

Cedar Rapids Staff Rallies to Recover from Flooding

One of the standard planning tools used by a facility manager to anticipate possible problems is to ask "What's the worst that could happen?" On the morning of June 13 Executive Director Scott Schoenike and the staff of the VenuWorks-managed Paramount Theatre and U. S. Cellular Center in Cedar Rapids found out. Record rainfall and swollen rivers had raised the likelihood of major flooding along the Cedar River that runs through downtown Cedar Rapids.

Staff members spent all day Wednesday (June 11) placing sandbags around the Paramount, a 1928 historic theatre listed on the National Register of Historic Places. They moved furniture from the lobby to the balcony and lifted the Wurlitzer pipe organ console to its highest point on its mechanized lift in the orchestra pit. Schoenike and Operations Manager Jason Moyer stayed overnight Wednesday at the Paramount, monitoring generators and pumps in the building's basement, but finally the two had to abandon their post early Thursday when water overran the generators and the pump could not keep up with the water.

When the Cedar finally crested at a record 31.2 feet, nearly 20 feet above flood stage, the flood had inundated more than 1,300 city blocks, displacing an estimated 24,000 residents. The entire downtown area was engulfed in water. On one downtown street the current was moving so fast that every parking meter was bent over in the same direction and at the same



Water reached the underside of the marquee at the Paramount Theatre during the worst of the June flooding that ravaged downtown Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

angle. At its crest, waters from the flood lapped at the marquee above the Paramount's main entrance.

When Schoenike was finally able to re-enter the Paramount four days later, he found devastation everywhere he looked. About 35 feet of standing water filled the two basement levels submerging all of the HVAC and electrical systems, and an inch of hazardous sludge covered the main floor of the theater. The stage floor was badly bowed out of shape. "Pretty much anything that wasn't bolted down was

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VenuWorks To Manage Facilities in Texas and Iowa

President Steve Peters recently announced that VenuWorks has been awarded contracts to manage facilities in Aransas Pass, Texas and Fairfield, Iowa.

Aransas Pass

The Aransas Pass Civic Center is a 30,000 square foot facility currently under construction with a

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Aransas Pass Civic Center Rendering: ArchitecTKO, Corpus Christi, Texas



Fairfield Arts and Convention Center

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FEATURE ARTICLE

A Personal Note



By Steve Peters,
President,
VenuWorks

I usually use this space to examine a topic relating to the public assembly facility industry and our company's approach to that issue. This time, however, I am taking the liberty to share a personal thought and a number of thank-yous.

For the last three years I have been serving as a senior officer of my professional association, the International Association of Assembly Managers (IAAM). As I come to the end of my term as President of IAAM, I have begun to reflect a little on what the experience has meant not only to me, but those who share with me the task of realizing the aspirations and the goals of VenuWorks.

In the past three years VenuWorks has maneuvered through a period of unprecedented growth, a name change, the development of a new marketing initiative, and most recently, the relocation of our corporate offices to new and larger quarters.

I started my year as IAAM president by quoting an old African adage: "If you would go fast, go alone; if you would go far, go together." Thank goodness that I did not go alone the past three years. I

will be forever grateful to the people who made it possible for me to serve that time as a senior officer of the IAAM.

When I was told three years ago of my nomination, the first person I consulted was my wife, **Randi**. Having been married to a venue manager for thirty-four years, she knew better than anyone the nights and weekends consumed by the venue management business. My being president of IAAM would mean even more time away from home. She gave me her full support without a moment of hesitation. And she has been at my side every step of the way since then.

