football League Cup Final, but hosts a range of sporting, musical, and live events, including The Rugby League Challenge Cup Final and major music concerts.

"The deal means that Microsoft has a relationship with the stadium, but not the individual events that will each have their own commercial partners," said Richards.

"One of the benefits of the [sponsorship deal] will be the visibility of the [Microsoft] brand on each set of stadium turnstiles and at each entrance of the bowl," said Richards. Other perks will include the placing of branded plaques around the stadium and the allocation of a box on the halfway line.

Three other founding partners will be announced next year and negotiations are "advanced with a couple of other categories," according to Richards.

The \$1.3 billion Wembley Stadium is at the heart of a major regeneration program for the London Borough of Brent called "Vision 2020," which will transform the area by

providing new homes, offices and community sport and leisure facilities as well as improved public transport links. The project is also expected to generate about 5,000 new jobs. — Ali Qassim

Interviewed for this story: Clive Richards, 00 208 7959 7637; Mark Roberts, 00 44 (0) 207 303 7841

Ricoh Coliseum



AHL MARLIES SECURE TARGETED SPONSORS FOR FIRST SEASON

Toronto's American Hockey League (AHL) Marlies made their debut on the ice Wednesday with a fat roster of more than 50 corporate sponsors who were carefully chosen to appeal to the squad's audience.

Companies including Molson, Home Depot, Direct Energy, the *Toronto Sun*, BMO and McDonald's, already have platinum, gold and silver partnership level sponsorships with the Maple Leaf Sports & Entertainment group, which owns the Marlies, National Hockey League (NHL) Toronto Maple Leafs and National Basketball Association Toronto Raptors. And several of those companies have extended their deals with the Leafs and Raptors to the Marlies, but the team also wanted to find some unique partners who would speak to the tastes and demographics of their new fans.

"It's a different product, AHL vs. NHL, tier-two sports vs. tier one," said Tom Anselmi, executive vice-president and chief operating officer of Maple Leaf Sports & Entertainment. "So it's a different audience, more suburban vs. downtown corporate. Who they're selling to is different, so the partners that we might want to partner with are different, too. We're taking a strategy that's been successful downtown and adjusting it and lining up sponsors that make sense with this demo."

The process of choosing the partners for the longtime Leafs farm team — which changed names and moved over to Ricoh Coliseum in Toronto this year from St. John's, Newfoundland — began with asking existing Raptors and Leafs sponsors if they were interested and then expanding the circle to find new potential partners who matched the team's audience make-up. Anselmi said the "entry-level" Marlies presented some unique opportunities to go after new sponsors that might not necessarily be a good fit for a pro hockey team like the Maple Leafs.

Those fresh faces include The Source by Circuit City, Trader Media, Yamaha Motor Company, Woodbine Entertainment Group, Maaco, Delta Faucet Canada and Ricoh, which owns the naming rights to the team's home arena, Ricoh Coliseum.

The inside of the arena has plenty of opportunities for partner companies to display their products and services, from Sony TVs throughout the arena that replay the action to Ricoh kiosks that showcase the company's products. In addition to selling their products, food and beverage partners such as Coke, Pizza Pizza, Tim Hortons and Good Humor products are also represented on signage in the building.

"Half of the sponsors are lead ones, like McDonald's and Pizza Pizza, and it's a great

audience for them," said Anselmi. "Whereas, some of our other existing sponsors, like financial services, just wouldn't be interested. We're selling categories we can't with our other teams and the overall spend is significantly lower because with the Raptors we've employed an exclusive strategy where we tried to limit the total number of partners to fewer, larger deals. But with the Marlies we're looking at more, smaller deals because there are more opportunities."

The deals with the partners break into three categories (silver, gold and platinum), which range from \$50,000 to \$250,000, depending on the company and how much of a buy-in they're interested in, with each deal customized to meet the needs of the companies, according to Anselmi. Sony, for instance, has a deal that includes furnishing product for prizeing, as does The Source and some of the media sponsors have signed in-kind deals that involve advertising dollars.

So instead of a single media partner in the *Toronto Sun*, the Marlies also have a deal with Trader Media, which publishes titles such as "Auto Trader," which Anselmi said are "perfect" for the team's demographic. "We also did a deal with a hotel on King Street that lines up with this demo and with Maaco," he said. "People buying platinum tickets to the Maple Leafs don't take their cars to Maaco, but it makes sense for the Marlies."

Trader Media is happy with the sports sponsorship, which is the company's first ever. "We're very proud to be involved with the inaugural season of the Marlies and really excited to engage with a group of Ontario sports fans and be in on the ground level of a grass-roots phenomenon that is so exciting for Toronto," said Chris Bellefontaine, the assistant product manager of "Auto Trader."

Bellefontaine said the Marlies deal made sense and felt like a great fit. "Like 'Auto Trader,' the Marlies are providing the Toronto region with a great value for their money, so there's a great parallel between AHL hockey and getting a great deal on an automobile," she said. The "Auto Trader" package is a custom deal that includes exposure on rink boards and on the concourse level, as well as giveaways of magazines on the concourse. The magazine is going to have two promotional nights during the season where they will give away copies of the magazine.

