



# Newsletter

Colorado New Mexico Oklahoma Arkansas Texas Kansas Mexico

November 2018

## Fort Smith Convention Center Wins 'Best of the Best' Award Contest

The Fort Smith Convention Center is honored and excited to have been voted the 2018 Best Special Events Venue in the region!



The contest, organized and promoted each year by the local newspaper, Southwest Times Record, allows its readers and the general public to vote on which business and organizations are the best in their field. Initially, a first round vote decides who the list of finalists are in each category, then a second round of voting decides who the 'Best of the Best' is in the category.

Best of the Best winners were announced at the Best of the Best awards reception and dinner which of course was held at the Fort Smith Convention Center. How cool it is that we won an award at the awards dinner being held in our venue!?

## The Broadmoor World Arena and Pikes Peak Center welcome new Event Management staff and Executive Chef



Chad Higgins  
Director of Events



Stephen Marquez  
Event Manager



Kelsey Guymon  
Executive Chef

As The Broadmoor World Arena and Pikes Peak Center for the Performing Arts gear up for a winter season of exciting entertainment for the entire family, the venues welcome new additions to their Event Management team and Centerplate catering staff.

Chad Higgins has accepted the position of Director of Events and Stephen Marquez joins Bekka Michaels as Event Manager, while Kelsey Guymon joins Centerplate as the new Executive Chef.

Higgins is from Vandalia, Ohio, a small town just north of Dayton. A 1999 graduate of Ohio State University, Higgins began his career in event management in 1996 when he became a stagehand at The Newport Music Hall while working for PromoWest Productions.

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After learning the ropes and progressing the entertainment industry event management ladder, Higgins soon found himself as the crew chief for The Ohio State University at the Jerome Schottenstein Center. A few years later Higgins switched his focus to event operations, becoming the Director of Operations for Live! Technologies, a national production company serving all facets of the entertainment industry through light, sound, and video resources. While there he was the production contact for The Jeff Dunham Tour from 2008-2012. In 2012 Higgins accepted a project management position with a pharmaceutical company in Arizona, but soon returned to facility event management and is now relocating to Colorado Springs with his wife Anne and their daughter Charlie.

Born in Denver and raised in Pueblo, Colorado, Marquez returns to Colorado from Wichita Falls, Texas where he was the Sr. Event Manager for four facilities, including an arena, theatre, agricultural facility and exhibit hall. Upon graduation from Pueblo West High School, Marquez worked as an event manager at the Pueblo Convention Center and Pueblo Memorial Hall for two years before moving to Texas. His appointment to Event Manager for BWA, PPC and the Ice Hall provide him a welcome return to his home state and family and the opportunity to advance his live event career at these premier venues in Colorado Springs.

Michaels, a former intern with the marketing department at BWA and PPC, became the venues' event coordinator in 2017 and is now enjoying a promotion to event manager after rejoining the event team this fall.

In September Guymon stepped into the role of Executive Chef for Centerplate, the Broadmoor World Arena and Pikes Peak Center's exclusive catering company, and has hit the ground running. Originally from St. Louis, Missouri, where most of her family still resides, Guymon moved to Colorado two years ago to become the Executive Chef at Granby Ranch Ski Resort in Grand County. Prior to taking the position at Granby Ranch Ski Resort, Guymon had never been west of Texas, but she fell in love with the Grand Lake area at the entrance to Rocky Mountain National Park. Guymon has been in the food/beverages industry for more than 17 years and is looking forward to her new position. Please join The Broadmoor World Arena, Pikes Peak Center and World Arena Ice Hall in welcoming these new additions.

## **UTA SPECIAL EVENT FACILITIES WELCOMES PAULA McELHENEY AS THE NEW DIRECTOR OF BOOKING AND CONTRACTS**



University of Texas at Arlington Special Event Facilities announces and welcomes Paula McElheneyk in a new position as Director of Booking and Contracts. Her distinctive role is to build promoter relationships in the entertainment industry, and to create and increase the number of entertainment, corporate and special events to both College Park Center and Texas Hall.

McElheney comes to UT Arlington Special Event Facilities with more than 30 years of experience as a leader in the entertainment industry. She began in 1985 as co-founder of Production Specialties. Since that time she implemented exceptional achievement as a production assistant and talent buyer, working with a number of the major promoters as well as managing day-of-show details for concerts in the DFW market. Recently she was at Chesapeake Arena/Cox Convention Center in Oklahoma City, where she worked with entertainment, convention and business events.

