

DEEP SOUTH



Fall Out Boy lit up Smoothie King Center in New Orleans.



ON

DEEP SOUTH VENUES
TAKING FULL ADVANTAGE
OF A STRONG ECONOMY

FIRE



SPOTLIGHT

BY NOELLE RILEY

Venue managers across the Deep South touted a strong 2018 and are expecting an even better 2019, hopeful that the economy will remain sturdy. Country, pop and rock continue to rule the stages, and words like “diverse” and “outstanding” popped up to describe venue schedules and their results at the gate. Venue operators rely on strong industry relationships and — in some cases — good weather for gigs to go smoothly.

THE CIRCUIT

WHAT STOOD OUT IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS FOR FOUR OF THE REGION'S VENUES

VERIZON ARENA, NORTH LITTLE ROCK, ARK.

Michael Marion, general manager



How did you do in 2018?

Shows generally do well in our market. Most of the

artists that do come through give our audience a good review. The economy is really strong, and it's strong in Arkansas. We usually do 19 concerts a year. We averaged around 25 in 2018, because we have a curtain system so we can cut our seating down to 3,000 seats. Some of these smaller shows have added to our event load and have done well.

Big shows



Verizon Arena
in North Little
Rock, Ark.

We certainly had some giant shows last year, with Katie Perry, Journey/Def Leppard, Shania Twain, Alan Jackson, Bon Jovi, Kevin Hart, Thomas Rhett, Lauren Daigle, Frankie Valli, Steve Martin/Martin Short and Chicago.

Changes

Ticketing is ever changing. When

I first started in this business 43 years ago, you ordered hard tickets. I'm a gadget guy, so we've gone all digital with our ticketing, and that's worked very well.

What went right?

We've had three or four really strong years. We pride ourselves on making sure we have repeat business. We're the biggest venue

in the state when it comes to concerts. Our geography is good.

What went wrong?

I gotta tell you, most of the shows beat our expectations.

How's 2019 been so far?

We did Justin Timberlake in January. We've done Metallica, Luke Combs, James Taylor, Toby Mac and Alabama. Coming up in 2019: Jimmy Buffett, Eric Church, Chris Stapleton, Carrie Underwood and Kiss.

TUSCALOOSA (ALA.) AMPHITHEATER

Kay Day, city venue operations manager



How did you do in 2018?

The overall feedback from the community, including our box holders, was that the 2018

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verizon ARENA

Y'ALL COME SEE US

NORTH LITTLE ROCK, AR

ARKANSAS' BEST



This place is lit!

Northwest Arkansas | amptickets.com



THE CIRCUIT

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season was truly outstanding, and I would say that as far as artists go, we were comparative to line-ups for cities twice our size.

Big shows

Jack Johnson, Alan Jackson, Jason Aldean, Keith Urban, Fantasia, Cole Swindell, Odesza and Chris Stapleton were some of our bigger shows.

Changes

We are always trying to bring more diversity into our shows. This year we have Jim Gaffigan, Kidz Bop and more urban shows with B2K, Nelly and TLC, and Mary J. Blige. Of course, we are always watching the latest security standards and upgrading those measures every year. We're also looking for ways to enhance our guest experience. Over the last few years, we have conducted several studies on our gate entrance procedures to lessen gate wait times.

What went right?

We are always looking for ways to improve the guest experience and safety of our patrons. This year, for the continued safety of our guests, we will be implementing a clear bag policy.

What went wrong?

It seems like we had more shows where we were concerned about the weather in 2018. Weather is obviously beyond our control and our goal has been to sharpen our communication methods so that we are able to immediately notify guests about any gate delays or changes to the show due to the weather.

How has 2019 been so far?

We kicked off our season on April 25 with the Zac Brown Band. A week later we had B2K followed up by Jim Gaffigan on May 9 and Lynyrd Skynyrd on May 10. Kenny Chesney will be here on Friday, May 24. We were honored to host the Bicentennial Bash on March 30, which featured legends like the Commodores, the Blind Boys

of Alabama and Moon Taxi. This show was offered free of charge to the Tuscaloosa community in honor of the city's 200th birthday. I think that show really got everyone excited about the upcoming shows for this season.

THE WHARF AMPHITHEATER, ORANGE BEACH, ALA.

Pete Bryan, general manager



How did you do in 2018?

We had a great year. Being an outdoor venue and in

the South, weather is a constant factor. We did have to postpone the Dave Matthews Band to a later date due to an approaching tropical storm.

Big shows

Dave Matthews Band, Imagine Dragons, Keith Urban, Jason Aldean, Alan Jackson, Miranda Lambert and more.