Anselmi said there will be a number of other unique promotions rolled out over the course of the season, which he was not at liberty to discuss at press time, as well as the usual AHL on-ice promotions and the McDonald's arches on player's jerseys, an AHL hallmark. Traditional media such as rink-boards and in-arena signage are being used, and there are plans to have promotion nights with product samples through giveaways and contests throughout the season. — Gil Kaufman

Interviewed for this story: Tom Anselmi, (416) 815-5493; Chris Bellefontaine (416) 784-5200

LESS THAN 4 MONTHS OUT, JUST OVER HALF OF TORINO TICKETS SOLD

In an attempt to bolster the sale of tickets to the XX Olympic Winter Games, Torino 2006 is running a major TV and print ad campaign in Italy to persuade locals to experience the games live.

Created by Milan-based advertising agency Armando Testa, the campaign is based on the importance of 'feeling' the Olympics as a live event and not just on TV, according to Giorgio Lauretta, director of ticketing of Torino 2006.

The ad campaign is limited to Italy as locals are the target market for the latest ticket sales push for the Olympics. "By this stage, many foreign visitors have already made

plans to travel to Torino. Italians like to do things last minute and that's why this 'feelings' campaign is targeted at them," said Laretta.

As of Oct. 24, Torino had sold 580,000 tickets of the total 1 million tickets available. The target for the organizers is to sell at least 81 percent of total tickets, "so we have achieved 58 percent of our target so far," said Laretta.

In the latest ticketing sale, there will be no discounts, said Laretta apart from the 10,000 tickets worth \$3.6 million allocated for school children.

Half of the total tickets originally on sale are worth between \$30.20 and \$60.40 while major events such as the opening ceremony, figure skating or the ice-hockey finals can fetch between \$242 and \$302. The most expensive seats — for the opening ceremony — can reach the \$1,030 mark.

About half of all tickets have been sold online. "That's a very good record," said Laretta.

To enter the various events, all visitors, without exception, will have to use hard tickets that contain barcodes to combat counterfeiting, said Laretta. Hard tickets will start being mailed on Jan. 2.

The latest ticket sales push began in early September after a three-week break in sales. "We needed to stop selling [coinciding with Italy's August slow summer season] to start assigning seats for those who had already purchased tickets. In previous sales, organizers still didn't have the total layout of the venue."

The first wave of ticket sales began after the Athens Olympics in 2004 when up to 360,000 tickets were sold, mainly to client groups that included major sponsors like Coca-Cola Co. and McDonald's Corp. and other multinational and top local companies. The second wave of sales — direct to the public — was launched in November 2004.

Italians will be able to purchase tickets through three main channels: TicketOne sales points and call centre (848 88 2006), the banking branches of Gruppo Sanpaolo, one of the national sponsors, and on the Web. Citizens of other countries in the European Union will be able to buy tickets on the Web, through a special call centre (+39 039 83 82 50), official sales agencies and the National Olympic Committees. In the United Kingdom, a leading sales agency is Sports World Travel.

In the United States, a leading ticket agent for Torino 2006 is Jet Set Sports, which is allowed to increase prices by up to 20 percent. Agents typically include accommodation with the final price.

The Olympic Winter Games will be held in Turin Feb. 10–26, 2006. Around 2,500 athletes, 650 judges and umpires and 1.5 million spectators are expected to participate in this 20th edition of the Winter Games. — Ali Qassim

Interviewed for this story: Giorgio Laretta, 00 39 011 11 2006

CONCESSIONS

Top-selling New Era fitted cap



WHITE SOX MERCH IS WHITE HOT NOW

Much like Boston Red Sox fans last year, Chicago White Sox fanatics just can't get enough of their team's merchandise during the World Series. With a slew of souvenir items available at US Cellular Field, anything that says White Sox and/or World Series is flying off the shelves, according to Chet Klovas, retail merchandise manager for Sportservice at US Cellular.

"Fans are so starved here that they're grabbing everything they can see with a logo on it," said Klovas of fans' thirst for items commemorating the team's first trip to the big game in 46 years. The #1 item on their list? A New Era fitted cap (\$35) with the World Series logo on the side that is the same type of cap the players are wearing on the field and that sold "thousands" during the first two games Oct. 22-23.

The second most-popular item is a replica of the baseball (\$25), made by Rawlings, that is being used in the games, which has the Series logo on it and comes in a plastic cube. Typically used by fans in search of signatures from players, every single one of the first 3,600 Klovas ordered have been sold so far, with more on the way.

The rest of the merchandise — which is being sold at more than 25 retail locations inside and outside of the stadium — ranges from pens (\$4) to T-shirts (\$25-\$35) and leather sleeved coaches jackets (\$300) and has been selling equally as well, mainly because of good advance planning on the part of Major League Baseball, Sportservice and the White Sox.

"I've been here 16 years," said Klovas. "And over the years we've changed things to make them more appealing to the fans and to make sure we had all the items they would typically want during this kind of event." Klovas said he also has traveled extensively in the past few years attending other Sportservice events such as the MLB All-Star game in Milwaukee last year to see how things worked and to get a sense for what the merchandise stock should be for a huge event like the Series. "Being a native of Chicago and long-time Sox fan," he said. "I have a history of knowing what fans here want. Based on how crazy fans went when the Bulls won their championships in the 90s, we were prepared, because baseball fans supersede any other sports in this town."