I had the same kind of support from our VenuWorks executive team. Vice Presidents **Doug Kuhnel**, **Tammy Koolbeck** and **Carl St. Clair** created a plan to cover my day to day duties, with each of them assuming more responsibility for overseeing our expanding list of locations across the country. **Betty Beisker**, our VP for Administration and HR, stepped up to the challenge of overseeing ongoing financial, budgetary, banking and contractual work, with the assistance of our Controller, **Andy Harris**. **Andy Long** moved out of our consulting division to take the lead in new business development, a responsibility that up to that point had been mine. **Sharon Cummins** moved from loca-

tion management in Cedar Rapids into our consulting division, bringing along husband **Ron**, fresh from thirty years in law enforcement, to help direct our safety and security efforts. Across the board, from **Phil Potter** in event booking, to **Dave Olson** in communications, **John Lamkin** in food and beverage, **Larry Gawronski** in our southern region, and **Lindsay Peters** in training, everyone took on more duties and responsibilities to cover for my absence. At the center of all this frenzied activity, **Ronda Biery** took on the huge task of being my personal liaison to the IAAM office, planning all of the extra travel, and coordinating all the additional correspondence.

This dedicated team proved to be more than adequate to the task of covering for me. How well did they do? This past year of 2007 was our best ever!

As so many of us already know, the gift we give of ourselves in service to other causes comes with its own reward. We are enriched both by the people we help and by those who help us. I return from my three years with new ideas, a new perspective, a new commitment to serving the needs of our clients, and above all, a profound gratitude to those who helped me make my service to IAAM possible. I am proud to be a member of your team!



FEATURE STORIES

Flood Recovery

Continued from Page 1

destroyed," said Schoenike.

Before the full extent of the disaster was known, The VenuWorks staff began post-flood planning. Schoenike and VenuWorks Senior Vice President Doug Kuhnel began calling flood restoration and cleanup companies that might be able to jump into action quickly to mitigate damage to the facilities.

Schoenike said his staff worked tirelessly to save as much as possible of the building's contents. "It was a heroic effort," he said. "The water was so much higher than anyone could have anticipated. The entire city was overwhelmed. Some of our staff members had no water or electricity, but no one lost their home to the flooding. Staff outside the affected areas offered their homes to other staff members."

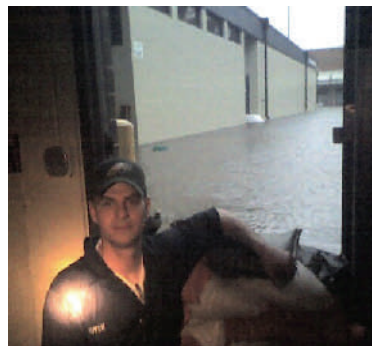
After the waters began to recede, a decision had to be made whether or not to proceed with the facility's signature summer event, the Cedar Rapids BBQ Roundup scheduled for late June. The four day festival brings national BBQ rib cookers to town to compete for prizes.

After receiving encouragement from city officials, it was decided to proceed with the event as a rallying point for city residents. With less than two weeks to the event, Schoenike and his crew made arrangements to move the entire event from the river front to the parking lot of the Ice Arena, which had not been affected by the flood. The event came off well, and reaction to the event was positive. Attendance was on

a par with the previous year, and patrons generally expressed appreciation for having something to do to take their minds off the flooding for a while.

Going Forward

From their temporary offices in the Ice Arena, Schoenike and his staff are still trying to return to some sort of normalcy. Promoters with events scheduled in the two buildings are being contacted and updated on the status of the community and its facilities. Damage was minimal at the U.S. Cellular Center, four blocks northwest of the Paramount, and the arena is near to re-opening with a Taylor Swift concert in August. With the



Paramount Theatre Operations Manager Jason Moyer at a loading door shortly before flood waters overran the building.

re-opening date of the Paramount still unknown, plans are being considered to create an environment in the U.S. Cellular Center that would accommodate some Paramount events.

The attitude is positive, and the view is to the future. It is a long hard road ahead, but Schoenike and the VenuWorks staff in Cedar Rapids are determined to persevere, and not just to rebuild, but to rebuild better.



VenuWorks Adds Texas and Iowa Facilities

Continued from Page 1

scheduled completion date of December 2008. It features an exhibition hall/ballroom of more than 16,000 sq. ft., approximately 2,000 sq. ft. of meeting rooms, and an outdoor event plaza of nearly 12,000 sq. ft.. It is designed to host meetings and trade shows on a local, regional and national scale. The architect is ArchitectTKO of Corpus Christi, Texas. The Aransas Pass project is being led by **Carl St. Clair**, VenuWorks' Vice President of operations and projects.