Changes

We are always looking to modernize where we can improve our guest's experience and reduce wait times, whether it be admission, buying concessions or accessing restrooms. We added a point-of-sale system for concessions to maximize sales, speed up transactions and to improve audit functionality. We continue to work with cellular providers encouraging them to upgrade their local infrastructure to improve service in the venue during events.

Also, this off-season we put in place

major changes. We increased tour parking and added a premium paid parking option for our patrons. Also improved the parking area and on-site amenities for our venue VIP program, The W Club.

What went right?

We increased focus on improving security search points and ingress to enhance timely processing and increase volume.

What went wrong?

Local day-of-show staffing continues to be a challenge in a strong job market. Fast food restaurants are offering upwards of \$15 an hour locally. Hard to compete for casual labor.

How has 2019 been so far?

It's shaping up to be even stronger. The concert business is healthy in our market.

LANDERS CENTER, SOUTHAVEN, MISS.

Todd Mastry, executive director



How did you do in 2018?

It started out with a sold-out Kevin Hart show followed

closely by three back-to-back-to-back sold-out Monster Jam shows, so 2018 was a great year for Landers Center, as was 2017,

but for different reasons. In 2017, we had a higher gross and ticket sales numbers but by less than 10 percent in each category when you look at just concerts.

Big shows

Marvel Universe Live, Sesame Street Live, Jurassic World Live (coming in December), Monster Jam.

What went right?

If you add in non-concert ticket sales in 2018, such as Marvel Universe Live, and non-ticket events such as a (President Donald Trump) rally and cheer events and a large increase in trade shows that took place on the arena level, our 2018 number grew by over 20 percent compared to 2017.

What went wrong?

The summer of 2018 saw the arena shut down for construction to replace all the lower bowl retractable seating units and yet 2018 still was a great year, only slightly behind 2017 in gross and ticket sales.

How has 2019 been so far?

It jumped out of the box with sold-out Kane Brown, rodeo and Kelly Clarkson shows. The Memphis, Tenn., and Southaven, Miss., metro areas have found their stride and continue to do an amazing job selling tickets to a wide range of events. It's a diverse community here in the Mid-South. ▣

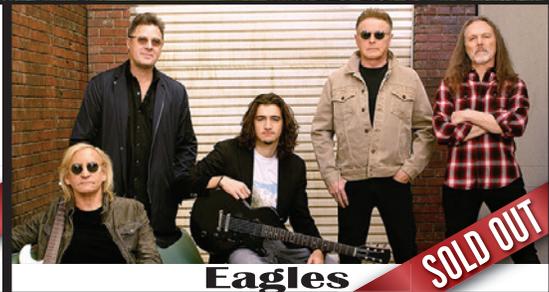


Landers Center in Southaven, Miss.



Pink

SOLD OUT



Eagles

SOLD OUT



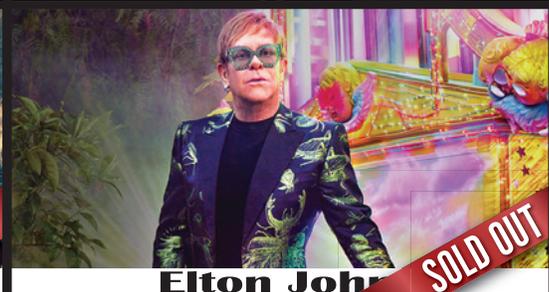
Metallica

SOLD OUT



Kiss

SOLD OUT



Elton John

SOLD OUT



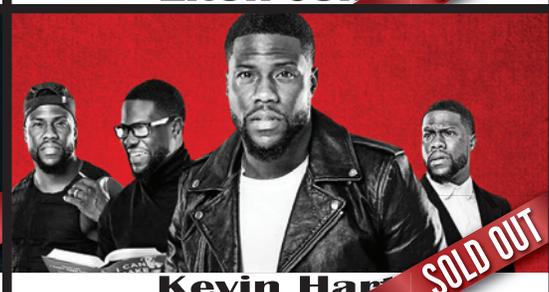
Mumford & Sons

SOLD OUT



Luke Combs

SOLD OUT



Kevin Harvick

SOLD OUT



TSO

SOLD OUT

ALABAMA'S PREMIER SPOT FOR ENTERTAINMENT The BJCC is located in the heart of downtown Birmingham, just 10 minutes away from the Birmingham-Shuttlesworth International Airport. The complex includes two luxury hotels and eight restaurants and bars in the adjacent Uptown Entertainment District which includes global entertainment leader Topgolf. The BJCC features covered, convenient parking and climate controlled crosswalks to the hotels.

bjcc.org | [#BJCC](https://twitter.com/BJCC) | 877.THE.BJCC

Bookings:: Susette Hunter, Director of Sales | 205.458.8441 | susette.hunter@bjcc.org

Scene: Little Rock

HOMETOWN HELPED RISING RAPPER GOON DES GARCONS LEARN TO INNOVATE

BY NOELLE RILEY



ARKANSAS RAPPER Goon des Garçons started recording songs and videos at 12 years old. As he got older, he realized that Little Rock lacked venues that supported budding rappers.

