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Monday, February 6, 2017

## **SPECTRA, NEDERLANDER PARTNER AT BONNEY FIELD**

*Exclusive agreement will see Nederlander promote, produce and program events at the 12,000-seat facility*

Spectra by Comcast Spectacor and Nederlander Concerts have announced a multiyear agreement to partner on live music programming at Bonney Field, which is on the California State Fairgrounds in Sacramento, and is currently used primarily for United Soccer League's Sacramento Republic soccer games.

The \$3-million, privately-funded facility is a private-public collaboration among Spectra Food Services & Hospitality, Sacramento Republic FC and California State Fair. The aim of the deal with Nederlander is to increase the quantity and quality of publicly ticketed events at California's second largest, outdoor soccer venue.

"We're very excited about the arrangement," said Alex Hodges, CEO, Nederlander Concerts, "and think, it's going to be a great environment for more concerts."

Hodges met with Spectra executives back in 2014 when they were building the facility and suggested that it would be wonderful to have a permanent, mobile stage that could roll out onto the field for variable capacities for different-sized shows.

One of the issues back then was the location of Bonney Field, which was once home to the Cal Expo/Bill Graham Presents Amphitheater. Cal Expo/Bill Graham Amphitheater programmed large outdoor concerts for 15 years, but was shut down in 1998 due to noise restrictions.

Spectra addressed the noise issues and built a Brown United/Clarke Reader-engineered mobile stage, with 128-turf tires to flex the venue's capacity from 4,500 to 12,000-plus with its multiple configuration options. They started hosting concerts in 2016 showcasing Weezer, Panic! at The Disco, Lindsey Stirling, Phantogram, the Sacramento Philharmonic and City of Trees festival, which was the Bonney Field's biggest paid event and saw 14,500 attendees.

Nederlander currently has a similar deal with Statesman Skyline Theater at the Long Center, Austin, and with the concerns over concerts at Bonney Field solved, Hodges felt it was time to bring up the several-year-old discussion about Nederlander and Spectra partnering to program Bonney Field.

"The stage rolls out on tires, and it's the key to programming the site," said Hodges. "It's big enough to be a fantastic stage, and it already being built saves a tremendous amount of money to the artist and promoter and keeps the costs in line."

During soccer matches the stage converts into the owners' box of the Sacramento Republic FC and invited VIP guests. With the stage tucked away in this configuration, Bonney Field has the ability to be a 28,400-seat venue.

Spectra's VP of Business development, Nick Nicora, the architect of Bonney Field, said that from the very beginning he felt that Hodges was the right partner.

"We always knew that Bonney Field needed a partner," said Nicora. "We designed it with a moveable stage in mind. It weighed on my mind that we respect Bill Graham's memory and Bill and Alex had a wonderful relationship, which made partnering with him and Nederlander a natural for the venue."

"We always intended for Bonney Field to be a multipurpose facility," said Eric Blockie, GM, Bonney Field and VP, Venue Development, Spectra. "As the site sits on the old Bill Graham Amphitheater, we thought along with the expertise Spectra brings to the venue, we could develop the property into a first-class outdoor live music venue with the addition of the rolling stage. The stage can roll up and down on the field and accommodate any size concert; the flexibility gives the agents and promoters an option."

"I've known the staff at Nederlander for 30 years and the company always presented the ability to bring not only the shows, but other assets to the table," said Blockie. "Their regional booking power, routing capabilities, their relationships with other promoters and a great marketing team all make Nederlander the perfect partner for Bonney Field."

Nederlander will co-promote all shows except for a small minority of local events.

Hodges and Spectra have been talking for close to a year. "We sent our people to look at the structure and the setting, and they became very excited about a partnership," said Hodges. It took about six months to work on the deal. "A great idea always needs to be followed through with the deal and we feel really good about it."

Hodges declined to discuss specifics of the deal but did volunteer that it was "a multiyear arrangement, with options, and we'll be there a long time. We wouldn't make this type of commitment if we weren't going to have longevity there."

Offers are currently out to kick off Nederlander's programming of Bonney Field to classic rock bands, new bands and Latin music bands, the latter of which Hodges sees as especially viable for the Sacramento market.

Hodges said Nederlander had success in Sacramento in the past at Raley Field, with bands Sugarland, Zac Brown and Scorpion.

The first show should land at Bonney Field in the late spring. "It's an outdoor setting so we need to be cognizant of the weather," he said. "We also have to be aware of soccer games and the fair dates."

Ticket prices will vary from show to show, but Hodges expects most to be priced between \$45 and \$65, with VIP tickets to run higher.

Bonney Field also partners with Raging Waters theme park, with which they share a fence, for discounts based on deals with promoters. Interestingly, the best-attended show at Bonney Field in

2016 was not a concert or soccer match, it was a Democratic presidential nominee Bernie Sanders rally that was free and attracted 17,000 Sanders supporters.

“Spectra has a wonderful history in Sacramento and we’ve been trying to figure out how to work with them more, and now we have a way,” said Hodges.

“The ultimate goal is to bring A-List entertainment to Bonney Field and Cal Expo,” added Nicora. “I’m looking forward to a long relationship with Alex at Bonney Field and at other California venues.”