

Sharing ideas and stories among VenuWorks employees.

Welcome Hara!

VenuWorks' President, Steve Peters announced that a Management Agreement



has been signed between Hara Arena in Dayton, OH and the Ames, Iowa-based company. John Siehl immediately returned to the role of Executive Director.

"We are delighted to be working with the Hara family in a coordinated effort to increase events at this venerable, iconic complex," said Steven Peters, VenuWorks' president. "The Hara Complex has been a part of the Dayton area since 1964. We hope to continue to add to that history for many years to come."

Siehl began his career

in facility management at the Hara Arena in 1965 and worked there for 24 years before

heading across town to Wright State University's Nutter Center. At the Nutter Center, he served as Executive Director

for 20 years before retiring in September 2010. Currently, he is VenuWorks' Director of Support Services and he will continue with those job responsibilities as well. Siehl will finish his term as Chair of the International Association of Venue Managers in late July.

"Hara Arena is thrilled to announce the return of its former Executive Director, John Siehl. We have very fond memories of John's leadership," said Rue and Sue Wampler, owners of the Hara Complex. "John shares our passion for maintaining the building as the icon that it is in Dayton."

"Hara Arena is also welcoming VenuWorks into the building as the facility manager and into the Dayton market,"

Vicksburg Stays Busy

They SURVIVED the great flood of 2011! The waters have



receded and the clean up is well underway throughout the community. Vicksburg had the most families affected in Mississippi, mostly due to the numbers of people living in the low lying areas and on the backwaters. The venue was ready and willing to jump in to assist in any disaster preparation that may have been needed as either a shelter or command post. On the educational front, Larry Gawronski attended his third year of Senior Executive Symposium and we're proud to say he graduated. Larry has also attended the MS Municipal League Conference in Biloxi in hopes of drumming up more business at the Convention Center and Auditorium. The conference sees about 1,200 attendees from municipalities across the state.

Sue Bagby, the special events guru, had been diligently working with

community partners in planning the July 4th festivities (poster attached). The weekend was filled with live entertainment ranging from the blues to gospel, the Miss Mississippi Pageant, Civil War reenactments and of course FIREWORKS! The Vicksburg Convention Center worked with industry partners to host the MS Society of Association Executives, May 1-3. This was a great opportunity to show off this fantastic venue and activities that meeting planners can take advantage of should they choose to meet in Vicksburg. There were 75 people from around the state that the staff wined and dined and even took on a haunted tour of Vicksburg. Businesses are already showing interest in booking for the upcoming year.

In this issue we ask

"What was your best experience with a patron?"

Check Pages 4 and 5!

At The Venues...

Hara

Continued from Page 1

continued the Wamplers. "VenuWorks is a results-driven leader that brings the kind of partnership our complex will benefit from."

"I am excited to be returning to the Hara Complex and working with the Wampler family," said Siehl. "I feel honored to have the opportunity to return where my career began."

Hara Complex is near Dayton, Ohio and has 165,000 square feet which consists of a 5,500 seat arena, four exhibition halls and a conference center. More information on the Hara Arena can be found at www.haracomplex.com.

Highlights of BPAC's Second Quarter

BPAC was excited to welcome two new faces to the team in the last couple of months! Taking over as Office Manager is recent college graduate (degrees in Recreation & Tourism and Public Relations) and travel enthusiast Dana Rondeau. The venue also named a new Technical Director, Shawn Nicholson. He started at BPAC in October as a stage hand and quickly exercised his extensive technical skills, making him the prime candidate to take over when the position became open at the beginning of May. What started out as a hobby, quickly

transformed itself into a career for Shawn, who brings more than 20 years of experience in the areas of audio, theater, lighting and stage work; he is a wonderful addition to



the full-time staff. The art gallery was host to the annual Children's Art Festival throughout May and June, showcasing the talents of Burnsville elementary school students. The colorful exhibit, complete with everything

from paintings to pottery to mobiles, drew a crowd of nearly 250 people for its opening reception. As the weather warmed up and the sun started shining many of the

participating schools made mini fieldtrips to the gallery to see what they had created hanging on real gallery walls!