Aransas Pass is located northeast of Corpus Christi along the northwest coast of the Gulf of Mexico.

Fairfield, Iowa

VenuWorks has also received a contract to manage the Fairfield, Iowa Arts and Convention Center (FACC).

The FACC opened in December 2007 in the southeast Iowa community of Fairfield. It is a 32,000 square-foot facility designed to host performing arts, convention, meeting, visual arts, and arts education events. It houses a 522-seat proscenium theatre, a 7,000 square-foot business pavilion, several meeting rooms, an executive conference suite, an art gallery, and an outdoor plaza.

"This is a small theatre with large ambitions and we are proud to be a part of its vision," VenuWorks President Steve Peters said.



AT OUR FACILITIES

Davenport Secures Major Angling Event

FLW Outdoors has booked Davenport for its 2009 \$1 million Wal-Mart™ BFL All American angler tournament. The event includes a fishing competition, awards ceremony, exhibits and educational sessions. In addition to the fishing on the Mississippi River, the entire RiverCenter facility and Perry Park Green Space will be utilized.

This 5 day event will be held in May, 2009, and will be broadcast to 81 million Fox Sports Net subscribers in the United States. It will also be broadcast in Canada, UK, Europe, Russia, Australia, Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

The event will generate 10,000 attendees and utilize 1,000 to 1,500 room nights, and it will have an estimated economic impact of \$5.6 million. The tournament has the potential to become an annual event at the RiverCenter.

FLW Outdoors, named after Forrest L. Wood, the legendary founder of Ranger Boats, is the largest fishing tournament organization in the world.

Successful Events in Vicksburg

It has been a busy spring and summer at the Vicksburg Convention Center. Roy Hargrove headlined the Alcorn State University Jazz Festival in April, and jazz legend B.B. King performed to an enthusiastic crowd in June. The annual Miss Mississippi Pageant also returned to the VCC in June.

High School Gymnastics Record Set at Swiftel Center



The Swiftel Center was host to state A & AA State Gymnastics Meet in February, and the crowds came out in record numbers to support Brookings' Madison High School in their quest for a national title. The Lady Bulldogs were attempting to set a national high school record by winning 14 consecutive state gymnastics titles. At the end of the tournament, Madison succeeding in making high school sports history, besting the record set by Bellingham, Washington teams in the 1970's and 1980's.



Toyota Center Partners with Washington State Lottery

Washington's Lottery is sponsoring the Guest Services area on the concourse of the Toyota Center. This three year contract will also promote the sale of Lottery products. Visitors can get event information, check out lost and found, and buy a Scratch or Mega Bucks ticket. According to Executive Director **Jeff Kossow**, the new area creates a bright, fun, (and helpful) space for Toyota Center guests.

Executive Director **Larry Gawronski** reported that the Pageant is a boon to the Vicksburg economy, bringing over 7,000 people to town for the five day event, over 60% of whom are from outside of Vicksburg and Warren County. The annual economic impact is over \$1.33 million.



Roy Hargrove performs at the Alcorn State University Jazz Festival in April at the Vicksburg Convention Center

AT OUR FACILITIES

Topping Off Ceremony Staged in Burnsville

VenuWorks Burnsville Executive Director **Wolf Larson** along with **Roger Swanson** coordinated a topping off ceremony for the new Burnsville Performing Arts Center in May.

The public was invited to sign a 40' construction beam decorated with flags of the U.S. and the City of Burnsville and the traditional evergreen tree. After an opening



greeting from Mayor Elizabeth Kautz (shown above adding her signature), members of the City Council, friends and neighbors enthusiastically joined in the signing before ironworkers (below) hoisted the beam 80' to the top of the stage house.

Local user groups participated in the festivities, manning display tables, giving demonstrations and answering questions from curious onlookers. Construction continues, and it is anticipated that the center will be at substantial completion before Christmas.



