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VenuesNow Pulse Feb. 21, 2018: NBA All-Star per caps a slam dunk; Freedom Hall management out for bids

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A WEEKLY PUBLICATION FROM VENUESNOW

vnpulse

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Greetings Samantha,
The major sports leagues seem to always be retooling their all-star games, looking for a change that will keep their traditional audiences while enticing more casual fans along for the ride. While they've had varying degrees of success, you have to admire the NBA for the show it puts on. Our lead story this week is evidence that fans are ready to fill the arena for the game and spend while they're there. Add that to more than holding its own in the sports news cycle on a day when NASCAR was kicking off its season with the Daytona 500, and the NBA looks like a winner. The league tried its own change this year, creating a contest between teams picked by LeBron James and Stephan Curry. It points toward an asset that undoubtedly helps the NBA: star power, a successful formula that's hard to duplicate.

The expansion of L.A. Live next to Staples Center allowed NBA All-Star Weekend events to be concentrated downtown. (Courtesy Staples Center)

Pop-Ups An All-Star Performer

By Don Muret

Per caps were a slam dunk for Levy Restaurants and Staples Center in Los Angeles, when basketball-mad fans spent an average of $45.86 for food and drink at the NBA All-Star Game on Feb.18. Gross revenue was $816,364; official attendance was 17,801. Four upscale pop-up celebrity-chef inspired concessions stands helped feed the crowd.
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QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"We studied it hard and we did not have the bonding capacity or voter support for bond revenues to build a new building that would have cost between $500 million and $600 million. Besides, we did not need a 250,000-square-foot exhibit hall or 100 breakout rooms. The bones of the building are in good shape and the renovation will solve all our issues."

— Kevin Kane, president and CEO, Memphis Convention and Visitors Bureau, on why his city is renovating its 44-year-old convention center rather than rebuilding.

PHOTO OF THE WEEK

Legendary venue operator Barbara "Mother" Hubbard stopped by the VenuesNow booth while attending Pollstar Live! in Los Angeles, Feb. 5-8. Hubbard "retired" from a 30-year reign as special events director at New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, in 1996. Today, she continues as executive director of the American Collegiate Talent Showcase, a position she's held since 1978. (VT photo)

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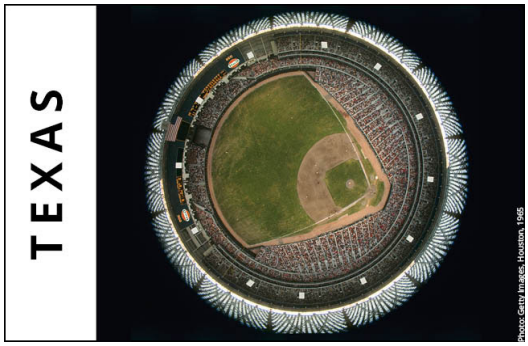
POLLSTAR DAILY PULSE

Sharks' Giveaway An AR Gateway

By Tim Newcomb

The San Jose Sharks handed out 17,000 promotional AR bobbleheads of player Logan Couture before a Feb. 10 game at



March Spotlight
Ad Deadline: February 23, 2018

Contact Rich to reserve ad space!

Rich DiGiacomo

SAP Center. It was the first AR take-home souvenir in sports history.
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Freedom Hall Out For Bid

By Linda Deckard

Spectra and OVG Facilities both have their eye on winning the contract to run Freedom Hall, a 5,600-seat Johnson City, Tenn., facility. Freedom Hall hosted 15 ticketed events last year and saw 120,000-150,000 walk through the door.
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Charm City's New Stop

By Don Muret

The $85 million, 5,500-capacity UMBC Event Center in Baltimore opened Feb. 3 for men's basketball. The Baltimore-Washington market, until recently, had few arenas of this size for live entertainment.
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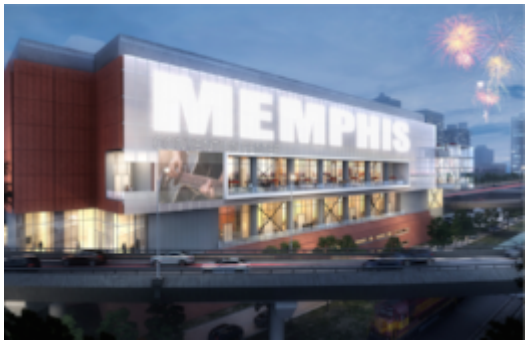