The gallery wasn't simply a viewing pleasure either; a wedding took place inside at the end of May. With a construction paper alligator as the backdrop, two elementary school teachers wed in the gallery with 90 friends and family present for the memorable occasion.

LARRY THE CABLE GUY IN SPENCER

The Clay County Regional Events Center, in collaboration with Outback Concerts, hosted a very successful and sold-out date with Larry the Cable Guy on Friday, May 13, 2011.

Larry the Cable Guy broke two previous venue records, and now holds the record for both the highest gross-

ing show and the largest attended show in the history of the Clay County Regional Events Center. "It was our pleasure to work with Outback Concerts in hosting Larry the Cable Guy in our sold-out arena – what a night!"



Larry and Scott

commented General Manager Scott Hallgren. The Events Center also heard about a local company Ag

Partners featuring a contest for tickets to the Larry the Cable Guy show. Employees had the chance during the

busy spring planting season to nominate others within the company that went "above and beyond" their normal work duties. Ag Partners typically has a lot of employees that work long hours in the spring and wanted to recognize and reward their effort on "Gittin' 'R Done" out in the field.

GRAND FORKS AND GRAND EVENTS

Tim McGraw

Tim McGraw's *Emotional Traffic Tour*, featuring special guests Luke Bryan and The Band Perry rocked the Alerus Center on May 17th in front of about 7,500 fans. With the economy and routing challenges, the Tim McGraw concert was the first large-scale concert at the Alerus Center since Britney Spears in 2009. The concert went off without a hitch and staff and the facility were commended for a job well done.



Summer Conferences, Conventions & Weddings in Full Swing

Our business typically slows down in the summer months, but the Alerus Center has still been hopping with activity. Six wedding receptions were held over just 3 weekends in



June with July and August booked solid as well. Notable conferences and conventions of second quarter include the 2011 District Rotary Conference, where the Alerus Center received rave reviews and accolades from all in attendance. Amongst all the area high school graduations and University commencements, the ND Motor Carriers Conference also visited the building in May, as did the Midwest Healthcare Educator's Academy.

Several large conferences were slated for June: a multi-day UAS (Unmanned Aircraft Systems) Research Corridor Conference was held at the beginning of the month, followed by other large meetings and conferences such as the 2-day State Stroke Program; the multi-day ND Pharmacist Association convention; 2011 CleanTech Conference; the National Potato Council meetings, each a 3-day event, respectively.

Easter Egg Hunt

On April 23rd, the Alerus Center hosted the 8th Annual Community Easter Egg Hunt. The event featured inflatable games, activity booths, face painting, arts and crafts, an interactive display with the Grand Forks Fire Department, a baby crawl, and of course, an egg hunt with 20,000 candy and prize-filled eggs! Around 3,500 children and parents participated in the annual celebration.

The Easter Egg Hunt is one of the Alerus Center's signature events and is made possible through support from our major sponsors, many of whom have sponsored the event since its inception. The success of this much-loved and anticipated event is largely due to the generosity of local individuals and organizations that volunteer time, donate prizes, and make financial contributions.





Best Experience with a Patron...

A conference attendee from Germany had left his coat and a few documents in the building and was scheduled to fly home early the next morning and did not realize it until late in the evening. When he notified the host hotel of his problem they called me and I drove to the building found his property and went to his hotel. When I got them back to him he wanted to provide a nice tip, I politely declined and suggested he could donate it to his favorite charity. He wrote a gracious thank you letter to the meeting planner on our extraordinary level of customer service.

*-Rick Palmer
Davenport*



My best experience is anytime a guest leaves an event with a smile on their face.

*-Rik Edgar
Racine*

Best Experience Story: When a Special Fan Met Kenny Rogers

April 1, 2011 marked the first day of Autism Awareness month; it also was the date of the Kenny Rogers concert at the Topeka Performing Arts Center. With the help of a few friends, TPAC was able to make a lifelong impact on a young Kenny Rogers Fan.

Colby Myers' mom, Kris, emailed KSNT - NBC a few months before the concert to tell them they bought tickets to the show April 1st at TPAC in Topeka to surprise Colby for his 15th birthday and asked if they knew anyone who could help Colby meet Kenny.