“Paula McElheney’s depth of knowledge in this industry will be a great asset to the UTA’s Special Event Facilities team. As we focus on bringing more entertainment and events to College Park Center and Texas Hall, we are pleased to find the right candidate that understands concerts, family and corporate events, as well as the challenges of programming in a competitive market,” says Jeff Davis, CVE, CMP, executive director Special Events Facilities. “With her extensive experience in the DFW market, we are excited to have Paula joining our team in this capacity, and we look forward to having a more diversified event calendar for both venues.”

## IAVM Region 3 and Region 6 Members Hold Joint-Chapter Meeting in Overland Park, KS

A Chapter meeting consisting of professional and allied members from Region 3 and Region 6 touched on outdoor festivals, trends in engineering and architecture and customer service improvement.

We also caught up with each other on what Halloween meant to us. 🎃



L to R: Donna Miller Brown, CVP – Kauffman Center, Kansas City, MO; Larry Gawronski, CVE – Topeka Performing Arts Center; Julie Bilyea – City of Overland Park, KS; David Greusel – Convergence Design, Kansas City, MO and Ian Wolfe – Henderson Engineers, Lenexa, KS

## SMG TULSA HOSTS “EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS & RISK MITIGATION TRAINING” FOR STAFF, LOCAL VENUES, CLIENTS AND FIRST RESPONDERS



SMG Tulsa hosted an all-day safety training event for its staff (Cox Business Center, BOK Center), airport personnel, local venues, hotels, parks, city representatives, event planners, and first responders. The event was attended by over 200 people and featured guest speakers from Dept. of Homeland Security, SMG Tulsa, Tulsa Police Department, the National Fire Protection Association and IAVM Director of Education Mark Herrera. IAVM provided a Facebook live-stream of three training sessions.

## SEEKING OUTRAGEOUSLY EXCELLENT SALES, FINANCE AND CATERING STAFF AT COX BUSINESS CENTER



The Cox Business Center is seeking a **Director of Sales** to coordinate the award-winning venue’s sales program with VisitTulsa and key hotel partners, and to direct the effort to attract conventions, consumer shows, trade shows, corporate meetings, and other short-term business opportunities. The Tulsa venue is also seeking a **Food & Beverage Coordinator** who will focus on financial reporting, and a **Catering Sales Manager** to solicit local catering events and service catering needs for convention, trade and consumer show clients. Visit <http://coxcentertulsa.com/jobs/> for details and to apply.

## NEW EVENTS LEADERSHIP AT COX BUSINESS CENTER



The Cox Business Center is pleased to announce **Mark Jeckavitch** as the new Director of Event Services and **Ashley Peacock** as Senior Events Manager for the SMG managed venue.

Mark studied hospitality management at **Ohio State University** where he also worked as a Facility Manager, Special Events Coordinator and Operations Manager. He most recently acted as Senior Events Manager at the **Greater Columbus Convention Center** – another SMG managed facility. In his new role as Director of Events, Mark will direct events and staff at two IAVM Venue Excellence Winner facilities – **BOK Center** and Cox Business Center.

Ashley joins SMG Tulsa from Texas where she received her Bachelor of Business Administration from **Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi** and worked in events for the University's School of Arts, Media and Communications. Ashley worked as a stage or festival manager for over 50 events during her undergrad career, and joined staff at the **Amarillo Civic Center Complex** for over five years; starting as an Event Supervisor before being promoted to Event Manager at the complex.

Ashley will be working directly with clients and vendors to plan and coordinate events, as well as directly oversee the Outrageously Excellent event services staff at the Cox Business Center in downtown Tulsa.

## Walmart AMP 20|20 Focuses on Expanded Amenities for Patrons *Live Nation Partnership, Expansion Plans Announced for Walmart AMP*



Peter Lane, president and CEO of Walton Arts Center, announced today Walmart AMP 20|20, a \$13.9 million expansion project for the Walmart AMP that focuses on providing outstanding programming and expanded amenities for patrons.

“We created a master plan for the development of the Walmart AMP, something that would serve as a blueprint for what the venue can and should look like for the next 10 to 15 years,” Lane said. “We knew we wanted to capitalize on the elements that make our venue unique – providing concerts that you would expect to see in a larger market with the amenities of a boutique venue.”

The first step toward that goal is a new five-year partnership with Live Nation, making them the preferred promoter at the Walmart AMP. The partnership goes into effect for the 2019 season, with Trevor Noah as the first announced Live Nation show of the new season.

