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Venues

Cont'd from Page 19

"This listing is very good thing for us having not one, but two venues listed that high," Crowe said. "Plus our audiences are very supportive, and have such a great time at the shows."

"El Pasoans are buying more tickets, and that means more shows," Crowe said. "A lot of performers are surprised by how well they do here and they want to come back."

COUNTY COLISEUM

Most successful promoters and venues in the area realize healthy competition is a good thing, because when one venue does well, whether it is the Coliseum or the Plaza, it benefits all the others.

Sports Commission CEO Brian Kennedy, who is also facility director for El Paso County Coliseum, said around 100 live shows come through the Coliseum each year. While the needs of each performer or event may differ when considering the Coliseum as a venue, there are some things to consider for every potential act.

"First, we have to make sure we are the right size for them," Kennedy said, stressing that every act has to be looked at for its own specific needs in terms of size, budget and scheduling. "We also have to look at what's going on around town at any particular date. If we book one popular band of a certain type of music too soon after another has come through, it might hurt ticket sales."

The Coliseum actively recruits acts for the venue, Kennedy said, but at the same time many acts and agents approach them.

"Ariana Grande is one example," Kennedy said. "She could play anywhere she wanted in this town, but she chose the Coliseum, because she heard it was like a 'rite of passage' to play here."

Performers want more than just a venue that's the right size, he added. They want a place that has the right atmosphere that fits their personality. Pop-punk legends Green Day kicked off their recent tour at the Coliseum in March 2017, and arrived a couple of days early just so they could get a feel for the place and fine tune their own performance. Being able to work with performers in this way is one of the aspects of being a successful promoter.

"We have gotten the reputation of the venue that not only works well for the performance, but will work well with the you while you are here," he said. Sometimes the fit becomes a long-lasting relationship. Disney On Ice has had such success with the Coliseum that they have already booked their annual stops at the Coliseum through 2020.

"We're just the right size and type for them," Kennedy said. "The know that when they come here they are going to do well."

Likewise, champion bullrider Tuff Hedeman, an El Paso native, hosts his annual West Texas Shootout bullriding competition at the Coliseum each year.

"Some performers just really prefer us," he said. "This is pretty much a home base for (Latin pop star) Chayanne, and Pepe Aguilar always performs here."

Kennedy said he knows the importance of bringing performers into the area, not just into the Coliseum, and if they aren't

the right venue for someone, they are more than happy to recommend another location in El Paso or Las Cruces. Every successful performance in the area benefits the reputation of the entire community. A successful show at the Plaza may help the Coliseum, or even Speaking Rock. A successful show at the Don Haskins Center in El Paso may benefit the Pan American or Rio Grande Theatre in Las Cruces. When a performer remembers a show in a certain city, others will look to perform in the area, and the more venues available to suit different needs, genres and audience sizes, the better.

"If they do well," he said of the area's other venues, "we all do well."

TRICKY FALLS

The increase in attention from touring performers isn't just toward the arenas and stadiums, in its welcoming and growing night club scene.

Performance spaces and stages such as Tricky Falls and its adjoining venue, The Perch, and Lowbrow Palace host musical acts of all genres. Other venues such as Rock House Bar and Grill, Club Here I Love You, or Neon Rose focus on certain music audiences from metal to electronic dance music, hip-hop, country.

Tricky Falls and Lowbrow Palace are two of the most consistent venues for touring performers, with Tricky Falls and The Perch hosting 110 touring acts in 2017, and Lowbrow bringing in about 100 over the course of the year.

Tricky Falls owner Bobbie Welch is no stranger to the worlds of booking and promoting live entertainment, having once served as Special Events Coordinator for New Mexico State University. She said the primary factor in bringing in an act is making sure it is financially doable.

"Obviously, the biggest concern is money," she said. "Do we think we will break even on a show, the old 'expenses-versus-projected attendance' formula."

This doesn't mean venues won't take the occasional risk of bringing in a good show.

"Sometimes when we are fans, we just throw the formula out the window, run with it, and hope for the best," Welch said.

Another major concern is whether a production will fit in the building, she said.

For Tricky Falls, there are varying audience capacities they can work with, from 200 in The Perch, 350 front-of-house downstairs in Tricky, 850 to 1,000 total downstairs in Tricky to a combined 1,500 full house. Audience capacity isn't the only "size concern," said added. There are also issues of how well it will accommodate the act itself.

"Tricky Falls seems large, but it is a historic building (designed in 1914 by Henry Trost) that was constructed before modern day touring productions," Welch said.

"Because of this, we lack many of the amenities, including private dressing rooms, production offices, catering rooms, and the like, that many venues of our size do have available."

In addition, the stage was configured more for film than live acts, so too big a set up with lots of equipment won't work.

"In fact, we are not able to get some stage sets in the doors because they are too large," she said, "and that has sadly meant being unable to book some concerts that we really wanted."

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