Colby was diagnosed with Autism when he was 2 years old and since his diagnosis he went from the child who never uttered a word to

the young man who will talk to anyone that will listen. His parents believe his exceptional progress came from his love for Kenny Rogers!

In 6th grade he sang Kenny's song "The Gambler" in the school talent show to a standing ovation. His mother was against Colby doing this in fear of the outcome but threw caution to the wind and in turn gave Colby the confidence to shine.

When KSNT emailed us, we forwarded Colby's story to a sponsor of the show, Core-First Bank. They agreed to give Colby two meet and greet passes.

With Colby's autism he latches on to certain things and can tell you anything and everything about that specific item, Kenny being one.

Colby found out about this once in a lifetime opportunity the week before the concert, when KSNT interviewed him and captured on video the moment he found out on the night of his birthday. We asked his parents why this was so special and they said it was because Colby just isn't included in life and this one moment, HE is the focus, HE is wanted, and HE is included.

To make things even better, the winners of a pair of 3rd party promotional tickets with passes weren't able to use the tickets and gave them to the family so that they could all attend the show!

Colby was one of the first in line and the tour surprised him a signed T-Shirt and poster.



Kenny Rogers and Colby Myers

Kenny even asked him to sing *The Gambler* for him! Colby got a round of applause from the other meet and greet attendees. Erin Aldridge, Marketing Manager was given the honor of handing a signed tambourine to Colby toward the end of the show. You've never seen a kid smile so much!

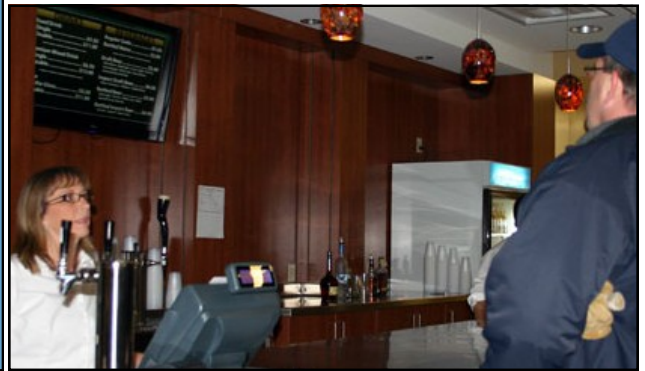
A couple of months ago, we had a patron lose a sweater in the building and was quite concerned about finding it. A few weeks after the event, the sweater was located and turned in to me so I called the lady and she came and picked it up. I thought that was the end of it.

However, another couple of weeks went by and she called back. She wanted to thank me for being so kind to her on the phone the first time she called to report the sweater missing. They had lost everything in a fire prior to coming to the event and the sweater was one of the few personal items that was saved. She couldn't talk about it without crying. We never know how much a seemingly routine part of our job can bless someone else. I still smile when I think about her.

*-Bonnie Vanloon
Davenport*

I had the pleasure of showing a gentleman the upper lobby of our facility; he was set to speak at an upcoming event and wanted to get a feel for the space. When we reached the top of the stairs, it was impossible to miss his surprise! He informed me that he had never seen a space with so much natural light; referring to our floor to ceiling windows. You could see him brighten up as he wandered the space planning his speech. It was great to see someone with so much passion be so excited to speak at our venue.

*-Dana Rondeau
Burnsville*



Best Experience Story: When Hoyt Sherman Worked Out a “Suite” Deal

Although summer has just begun and most people are thinking about sunshine and vacations, our “best experience with a patron” at Hoyt Sherman Place takes us back to December during one of the annual performances of *The Nutcracker Suite* by Ballet Des Moines.

Each year the Ballet puts on two school shows (in addition to four public performances) and invites school children from all over Des Moines and its surrounding cities to attend with their classes. Even though

Ballet Des Moines is responsible for making all of the arrangements for these shows, we typically get several phone calls from parents wondering if they can take advantage of this opportunity. I remember one such phone call like it was yesterday – from Amy, a mother of a daughter with autism. She was desperate for her daughter to attend one of the traditional holiday events that Des Moines has to offer. She knew that any crowded public performances would be too overwhelming for her daughter, but when

she heard about the special school shows of *The Nutcracker Suite*, she thought she might have finally found something that would work.

