

A newsletter from VenuWorks | Management, Events, and Consulting

An Ongoing Commitment to Service



By Steve Peters,
President,
VenuWorks

In our last newsletter we announced our name change from Compass Facility Management to VenuWorks. Since the rollout, we have been pleased to receive a good deal of positive feedback on our new name.

But it is important to understand that the process we undertook to arrive at a new name involved much more than just the exterior trappings of a new logo and slogans. In surveying our clients, our staff, and our peers in the industry, we wanted to discover the strengths of our company, what made us unique, and how those

discoveries could help make us stronger and enable us to better serve our management and consulting clients. One of the things our process identified to us is that our aggressive approach to service is viewed as one of our strengths.

Having identified this asset, we are taking steps to make it even stronger. This fall, we have begun a new corporate training program that will be initiated at all of our managed facilities for the benefit of full and part-time service workers.

An excellent example of our commitment to service recently appeared in *Facility Manager*, a publication of the International Association of Assembly Managers,

our industry's professional association.

The article, which can be found beginning on the next page, was authored by Larry Gawronski, a VenuWorks Vice President and Executive Director of the Vicksburg, Mississippi Convention Center and Auditorium. It profiles Artis Williams, an Operations Coordinator at our Vicksburg facility, and how he applies his commitment to service each and every day.

We are rightfully proud of what Artie does every day to meet the needs of the patrons of the Vicksburg Convention Center, but he is certainly not alone. Across the country, there are others just like him in VenuWorks buildings who go the extra mile to see that those who visit our facilities have the

Ground Broken for Two VenuWorks Client Projects



Ground has been broken for two projects that VenuWorks is associated with. In Burnsville, Minnesota, the first shovels of dirt have been turned on the Burnsville Performing Arts Center to be located in the City's downtown Heart of the City development. Above, VenuWorks corporate staff members join in the ceremony as

Burnsville Mayor Elizabeth Kautz looks on. From left to right are Mark Wentzell and Pam Anderson (AKA Architects), **Steve Peters**, Mayor Kautz, **Roger Klevesahl**, and **Randi Peters**. VenuWorks is currently providing fund raising and pre-opening services to this project and will manage the facility when it opens next year.

And in Boone, Iowa, a ground-breaking was held recently for the Central Iowa Expo (CIE), a venue that will host the Farm Progress Show and other outdoor events. Above right, officials from The Farm Progress Show, The Central Iowa Expo Board and the Boone



County Board of Supervisors prepare to turn the first shovels full of dirt, while in the background, contractors have already begun grading and excavation on the 108-acre Expo site. VenuWorks is providing a variety of pre-opening services for this exciting new facility.

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FEATURE ARTICLE

Guest Services and Customer Relations - A Work of Art(ie)

Larry Gawronski is Executive Director of the Vicksburg Convention Center and Auditorium and Vice President for the VenuWorks Southern Region. This article originally appeared in the October-November 2007 issue of Facility Manager Magazine.



I had it all planned out...

Select a subject that I was really passionate

about – something topical, current and relevant to our industry, do the research and submit an article.

Then it hit me right between the eyes. My “subject, research and passion” works along side of me nearly every day. His name is Artis Williams (Artie to all who know him ... and you also will if you read on). Many of you are blessed to have “Artie” on your team. Some of you wish you could find “Artie.”

I firmly believe in hiring for attitude and training for skills. You can educate someone on the particulars of a job, but you can't teach them to love a customer.

Artie **LOVES** *everyone!* Clients, guests, patrons, you name it. Outrageously great customer service is his mantra. His story is one for the ages. His office is the Vicksburg Convention Center and the Vicksburg Auditorium. He has no computer and rarely carries paper-work. “It's all up here,” he says

(pointing to his head). I think that it comes mainly from here (pointing to his heart).

We work in the hospitality and service industry, but we tend to forget that as we focus on the “lines”. Deadlines, headlines and bottom lines.

But Artie never forgets it. He is everyone's “go-to-guy” in the City of Vicksburg, Mississippi – from the fire chief to the last



Artis Williams

person cleaning up at a local restaurant. If Artie is on the scene, there is nothing to worry about. All the details are covered. Room sets are dead on, air temperature and lighting details are perfect and he's there at the door to greet you with a smile – a genuine, permanent smile – one as broad as the Grand Canyon. Simply put, it's contagious.