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“After our first few shows in 2014, it became clear that Northwest Arkansas is not only a great market for business but also entertainment,” said Bob Roux, president, U.S. Concerts, Live Nation Entertainment. “Live Nation looks forward to our new partnership and bringing even more first-class entertainment to one of the fastest growing regions in the country.”

Also today, officials revealed expansion plans for the Walmart AMP that focus on enhancing the patron experience during a concert. These include:

- A new Procter & Gamble Box Office with more service windows making it easier for patrons to purchase and pick up tickets.
- An expanded main entry plaza twice as large as the current plaza with more Tyson Concession Stands and restrooms in the area.
- A new covered plaza at the top of the lawn, which adds 15,000 square feet of flexible viewing and event space as well as private restrooms. This area can be used for private events during shows and to provide enhanced amenities for the lawn.
- Two new outdoor plazas at the top of the hill will provide two new Tyson Concession stands, 56 additional restroom stalls and flexible space for activations.
- A reconfigured Kraft Heinz Entrance on the north side of the venue will feed into the new space at the top of the hill providing additional gates to get patrons in and out of the venue.
- New tiered seating at the front of the General Mills Lawn will provide a flexible space for portable seating that can accommodate 1,200 patrons in a reserved, premium lawn section.
- Capacity will increase by 1,000, bringing the total venue capacity to 11,000.

The entire project will take seven months to complete, and is designed not to interrupt any concert seasons.

Construction will start in November 2019 at the end of the concert season. Work will be finished in time for the 2020 Cox Concert Series. CORE Architects is handling project design. CDI is the general contractor.

To date, \$13 million or 94% of the funding has been raised. 20|20 Vision Supporters include Johnelle Hunt, whose give retires all existing debt; Walmart, who extended their naming rights to 2044; General Mills, who extended their sponsorship of the lawn through 2035; Tyson, who extended their sponsorship of the concessions buildings through 2028; Procter & Gamble, who extended their sponsorship of the box office through 2028, and Live Nation.

Additional phases of development for the venue, which focus on artist amenities and back of house needs, have been identified by the master plan. Those will be funded and staged to start at a later date.

For more information about AMP20|20 visit <http://www.waltonartscenter.org/amp/2020>.

For downloadable photos and videos, visit the [Walmart AMP 20|20 Dropbox](#).

## **FNB Arena Banks on New Staff Members**

First National Bank Arena in Jonesboro, Arkansas, has continued finalizing its team this fall. Jennifer Hurn was added to the team in early September as the new Assistant Box Office Manager. Hurn grew up in Jonesboro, Arkansas, and is no stranger to the Red Wolves. Her husband also works at the university in the mail center, and their daughter graduated in December of 2017 with a degree in education. She spent the past 18 years as the Assistant Vice President for Heritage Bank and has 23 years of experience in banking. In her spare time Hurn enjoys working in her yard. “It’s like my yoga time,” she said.



Jennifer Hurn

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No stranger to the arena, Julianna Darvis was promoted as the new Booking Coordinator this past spring. She originally joined the team in December 2000 and spent the last 18 years serving as the cashier for First National Bank Arena. Darvis is from Traverse City, Michigan, and began her career at Walmart before transitioning to banking. She later moved to St. Bernard's Hospital in Jonesboro. Her daughters are also Red Wolves' fans; her oldest graduated with a degree in graphic design and youngest is pursuing a degree in nursing from AState. In her free time, Darvis loves to travel and spend time with her family.



Julianna Darvis

In addition to administration, the arena's operations team has also grown. Jeff Crabtree joined FNB Arena two years ago as the Skill Trades Supervisor. The Ohio-native prides himself in his daughter's straight A's and perfect attendance in school. In his free time, Crabtree enjoys movies and roller skating with his daughter, Domino's pizza, working out in the yard and spending time with friends. When asked what he loves about his job Crabtree said, "It's never the same thing twice. I remember walking into the arena one day seeing a cage of Bengal tigers and then having to step out of the way for an elephant walking down the hallway."



Jeff Crabtree

Keep an eye out for continued changes and growth at First National Bank Arena! For more information, contact us at 870-972-3870; tickets available at [tickets.astate.edu](http://tickets.astate.edu).