When I spoke with Amy, she explained her situation, and I was eager to find some way that I could help. After consulting with Ballet Des Moines’ Executive Director, Rachel Gross, we decided that the best place for this family to sit would be in their very own box seat in the balcony, away from the crowds of children. I called Amy back with the good news,

and she couldn’t have been happier.

On the day of the show, I met Amy and her daughter, Kylie, at the box office entrance and escorted them up to their seats. Kylie had brought her very own toy nutcracker prince to the show. I met up with Amy and Kylie after the show, and they told me they had a wonderful time. Actually, they enjoyed themselves so much that Amy wrote an article about the experience, thanking Hoyt Sherman Place and Ballet Des Moines for allowing her daughter to have such a “suite” day.

At The Venues...

Racine Lets Loose “Wild Animals”

Racine Civic Centre wants to give a howling welcome to the newest members of the VenuWorks Racine crew, Tom and Jerry. Tom and Jerry joined the staff in April 2011 and since that time have become



invaluable grounds staff. These new members are pack leaders of the geese waste prevention team and have excelled since these positions were introduced. Tom and Jerry have effectively scared away all but two very

brave geese making our grounds much cleaner and safer to use. Unfortunately, in their short tenure, the venue has received calls from concerned Racine citizens who have sighted these “wild animals” on the grounds. The staff

has had to reassure both citizens and Tom and Jerry that they are an invaluable part of our team. As a result, we felt this would be an excellent opportunity to prove their importance and officially welcome them to the band.

A Marquee in 2 Pictures... and 2 Pieces



Straight line winds in excess of 70 mph ripped off the top of the Swiftel Center marquee this spring and threw it in the yard. Fortunately no one was hurt.



The New Sanford Center is the New Home for Events in Bemidji

Legendary band STYX became the first rock band to play the Sanford Center on May 28th. An enthusiastic audience spent Saturday of Memorial Day weekend singing along to such hits as “Come Sail Away”, “Grand Illusion” and “Renegade.” The Bemidji Jaycees Annual Home, Sport and Travel Show relocated to the Sanford

Center in April and drew record attendance for the three-day event.



Annual Home, Sport and Travel Show on the arena floor.

The consumer show occupied the entire facility and even part of the parking lot. The Jaycees have secured their date for 2012 and are looking to make it even bigger next year.

The Sanford Center was awarded the Red, White & Blue “Money Ball” by the Harlem Globetrotters after the troupe set an attendance mark during their April 4th performance. In 2012, the Sanford Center hopes to challenge for the “Gold” Money Ball, given to venues for breaking records in two consecutive years.

VenuWorkers' SPOTLIGHT

VenuWorkers' Spotlight: Erin Powell of the Vicksburg Team

How long have you worked for VenuWorks?

I have been working for VenuWorks since September 2003.

What did you do before you started there?

I was the marketing representative at a casino. I got sold on the idea of leaving the casino world and crazy hours to come work at a convention center where I could have weekends off and better hours, little did I know what happens in this building! Some days when I was an Event Coordinator I missed the 40 hour weeks of the casino! I did get some weekends off that first year- but in my delusions I thought I was going into a Monday - Friday 8-5 kind of job— What an awakening I had! I loved every minute of it.

What has been your favorite part of the job?

My favorite part of the job is that moment right before a big event- when all of the work comes to fruition and you see the final product of months of planning and coordination.

Whether it be a concert/ spectator event or a conference- there's nothing more rewarding than seeing the smiles on people's faces as they are coming into the venue for their event.

What is your full title?

Sales and Marketing Manager or as I prefer "juggler".

Have you ever worked in another department?

I started out as an Event coordinator, moved into Marketing and Events coordinator/ manager and then slid on into the Sales and Marketing and passed the events on to new blood.

Have you always lived in Vicksburg?

No. I'm originally from Memphis. After a lot of moving around with my family in the south east, we ended up in Vicksburg. I've been here since 1991.

