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ENCANA EVENTS CENTRE PROVES IT'S WORTH THE TRIP

The Encana Events Centre, located in the small Canadian town of Dawson Creek, is an unlikely success story. Looking at a map, it's a venue that's not the easiest to access.

But this is a market that sells tickets and has great content partnerships with Invictus Entertainment Group, Live Nation, Mascioli Entertainment and Paul Merce Concerts.

"We do have to fight and scrape to make sure that the tours come here," said Ryan MacIvor, Spectra's general manager at the Encana Events Centre. "We've been doing great deals, and ultimately that has led to success."

He also credits the venue's customer service-focused approach to touring shows and his team's attention to detail.

Open close to a decade, the Encana Events Centre, which takes its name after Canada's largest gas company, is about a five-hour drive from Edmonton and the same distance from Prince George.

When pitching the facility, MacIvor said it's his job to educate promoters about the market and provide assurance that the market will support the show.

"There's money to be made and the building is state of the art and easy to work in," said MacIvor. "The conversation is really about adding an extra date here."

It's also a bonus working with Spectra's South Okanagan Events Centre in Penticton and the Abbotsford Entertainment and Sports Centre, which easily route to Dawson Creek, creating opportunities for all three venues.

There have been situations where promoters will book shows in Vancouver, Kelowna or Penticton and then visit Dawson Creek and play Edmonton, bypassing other major markets.

"We've been very fortunate, and I think it speaks to our servicing and ability to sell tickets as well as the fan experience," said MacIvor. "We're trying to be a big building in a small market, even though we're a small building in a small market."

Although the Encana Centre played a big part in opening up a Canadian route that wasn't in existence 15 years ago, it hasn't been without challenges.

When rock band KISS was scheduled to play Dawson Creek, the pass from Prince George was closed due to an avalanche. This resulted in an extra five hours of travel time. Fortunately, doors opened on time for the show.

"And I remember a couple years ago when Canadian band Blue Rodeo played here and we had a power outage in the city, which cut power to our building," said MacIvor. "We went to emergency backup and the band actually played an acoustic set and used our wireless mics."

The building has hosted the Dixie Chicks, a two-night Luke Bryan show and the musical Mamma Mia!, which will run a second time on its final tour this fall.

Along with big name performers, the Encana Centre hones its entrepreneurial spirit by hosting small festivals, including Grizfest and Canolafest, to help leverage its ticketing, food and beverage, and corporate sales.

“I think it speaks favorably to the clients, the city and the efforts and energies of Spectra Venue Management, Invictus, Live Nation and everyone,” said Maclvor. “It’s a team effort and we’re all players in the Encana Centre’s success.”