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BIG ACTS IN 2017 BRING EXCITEMENT TO THE CITY

In recent years, it has been difficult for the city of Wichita Falls to sell tickets for shows taking the stage, but that could all change in 2017.

After years of lack luster ticket sales and slumping revenue at its entertainment venues, it has become difficult for the city to even attract performers.

Management was recently handed over to Spectra in hopes the firm could book some big acts and could even encourage Texomans to buy tickets to see the shows.

The city of Wichita Falls will be micing up and welcoming three big acts when 2017 gets underway.

Starting on January 14th, Grammy award winning country star Travis Tritt is first who is known for his big hit in 2000 "Best of Intentions".

On February 7th, legendary rock band Foreigner will perform some of their big hits such as "Waiting for a Girl Like You" and their number one hit "I want to Know What Love Is".

Just four days later on the 11th, funny man Gabriel Iglesias will be delivering laughs to a Wichita Falls crowd.

All three acts will be performing at Memorial Auditorium and Foreigner Marketing Director John Lappen says there is a large fan base for the band in the city.

"Wichita Falls, Texas market in general for the band over the years is always been a very good area for Foreigner to tour in. Very strong fan base in Texas over the years, some rapid fans and has always supported the band in general," Foreigner Marketing Director John Lappen said.

In hopes residents would get out and support other talents, back in August, city leaders voted for the MPEC to be privately managed by Philadelphia based management firm Spectra.

They took over in October locally-- but across the country-- Spectra has hosted more than 15,000 events and entertains more than 23 million guests annually.

Some Texomans believe the acts now set to come to Wichita Falls will be beneficial to the city as a whole.

"Well, I remember Foreigner since I was young. Travis Tritt is a big country star and love him too. I think it would be good for them to come," resident Johnnie Maldonado said.

"Well to me it wouldn't hurt. Anything is better than nothing," resident Emmitt Smith said.

"Yeah that would be a good idea. You know, different people coming in and be something fun for people to really watch and entertain themselves as well," resident Daniel Acheampong said.

And city leaders hope the first three big acts of 2017 are just the beginning of bringing the city's different entertainment venues back into the national spotlight in the year to come.

The city of Wichita Falls recently paid Gatehouse Capital to extend their feasibility study by about four months to continue looking into building a hotel by the MPEC.

Gatehouse representatives say a hotel would cost around \$28 million.

Convention and visitors bureau officials say it would really pay off in helping them book larger conventions at the MPEC in downtown.