How do you and your staff get along?

We get along like any normal, healthy family. When you see the people you work with more than your own family, you do become a family of sorts. We depend on each other to get everything done. When one

of us is missing, EVERYONE feels it because a portion of our family unit is not there.

Does Larry sing all the time?

HAHA not all of the time, only about 85% of the time; the other 15% of the time he's cracking us up with jokes

What has been your favorite event at the building?

WOW in almost 8 years there are A LOT of favorite events. I guess my favorite in this building was my first ever concert, Isaac Hayes, also known as SHAFT! I started in September and the concert was the first of November- needless to say I was initiated by fire (which really is the only way you can learn this business). You can be given all the instructions, advice and how to, but until you do it yourself there's no way to totally understand or comprehend how an event happens. As for my all time favorite event that I have worked would have to be when I was part of an opening team back in 2005 in Youngstown, OH. Scott Schoenike and I were moving

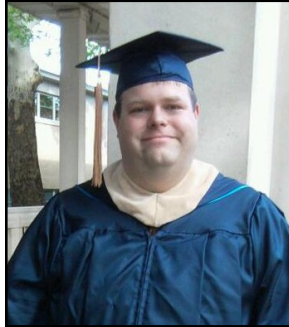
some furniture back of house and walked through the locker room being used by Tony Bennett. I was in awe that I was listening to this great performer warming his vocal cords. Scott laughed at me and said I'd get used to it someday- 6 years later I still get goose bumps when we have a show and realize I'm talking with someone some people only dream of being in the same room with. Working for VenuWorks has allowed me to meet people and do things that I would never have thought possible, this truly is a job I can honestly say is a labor of love. This industry is not one you can work in and "just draw a paycheck," you have to enjoy it and want to be a part of something bigger than yourself.



Erin Powell

QUICK UPDATES FROM OUR TEAM

Brendon Wagner recently completed his Masters Degree in Business Administration from Webster University. Taking classes



online and commuting often, he continued with his duties as Director of Operations at the RiverCenter. Congratulations Brendon!

Mike Siegel, Food & Beverage Manager at the Swiftel Center successfully completed Leadership Brookings. The program, sponsored by the Brookings Chamber, is spaced over eight months and participants learned new leadership skills. Additionally, participants built a leadership network among current and emerging leaders, learned about community issues, and became familiar with the rewards of community service. Congrats Mike for a job well done!

Add one more in Kennewick! Kim Snowden gave birth to a baby girl, Mauryn, on June 20th! Congratulations Kim and Cullen!



Clay County Regional Events Center's Event/Marketing Coordinator Jill Irlbeck is recently engaged to local electrician Nick Toft. An August 4, 2012 wedding is planned. The wedding will be in Jill's hometown of Manning and the reception will be in Dedham, Iowa. General Manager Scott Hallgren couldn't convince Jill to be the Manager on Duty at her own reception at the Events Center in Spencer.



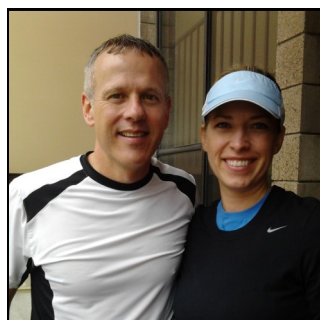
Rick Palmer is in the midst of a busy 2011. Over the 4th of July weekend, Rick attended the Optimist International Convention in Baltimore as part of his duties as President Elect for the Davenport Noon Optimist Club. Rick will begin his term as President in October. Congratulations Rick!



Tom Richter, Executive Director of the Swiftel Center completed his first half marathon in May.

Andrea Hogie, Business Manager at the Swiftel Center, has been appointed to a three year term on the City of Brookings' Safety Wellness Committee. The mission of the Safety/Wellness committee is to promote safety awareness and to provide a coordinated effort to address and help resolve health and safety issues in the City of Brookings in order to provide the safest possible working conditions for our employees.

Ticket Manager Garret Kollin married Ericka Erdmann on Friday, June 10th. They will continue to live in Bemidji. The Sanford Center staff wishes the couple the very best on their lives together!



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