Never at a loss with a kind word, he lifts your day and

buoys your spirits while doing his job. Then, he goes the extra mile and then some. He'll carry guests' packages, exhibit materials, audio-visual aids, signs and even purses with great aplomb, all the while holding the door for the client and welcoming them to the facility. “Customer service,” he quips, “It's what we do ... taking care of our people!” In the course of an event, he has operated the stage curtains, run the spotlight, mopped the restrooms, unloaded the trucks and, in some cases, popped the lock on the car that you left your keys in.

When we receive client evaluations that ask them to rate their satisfaction for service delivery, Artie's name appears in several places. Hand written comments such as “The BEST.” “What would we do without Artie?” “Above and beyond the call of duty” are synonymous with, but never taken for granted by Artie.

At one ribbon cutting a few years ago, our team was assembled at the back of the lobby where the dedication took place. Our mayor arrived. After some observation, he pointed to our team, looked at me and quizzically remarked, “What are you feeding these people? Why are they always

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NEWS AND NOTES

A Work of Art(ie)

Continued from Page 2

smiling?" Without missing a beat, Artie jumped in and replied, "We love our jobs!" I just stood there speechless while sporting an Artie-sized smile.

Even on his day off, a national holiday, Artie learned that volunteers with the Independence Day Celebration were schlepping bags of ice from one place to another. He began loading ice from our two venues, bringing it over in a pickup truck, delivering equipment, wiping down a rain-soaked stage laden with sound, lighting and band equipment and picking the equipment back up while asking if anything else was needed.

Standing around six feet tall, Artie never looked as large as when I saw him lean down to help a guest in a wheelchair or assist a small child in tying their sneaker. To say that he excels at great customer relations would be a gross understatement. He's simply the best at it. I wouldn't be a bit surprised if, when I looked up "salt of the earth" in a thesaurus of well known phrases, there would be a photo of Artie grinning from ear to ear.

Just this past weekend, Artie assisted a bereaving family who held a funeral service for a family member at our Auditorium. The brother of the deceased is a colleague of mine. I told him that Artie would take care of them and that they should want for nothing. That man told Artie how highly I spoke of him. Artie called and left me a voice mail thanking me for the compliment that I gave him.

Artie said "Any day you can get your boss to speak of you like that is a great day! I just called to say thanks". Even in accepting praise, he was doling out some of his own.

My boss, Steve Peters (and IAAM's current President), once told me that I was the "Second Experience". By that, he meant that one has certain expectations when you go to an event. Then something extra and totally unexpected happens to enhance and add positives to your initial experience. If I am the "Second Experience", then Artie is the "Total Experience."

One of my favorite movie lines, repeatedly spoken by the father of the bride in *My Big, Fat Greek Wedding*, is "Put some Windex on it". If you're seeking fabulous customer service, "Put some Artie on it!"

I hope you all have an Artie that you can lean on and learn from. Here's to the Artie in all of us. May it shine brightly every day in all that we think, say or do – lest we forget who we serve in our business lives and who we ultimately serve in our everyday lives.

Peters Visits Austria on Behalf of IAAM

Steve Peters, VenuWorks President and current International Association of Assembly Managers (IAAM) President traveled to Austria in September to be a guest lecturer at this year's European Academy of Venue Management (EAVM) held in Gnadental, near Innsbruck. The school was located at Speckbacher Hof, set high in the Tyrolean Mountains, a venue that provided high quality accommodation, food, and conference facilities.

Students at the school came from facilities as far apart as Hungary, England, Finland, Austria, and Portugal. Instructors from all over Europe joined Peters on the faculty of the one week school.

The school is operated by IAAM Europe and supported by the IAAM Foundation.



Broadway Series Rolls into Kennewick

Putting ad signs on buses is a common practice, but Kennewick took it one step further. This entire bus is an ad for this year's inaugural season of Broadway musical events at the Toyota Center.



Fulfilling promises. Creating success.