Lodging Tax Funding Memphis Upgrade

By Brad Weissberg

Memphis (Tenn.) Cook Convention Center is embarking on a $175 million renovation from top to bottom. Planned changes include installing an all-glass concourse that will overlook the beauty of the Mississippi River, 120,000 square feet of exhibit hall space and 52 new redesigned breakout rooms.
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Fillmore Minneapolis To Debut In 2019

By Brad Weissberg

Live Nation is adding a new Fillmore Theater to its clubs and theaters division. The new Fillmore will be in Minneapolis and will be No. 74 in the company's expansion plans. The division's president, Ron Bension, spoke

with VenuesNow about the strategy.
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Shelton Takes Tulsa

Blake Shelton grabbed three spots on our Hot Tickets chart, including a stop at BOK Center in Tulsa, Okla., Feb. 15, where the country star played to 13,578 fans and grossed more than $1 million.
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IAVM Regional Meetings; VOS Coming

IAVM Region 6 Meeting, Padre Island, Texas, Apr. 8-11; IAVM Regions 1,2,3,5, Lexington, Ky., Apr. 22-24; Venue Operations Summit, Nashville, Tenn., Apr. 29 - May 1.
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Johnson New FedExForum VP

Dwight Johnson is the new VP of arena operations at FedExForum in Memphis Tenn. Johnson has been GM of Richmond (Va.) Coliseum since 2009 and has been with SMG Richmond for 13 years.
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SHORT TAKES

Seattle Out To Prove It Can Sell NHL TIckets

Despite the fact that the city of Seattle has not yet secured an NHL team to play at the soon-to-be-renovated KeyArena, Seattle Mayor Jenny Durkan has announced a campaign to sell season tickets to NHL hockey games in the city. Deposits will be refundable in the event that arena partner Oak View Group cannot secure a team. A news conference featuring OVG's Tim Leiweke and investor Jerry Bruckheimer is scheduled for Feb. 28. (OVG is the owner of *VenuesNow*.)

Populous Named In *Fast Company* Top 10 Most Innovative List

Design firm Populous has been named by *Fast Company* as one of the Top 10 Most Innovative Companies in Live Events. This year marks the fourth listing of Populous in *Fast Company*'s annual Most Innovative Companies list, having previously received recognition in the architecture (2013) and sports (2009 and 2010) categories.The three live event innovations that earned Populous a spot in this year's list are bringing safe-standing space to the MLS with Orlando City Stadium, first-to-market team viewing areas for fans and the design of the world's first purpose-built esports venue.

MLB And ASU Partner On Sustainability

MLB and Arizona State University's School of Sustainability are partnering on a project that will see the two organizations undertaking sustainability efforts during parts of the Cactus League schedule. Salt River Fields

at Talking Stick, the spring training home of the Arizona Diamondbacks and Colorado Rockies, will be the focus site of the "Recycle Rally" initiative that will test and implement zero waste strategies with the overarching goals of reducing landfill impact, increasing operational efficiencies and improving the fan experience across all Cactus League ballparks.

Nashville Breaks Visit Records

The Nashville area saw a record 14.5 million visitors in 2017, a 4.6 percent increase from 2016's record 13.9 million visitors, the Nashville Convention & Visitors Corp. has announced. The growth is attributed to an uptick in leisure travelers and a stronger-than-expected second half of the year, which included the solar eclipse in August, seven Garth Brooks concerts in December and a fall calendar filled with weekend events, festivals and football games.

Frank Erwin Center Launches Poster Contest For 40th Anniversary

Frank Erwin Center in Austin, Texas, has launched a poster design contest to commemorate 40 years of live entertainment and recognize Austin-area artists. The venue's 40th anniversary celebration will culminate with an exclusive performance by George Strait on June 3, and the winning design will be incorporated into the STRAIT TEXAS VIP Package.

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