Alerus Hosts 17,000 at ND State Demo Convention

The Alerus Center in Grand Forks hosted the North Dakota Democratic NPL Convention in April. More than 17,000 people attending the speeches of Senators Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton, including a large number of Canadians. The event attracted more than 200 local and national media.

Each candidate received a UND hockey stick. The top picture above shows (from L to R): Senator Kent Conrad, Senator Obama, Senator Byron Dorgan and Congressman Earl Pomeroy. Bottom picture (from L to R): Conrad, Senator Clinton, and Dorgan.

Kennewick Reports on Naming Impact

In their annual report to Toyota of Tri-Cities, the staff of the Kennewick Three Rivers Campus noted that the naming arrangement for the Toyota Center and the Toyota Arena on the campus delivered over 47.5 million impressions for their annual investment. This exceeds industry standards by a considerable margin.

The fact that the facility has also shown a 42% increase in attendance and a 90% increase in event days since the naming agreement was signed is further evidence that the arrangement has proven to be a good investment for Toyota. The report will be forwarded to Toyota regional and national offices.

Topeka hosts Ron White

A packed house laughed the night away in April as comedians Ron White and Alex Raymond entertained the crowd with their blue collar style comedy.



Hoyt Sherman Hosts *Menopause The Musical*

Hoyt Sherman Place collaborated with the Civic Center of Greater Des Moines (the City's major Broadway presenter) in bringing *Menopause the Musical* to Hoyt Sherman Place for a two week run in early June. Busloads of tour groups from throughout central Iowa filled the theater for 13 performances. A flood-related evacuation of downtown Des Moines during the last weekend of the run resulted in the cancellation of 3 performances as the City requested all non-essential events cancel or postpone due to flooding concerns. The success of this show ignited a buzz and strong early group sales for the fall week-long run of *Church Basement Ladies*, starring William Christopher of M*A*S*H fame.

NEWS AND NOTES

Improvements Completed or Underway at Several VenuWorks Facilities

Central Iowa Expo Takes Shape

Despite continuous rains that have devastated large portions of Iowa, construction on the Central Iowa Expo site is going strong, says **Andy Long**, VenuWorks' Acting General Manager for the new facility. The Expo site will be the biennial host of the Farm Progress Show, the nation's largest outdoor farm show that draws more than 500 exhibitors and 240,000 attendees.



The most recent aerial photo of Central Iowa Expo site. White areas on the grounds are graveled lots. An administration building is being built on the diagonal road lower left.

The Central Iowa Expo is located on 106 acres in Boone County just west of Ames, Iowa. The site is surrounded by an additional 400+ acres of demonstration and parking areas. Besides the Farm Progress Show, the Central Iowa Expo grounds also will be used to host other events and activities, with meeting space, and electrical, sewer, and water service all available.



Duplin County Adds Rigging Grid

Construction crews recently completed a stage rigging grid at the Duplin County Events Center. The new grid makes for easier hanging of lighting and sound equipment for concerts. The structure is based on a similar one created for the Swiftel Center in Brookings. Credit goes to VenuWorks' Vice President **Carl St. Clair** for the initial planning and to facility Executive Director **John Vogt** and his crew for seeing this project through to fruition.

The grid is only one item of almost \$500,000 of capital improvements approved by the Duplin County Board. Acoustical baffles have been installed in the arena, a new marquee will be installed, the box office will be upgraded, and over 125 oak and maple trees have been planted on the grounds.

Racine Adds Clear Span Structure

In a major upgrade to its outdoor festival grounds, the Racine Civic Centre is replacing a portable tent with a new clear span structure. Larger than the tent, the new structure will have a permanent aluminum frame anchored into the concrete with trusses that can each hold 1,000 lbs. of lights and sound equipment. The new structure, which cost \$86,000, is guaranteed to withstand up to 80 mph winds. The frame and fabric each have 7-year guarantees. Another eight years of fabric life will be achieved by removing it each winter. Most important to Executive Director **Jim Walczak**, it will go up earlier in the spring and expand offerings to clients and patrons. More facility upgrades include tuck-pointing, landscaping, new air conditioning, lighting control, icemakers and walk-in coolers, and hopefully, new seating for the Auditorium.