Fans at Sox home games have plenty of options when shopping, including five gift shops that are item-specific, including one just for headwear and another just for name jerseys for all the Sox players. In typical fashion, the designs were all originated in the art departments of the dozens of different companies that supply merchandise and all approved by the League.

In what looks like a stroke of luck or sartorial smarts, one of the clothing fashion colors brought in for this year that has been doing remarkably well is Kelly Green, which was introduced just for the Series and has been a brisk seller.

Among the top merchandisers at U.S. Cellular are two on-field licensees, Majestic and New Era, who are getting approximately 50 percent of the business, according to Klovas. Majestic is hitting home runs with a batting practice jersey (\$100) and a mock turtleneck (\$60), as well as sweatshirts and T-shirts, all bearing the Series logo and/or player's names. Another other top selling Majestic items is a Sox American League Champions Authentic Collection T-shirt (\$24.99).

"History tells us that what has sold in the past and what worked at other locations," said Klovas. "Fans must have the basics: the hat players are wearing on the field, the hat they wore when they clinched, the commemorative ball and the jersey they wear on the field. But everyone has their own taste, too, so we try to have a variety of items for men, women, grandmas."

Klovas said there is "no item" that is not selling well, from kid's teddy bears with the Series logo (\$20) to jacket patches (\$16) and the hundreds of other items on shelves during games. He said he was surprised at the variety of lapel pins (\$10) people were interested in, especially the double ones with the logos for the Sox and their opponents, the Houston Astros. "I think it exceeded our expectations and it, again, comes down to how starved the fans of Chicago are for a baseball champ," he said.

Other unique items for sale include a CD of "Let's Go, Go-Go White Sox," the team's fight song from 1959 (\$12), pinstriped "Old School" jerseys, reminiscent of the uniforms worn in the '59 series (\$275), and quarter and full zip-up fleece jackets for women (\$75) with the Series and Sox logos. And for kids, there's a toddler shirt similar to what the players wear in the locker room (\$20) that comes in sizes as small as 2T.

While the \$300 coach's jacket from Majestic is the highest priced item on the list that was brought in especially for the Series, Klovas said fans with a bit less to spend can also check out a lower priced Premier style jacket from Majestic (\$135) in Series colors of navy and red with the Series logo on the front. Either way, if the series comes back to Chicago this weekend, Klovas will be ready. — Gil Kaufman

Interviewed for this story: Chet Klovas (312) 674-1000

SHORT TAKES

GAMETIME EXTENDS DEAL WITH U.S. CELLULAR COLISEUM

GameTime Food and Beverage, which had a consulting agreement with the U.S. Cellular Coliseum in Bloomington, Ill., has signed a 10 year concessions contract, effective with opening of the arena in April of 2006, said GameTime's Steve Blumenthal. The management fee escalates, starting a \$75,000 per year the first two years; \$125,000 the next three; and \$125,000 per year from years 6 to 10. If the five year option is picked up, the fee will increase to \$150,000 per year. "We gave them back a lot of the consulting fee for the first two years to help Central Illinois Arena Management get started," Blumenthal said of the deal. The contract also calls for GameTime to receive an incentive of 2.5 percent of the net the first five years and 3.5 percent the second five years.

Contact: Steve Blumenthal, (847) 243-4263

TD BANKNORTH MAKES DEAL WITH CELTICS

The Boston Celtics and TD Banknorth have entered into a multi-year partnership, with the Celtics designating TD Banknorth as the Official Bank of the Boston Celtics. The partnership will include a new community program at the home games, the TD Banknorth Kid's Clubhouse, which will bring more than 800 children to Boston Celtics games this season. The partnership will also include exclusive retail promotions for TD Banknorth customers, in-arena fan interaction promotions, as well as various branding opportunities through Celtics' publications and broadcasts.

Contact: Farra D'Orazio, Boston Celtics, (617) 854-8045

BRANSON CONVENTION CENTER BREAKS GROUND

An official groundbreaking was held for a new \$50 million convention center in Branson, Mo., yesterday (Oct. 25). Branson Convention Center is slated to cover 220,000 square feet, with a 50,000-square-foot exhibition hall, a 23,000-square-foot ballroom and 15,000 square feet of meeting space. The venue and a new 293-room Hilton hotel are scheduled to open in late spring of 2007.

Contact: Jerry Adams, City of Branson, (417) 337-8526

To submit news or information to **Venues Today** contact:
Linda Deckard, Publisher, Editor-in-chief
(714) 378-5400
linda@venuestoday.com

Natasha Emmons, Managing Editor
(714) 378-5400
natasha@venuestoday.com

For advertising information, contact:
Sue Nichols, Eastern Region
(615) 662-0252
sue@venuestoday.com

Pauline Davis, Central Region
615-356-0398
pauline@venuestoday.com

April Stroud, Western Region
(714) 378-5400 ext. 23
april@venuestoday.com

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