In his late teens, he started a traveling music series called Fire Room, working with club owners, asking them to allow him and other young rappers and punk musicians to perform shows for all ages. Young rappers and punk rockers signed up to play.

The first Fire Room gig sold 80 tickets at the 300-capacity club

inside Vino's Brewpub in Little Rock. The second sold 120 at the same location. The largest Fire Room event logged 280 people at 600-capacity the Rev Room, also in Little Rock.

"It was a steady growing thing. Toward the end of 2017. The thing just built. We didn't have a scene (before that) ... the kids and the youth," he said. "I think the youngest people were like 11 or 12. And then it could range to late 30s and 40s."

He's now 26, recently moved to Los Angeles and is working on a new album. His management said

late last month that an announcement of his signing with the Def Jam Recordings label was imminent. His insight into the Little Rock music scene comes from a performer's perspective.

What are the fans like in Little Rock?

They're appreciative. You appreciate it when it's brought to you (and you don't have to travel). Every artist I've talked to say they love to play Arkansas.

Where are you now with your career?

I just plan to keep it going. My sights aren't on a certain thing. I'm just getting started, so I have a lot I want to do. Right now, I'm gearing up and about to release two new projects for Def Jam. Growing up in Arkansas, I had to learn how to get those venue relationships. You had to also learn to do your own merchandise and videos. It's been such a valuable skill that I've brought to L.A. with me.

What advice do you have for venue operators when working with talent?

Be understanding and be willing to look outside of yourself at the bigger picture. (They) get into a routine of it's another night, it's another night. But to the performer, it's a big night for us.

What's a dream venue for you?

When it's time for me to go back to Arkansas in a couple years, I would love to go back and do Verizon Arena. Little Rock doesn't have that many venues. It's either 400 people or 800 people. And then the next range you can go to is the arena, which is 20,000 people. ▣

TOPSTOPS DEEP SOUTH

Ranked by tickets sold. Based on data from concerts and events in Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi March 1, 2018-Feb. 28, 2019, as reported to Pollstar. Data updated as of April 1.

| RANK | VENUE | TICKETS SOLD | CAPACITY | GROSS | SHOWS |
|------|--------------------------------------------|--------------|----------|--------------|-------|
| 1 | Smoothie King Center, New Orleans | 261,784 | 18,000 | \$21,802,242 | 31 |
| 2 | Verizon Arena, North Little Rock, Ark. | 257,526 | 18,000 | \$14,961,867 | 39 |
| 3 | Mercedes-Benz Superdome, New Orleans | 189,924 | 73,000 | \$23,601,437 | 4 |
| 4 | Walmart AMP, Rogers, Ark. | 151,914 | 10,000 | \$6,887,451 | 20 |
| 5 | Legacy Arena at the BJCC, Birmingham, Ala. | 113,669 | 18,000 | \$8,418,352 | 14 |
| 6 | Oak Mountain Amphitheatre, Pelham, Ala. | 86,184 | 10,289 | \$3,356,147 | 19 |
| 7 | The Wharf Amphitheater, Orange Beach, Ala. | 73,209 | 10,250 | \$4,026,982 | 9 |
| 8 | Tuscaloosa (Ala.) Amphitheater | 68,742 | 7,294 | \$3,141,331 | 13 |
| 9 | River Center Arena, Baton Rouge, La. | 60,823 | 10,617 | \$3,301,071 | 16 |
| 10 | CenturyLink Center, Bossier City, La. | 59,359 | 14,000 | \$3,688,198 | 8 |
| 11 | Saenger Theatre, New Orleans | 45,784 | 2,613 | \$3,939,490 | 20 |
| 12 | Iron City, Birmingham, Ala. | 43,004 | 1,300 | \$1,208,230 | 55 |
| 13 | Mississippi Coast Coliseum, Biloxi, Miss. | 39,639 | 15,000 | \$3,023,265 | 7 |
| 14 | Shreveport (La.) Municipal Auditorium | 36,967 | 3,024 | \$1,781,884 | 22 |
| 15 | Landers Center, Southaven, Miss. | 32,684 | 10,000 | \$1,868,047 | 8 |

Note: Capacity shown is legal capacity listed in Pollstar database. Compiled by teamboxoffice@pollstar.com.