NEWS AND NOTES



Friendship City Delegation Tours Alerus

The City of Grand Forks and the Alerus Center staff welcomed a delegation from the City of Kanuma, Japan in October. Grand Forks and Kanuma are Friendship Cities. The visiting group, led by Mayor Kazuo Abe, included other Kanuma residents and 20 students and 4 advisors who are a part of the Homestay Exchange program. While in Grand Forks, Mayor Abe toured several facilities including the Alerus Center. Above, Mayor Abe and some of his delegation and hosts take time from their busy schedule to pose at the front entrance of the Center.

CCREC Busy During Clay County Fair

The Clay County Regional Events Center, located on the Clay County Fair Grounds in Spencer, Iowa proved to be very "eventful" during this fall's Clay County Fair. In addition to the 80+ exhibitors housed in the arena for nine days, the ball-



Clay County Regional Events Center

room was busy with six performances by three different entertainers, plus an appearance of Clifford the Big Red Dog sponsored by Iowa Public Television during kid's day at the Fair and a 4H dance for over 650 teenagers. The Fair's attendance is said to have reached over 330,000 people this year, a record in its 90-year history.

Willett To Adler Post

Greg Schermer, Chairman of the RiverCenter for the Performing Arts, has announced the appointment of Lance Willett to the newly created position of President of the Adler Theatre.



Willett will coordinate the Theatre's relationships to its investors, financial institutions and agencies, which provided financing for the Adler Theatre's recent backstage improvements. Willett will work with VenuWorks, and the RiverCenter for the Performing Arts Board to ensure the Adler Theatre's continued financial success, while expanding community outreach and educational partnerships.

Lance Willett recently retired following a thirty-year career as executive director of the Quad City Symphony Orchestra.

Paramount Curtain Call Off to Successful Start

The 2007- 2008 season of *Curtain Call* presented by GE Commercial Finance is underway. This year marks the seventh year of providing school-aged children with the opportunity to experience live, professional theatre productions in the historic Paramount Theatre in Cedar Rapids. The season includes *Charlotte's Web*, *Junie B. Jones*, *Buffalo Soldier*, and *Stone Soup*. Reservations have been rolling in, and to meet the demand, second performances of *Charlotte's Web* and *Junie B. Jones* have been added.



CR Initiates Hockey Scholarship Program

The Cedar Rapids Ice Arena is initiating a new sponsorship program for its 2007-2008 youth and adult hockey leagues. The idea behind the program is to allow individuals to participate in one or several of the facility's hockey programs.

The program is made possible by a group of generous sponsors including the following businesses, groups, and individuals:

The Cedar Rapids RoughRiders
TrueNorth Companies
St. Luke's
PRC
Great Clips
Dr. Anthony Carter

This year's recipient of the sponsorship program is Don Gilbertson and his son, Bradley. Mr. Gilbertson will be playing in the over 35 adult hockey league and his son is playing in the House Hockey League. Don has been a long time supporter of hockey in the Cedar Rapids area especially in working with youth hockey leagues.

AT OUR FACILITIES

Duplin County Festival

The Third Annual Muscadine Harvest Festival was held on September 29 at the Duplin County Events Center. The adjacent RV Campground served as an out-



standing expo site, containing all of the needed utilities. The day-long festival hosted over 6,000 people sampling the finest North Carolina wines, listening to beach music, and attending educational seminars. This year's festival attendance nearly doubled over that of last year's event.



Spencer Welcomes Lance Armstrong

Scott Hallgren had an opportunity to meet Lance Armstrong when he spoke at the Events Center promoting his "Live Strong Foundation" during the Des Moines Register's Annual Bike Ride Across Iowa. The ride made an overnight stop at the Clay County Fair Grounds in July.

Alerus Center Comes to the Aid of Tornado Stricken Town

In August, a tornado devastated the town of Northwood, North Dakota. Many homes and businesses were destroyed. The outpouring of volunteer help, support and donations to this town was overwhelming and the Alerus Center wanted to play a part in



Some of the 700 Northwood fans cheer on their team from the stands at "Kick Back to Northwood" event at the Alerus Center.

the assistance effort. After some discussion, it was decided to host Hatton-Northwood's last "home" football game against Park River in the arena. The event was named "Kick Back to Northwood". All ticket sales went back to the school and profits from concession sales, a 50/50 raffle, and free-will donations went to the city of Northwood. Local residents and many staff members volunteered their time with selling and taking tickets, ushering, and post-game clean-up. The Alerus Center also arranged halftime entertainment of two local dance lines and had the crowd on its feet with the Winnipeg (Canada) Police Pipe Band performance! Attendance was over 700, which more than doubled what they would have seen at an average game. Nearly \$3,700.00 was raised that night for the school and city of Northwood.