## **Trudy Sweeten Appointed Assistant General Manager at Destination El Paso - El Paso Live**



Destination El Paso is proud to announce that Trudy Sweeten has been named the Assistant General Manager at El Paso Live. A highly accomplished professional with more than 25 years of experience and 15 years with SMG, Sweeten transferred from a very successful SMG operation in Tulsa, Oklahoma at the Tulsa-Cox Business Center and BOK Center, where she was Director of Event Services for all venues. She managed and developed several programs including the "Outrageously Excellent Career Development program," a new Guest Services training program and a Special Events Outdoor Emergency Plan and Safety Program among others.

"I have fallen in love with El Paso and its rich cultural diversity. The city is experiencing tremendous growth and I am excited to work with the El Paso Live team to continue to meet and exceed expectations to enhance quality of life through our events, entertainment and services to the Border region," Sweeten said.

Additionally, Sweeten worked for SMG in Oklahoma City at the Cox Convention Center and Chesapeake Energy Arena. She is a graduate of Middle Tennessee State University. Welcome Trudy to the DEP team!

## **SMG-DESTINATION EL PASO SEEKS A SPONSORSHIP MANAGER**

**SMG**, the leader in privately managed public assembly facilities has an immediate opening for the following position at Destination El Paso featuring nationally recognized venues including: El Paso Convention Center, Abraham Chavez Theatre, Plaza Theatre Performing Arts Centre, McKelligon Canyon and Pavilion.

### **Sponsorship Manager**

#### *Position Summary:*

This position reports and works with the Assistant General Manager to develop, coordinate and manage all sponsorship activities related to all special event activities; shows/festivals, series that are either owned, co-owned, presented, or co-presented by Destination El Paso. This position is responsible for selling and managing event and venue sponsorships and high-level vendor partnerships.

*Education and Experience:* Must have a bachelor's degree from an accredited four-year college or university. Marketing, Public Relations or related field experience is preferred. The position requires a minimum of two years previous experience with event management, including logistics and sponsorship procurement is preferred.

**For the complete job description or to apply, visit:** <http://www.elpasolive.com/contact/jobs> or contact Emilio Velez, Human Resources Manager at: [HRecruiter@destinationelpaso.com](mailto:HRecruiter@destinationelpaso.com)

**SMG is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer, and encourages Women, Minorities, Individuals with Disabilities, and protected Veterans to apply. VEVRAA Federal Contractor**

## **BILL HERMAN PROMOTED TO GENERAL MANAGER OF ALLEN EVENT CENTER**



Bill Herman has been promoted to General Manager of Allen Event Center in Allen, Texas. Herman has served as Assistant General Manager with Allen Event Center since July 2017 overseeing daily and event operations at the venue.

“Bill’s extensive experience in arena operations, event planning, booking and general management has been an indispensable resource to all work groups at the Event Center over the past 15 months,” said David Angeles, Herman’s predecessor who will now provide oversight to both Allen Event Center and the Courses at Watters Creek as an Assistant Director. “Bill’s knowledge in sports team operations has further strengthened the arena’s relationship and support of City of Allen sports tenants.”

Herman, who officially began his new role on October 27, has spent his 20-year career in public assembly venues in the Dallas-Fort Worth market and is a recent second year graduate of the Venue Management School.

## The Rustic Opens on Avenida Houston



On November 1, The Rustic opened its doors and welcomed guests with southern hospitality and lively entertainment. The bar/restaurant/entertainment venue hosted a Texas-sized party to celebrate its grand opening in Houston at 1836 Polk Street, just across the street from the George R. Brown Convention Center. The opening celebration featured food and drinks from their southern-inspired menu and a performance from co-partner and Texas country legend Pat Green.

The Rustic is conveniently located in downtown's center of entertainment, Avenida Houston. With the convention center, Toyota Center, Minute Maid Park, and BBVA Compass Stadium located within a few blocks, the already vibrant area has now added more options for visitors looking for live entertainment seven days a week. The Rustic will feature live performances each evening from local and national acts, as well as special events and brunches. For more information about The Rustic and upcoming events, please visit: [http://therustic.com/#houston\\_downtown](http://therustic.com/#houston_downtown).



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**Thank you newsletter contributors this month!**

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Arena Ice Hall

Holly Beal – Cox Business Center

Larry Gawronski – Topeka Performing Arts Center

Brian Nickerson – Allen Event Center

Katelyn Orenchuk - George R. Brown Convention Center

Morgan Rhodes – First National Bank Arena

Tim Seeberg – Fort Smith Convention Center

Emilio Velez – Destination El Paso

Pamela Webb – UTATickets, University of Texas at Arlington

Jennifer Wilson – Walton Arts Center/Walmart AMP

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