Workers install Racine Civic Center's new clear span building

EMPLOYEE NEWS

Chicago



Jerome Jackson is the first Guest Services Coordinator / Contract Administrator Liaison for the Emil and Patricia A. Jones

Convocation Center. His role will consist of being the guest relations contact for the facility, and in charge of the day-to-day administrative activity of the facility. "Jerome is a great addition to the staff here. He has great knowledge of the CSU community and his experience in customer service will be a great asset in this position," said Executive Director **Monty Jones, Jr.**

Prior to joining the Convocation Center staff, Jerome was previously employed with many departments at CSU, including the Division of Student Affairs and the Department of Housing and Residence Life as a Resident Assistant.

Spencer

Jill Irlbeck was hired in June to be the Event/Marketing Coordinator. Jill is a 2008 graduate of Buena Vista University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communication Studies and Business. While in college, Jill completed internships with the Sioux City Convention Center and King's Pointe Waterpark Resort.

Topeka

Barbara Wiggins was nominated and selected as one of "Topeka's

Top 20 Rising Stars" by TK Magazine.

Barbara Wiggins and **Erin Aldridge** have been selected to serve on the Steering Committee and Task Force, respectively, of the Heartland Visioning Project. The goal of the project is to create a common vision for the future of Topeka and Shawnee County for the next 20 years.

Cedar Rapids

Tanya

Burgess was awarded the rating of Certified PSA Program Director in May at the Professional Skaters Association Conference in Chicago. This

award is only given to those elite directors whose expertise is not only proven in their current position as Skating Director but is also tested out in front of a panel of Master rated Directors from the Professional Skaters Association. This makes Tanya the only certified Skating Director in the state of Iowa.

Davenport

Doug Davis, Senior Event Coordinator, was an April graduate of the Quad-City Chamber of Commerce Federation Leadership Academy Essentials Program. The academies are part of a combined effort by the DavenportOne, Bettendorf, and Illinois Quad-City Chambers of Commerce to provide training for emerging leaders in the Quad-City community.

Vicksburg

Special Events Coordinator **Sue Bagby** received the "You Caught My Eye" award from the Vicksburg Warren County Chamber of Commerce. Sue is the 4th person to receive the honor from the Convention Center and Auditorium's team. Her name was in lights on the Chamber's marquee for a week. People throughout the community nominate those they think have provided outstanding service and hospitality.

Larry Gawronski was a presenter on a series of panels at a Mega Shelter Symposium entitled *Lessons Learned, Challenges and the Future* in April in Reno, Nevada. Gawronski shared experiences on sheltering operations at the Vicksburg Convention Center following Hurricane Katrina and participated on a panel on the business side of mega sheltering, discussing lost business and the costs of mega-sheltering.

Corporate

Steve and Randi Peters made two trips abroad this Spring as part of Steve's duties as IAAM President. The first was in May to the annual Asia Pacific Venue Industry Congress Showcase in Auckland, New Zealand. The City of Sails played host to this key industry event with more than 260 delegates in attendance. The Peters took some extra time to visit their son Joe who is currently working in Singapore. In June they attended the IAAM-Europe Third Annual Congress in Rome, the city known for introducing stadiums as we know them today.



WHO WE ARE

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

We currently guide the activities of 29 separate venues in 16 communities in 11 states across the country.

We also maintain 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.

4611 Mortensen Road - Suite 111
P.O. Box 625 | Ames, IA 50014
Phone: 515-232-5151
Fax: 515-663-2022
www.venuworks.com

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

Aransas Pass Civic Center

Aransas Pass, Texas
(Under Construction)

Burnsville Performing Arts Center

Burnsville, Minnesota
(Under Construction)

Jones Convocation Center at Chicago State University

Chicago, Illinois

Central Iowa Expo

Boone, Iowa
(Under Construction)

Fairfield Arts and Convention Center

Fairfield, Iowa