Alice Cooper at the Adler

With the assistance of Don Kronberg from Nitelite Promotions, VenuWorks National Director of Programming **Phil Potter** and his son Evan had a chance to meet privately with Alice Cooper in August following a show that definitely rocked the almost sold-out house at the Davenport theatre. Evan is a guitar player, and Alice was the first rock star he had met in person. Phil reports Alice was very personable and gracious and extends his thanks to Don Kronberg for making the arrangements.



Topeka Grape Escape

The 10th Annual Grape Escape fundraiser was a huge success. The generous donations of the Topeka Community and businesses helped the facility raise over \$50,000. At left, patrons enjoy the very popular chocolate fountain.

AT OUR FACILITIES



Wing Fest in Brookings

The Swiftel Center was the place to be in September as it hosted its 2nd Annual Brookings Wing Festival. Pictured above is the wing eating contest featuring Miss South Dakota Kate Wismer (on the far left).

The theme was "The Last Beach Party of the Summer". Kids entertainment, included a Root Beer Garden (complete with a root beer keg), inflatables, crafts, a magician, and a surfing simulator. For adults, there was live stage entertainment, co-ed volleyball tournament, yard games, and wings from six area vendors. And, of course the wing eating contest!

Another Festive Summer in Racine

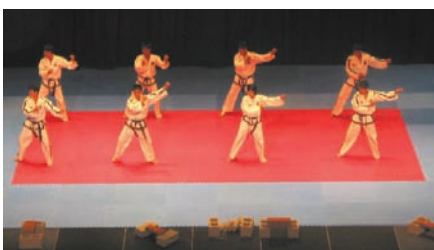
Another great summer was had along the beautiful shores of Lake Michigan. The Racine Civic Centre hosted seven festivals from June to September, starting with Harbor Fest that featured Joan Jett and Heartbreakers and Think Floyd and finishing with the Great Lakes Brew Fest, a fundraiser for Racine's own Kilties Drum and Bugle Corps that featured 85 Micro Breweries from across the country. Executive Director **Jim Walczak** reports that total attendance for this years festivals was 58,926.



Members of the Harley Owners Group begin to assemble in front of Festival Hall in Racine in August.



Crowds pack the grounds for the September Great Lakes Brew Fest.



Cedar Rapids Hosts Goodwill Martial Arts Tour

The North Korean National Tae Kwon Do Demonstration

Team made a smashing impression upon a near capacity crowd at the Paramount Theatre in Cedar Rapids in October. The North Koreans were making the third stop on a five-city United States tour. The show was punctuated by an acrobatic, board-breaking, brick-crushing style that elicited regular "oohs and ahs" from the crowd.

Woo Jin Jung, a Korean native who now lives in Cedar Rapids, was one of the organizers of the tour. Jung emigrated to the United States 36 years ago. He owns a fitness center in Cedar Rapids and has trained nearly 4,600 black belts.

Lighthouse Fundraiser

Memorial Hall in Racine was host to the Downtown Racine Corporation Light House Auction in September. The auction was the culmination of a season of public art display in downtown Racine that has been an annual event since 2002. Local artists create unique art works each year to display on the downtown streets and then auction off. Prizes are awarded to the most popular work as determined by an on-line poll.



EMPLOYEE NEWS



Erin Aldridge and Heath Wilson

Topeka

TPAC has added two new people to its full time staff.

Erin Aldridge is the new Marketing Manager. Previously, Erin worked full time at an advertising agency and was a part-time house manager for TPAC. Erin

is a 2004 Graduate of the University of Kansas William Allen White School of Journalism and Communications.

Heath Wilson became the Events and Marketing Coordinator in September. Heath previously was a part time staff member as the event coordinator in charge of scheduling house managers and volunteers.

The Topeka Arts Connect honored Executive Director **Barbara Wiggins** for her outstanding service with a contribution in her honor to the Topeka Symphony Youth Ensembles.

Barbara has also been appointed to the Community Advisory Board for KTKA, the local ABC affiliate. The Community Advisory Board is comprised of eight community leaders and four KTKA executives. This board will advise KTKA on programming of news casts and special events.

Erin Aldridge was accepted into the Sales and Marketing Executives International – Topeka chapter in October. Sales & Marketing Executives of Topeka is a non-profit organization dedicated to the advancement of sales and marketing management techniques and methods

Spencer

Scott Hallgren and his wife Trudy announce the arrival of Joel Alexander at 7:22am on September 20. He weighed 7 lbs. 3 oz., 19½" long, short, light brown hair, and healthy. Joel joins 3 older sisters (Jordan, Jaime, & Jady). Scott reports it's nice to finally have another man around the house.



Also in Spencer, **Luc Arnold** has joined the Clay County Events Center's team. Luc comes to the CCREC from the Alltel Center in Mankato, MN where he was employed for 9 years in the Operations/Maintenance Department. He has also worked for Skyway Event Services in Minneapolis. Luc and his wife, Misty have 3 children, Asia, Travin & Cheylee. Luc is a native of Spencer and the CCREC is happy to have him back.



Davenport

RiverCenter Adler Theatre staff participated in the local United Day of Caring in September. RCAT staff members were assigned to work on multiple hands-on projects with area non-profit organizations. **Jennifer McKee, Kaye Tilton and Heather Brummel** assisted the class from the Trinity Employee Child Care facility in harvesting their vegetable and herb garden that had been planted earlier in the season. In addition to harvesting the garden, they helped the children wash and cut vegetables in preparation of making a stew for all to enjoy for lunch.

At the left, Kaye and Heather help keep the project moving along smoothly.

WHO WE ARE

VenuWorks is dedicated to providing comprehensive management solutions for arenas, theaters, and convention centers throughout North America.

Beginning with a contract to manage just one facility, VenuWorks today is one of the three largest public assembly management firms in the United States, guiding the activities of 26 separate venues in 15 communities in 11 states across the country.

The company also maintains an active consulting business, providing feasibility studies, operations audits, and pre-opening services to clients across the nation.

Imagination, hard work, and integrity are the distinguishing traits of our VenuWorks team members. Value pricing, uncompromising services

and a client-first philosophy have enabled VenuWorks to create a network of very successful facilities across the country.

At VenuWorks we know that every location we serve is unique. That is why we work with community leaders in each of our locations to custom tailor a management plan that will work for them. Behind every theater, arena, and convention center ever built, there was a dream and a promise. It is our job to unlock those dreams and fulfill those promises.



Fulfilling promises. Creating success.

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Facilities Currently Under VenuWorks Management

Alerus Center
Grand Forks, North Dakota

**U.S. Cellular Center
Paramount Theatre
Cedar Rapids Ice Arena**
Cedar Rapids, Iowa

**Three Rivers Convention Center
Toyota Center
Toyota Arena**
Kennewick, Washington

**Vicksburg Convention Center
Vicksburg Auditorium**
Vicksburg, Mississippi

**RiverCenter
Adler Theatre**
Davenport, Iowa

Swiftel Center
Brookings, South Dakota

Topeka Performing Arts Center
Topeka, Kansas

Clay County Regional Events Center
Spencer, Iowa

**Racine Civic Centre:
Festival Hall, Festival Park, Memorial Hall**
Racine, Wisconsin

Duplin County Events Center
Kenansville, North Carolina

Hoyt Sherman Place
Des Moines, Iowa

Allentown Symphony Hall
Allentown, Pennsylvania

Burnsville Performing Arts Center
Burnsville, Minnesota
(Under Development)

Jones Convocation Center at Chicago State University
Chicago, Illinois

Central Iowa Expo
Boone, Iowa

VenuWords is a periodic newsletter directed to the associates, clients, and staff of VenuWorks. If you do not wish to receive this newsletter, please email us at dolson@venuworks.com. We welcome your comments and suggestions at the same address.