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## **FOOD FOR THOUGHT: MPEC WANTS EATERY IN COLISEUM**

If you think the Texas Ranch Roundup or Wichita Falls Nighthawks indoor football fans just can't do without your eatery's jalapeno poppers, macaroni-and-cheese nuggets or your white balsamic vinegar-glazed chicken, then you might be the perfect fit for Kay Yeager Coliseum.

Spectra, which has been managing the city's Multi-Purpose Events Center facilities for about eight months, is hoping a local eatery or chain restaurant might want to take over one of the four window concessions areas at the coliseum.

"We renovated three of them and left one as it was. We want to encourage a local business or a chain to come in and operate it during our sporting events and concerts," said Alysa Snow, Spectra director of corporate sponsorships for the MPEC.

It's not a new idea for Spectra, which manages more than 100 facilities worldwide, including convention centers. It has partnered with local businesses and chains in other facilities it manages.

Snow said, "We wouldn't charge for the space, but it would be for a percentage of the sales."

She said she has mentioned the idea to a couple of businesses but wanted to put forth the proposition to everyone she could.

"We want to make it about the overall experience," she said. "We want to offer something we don't already have. We've got the standard nachos and hot dogs, but we're looking for something a little bit different. ... We want to see the ideas people come out with."

Snow said food trucks are all the rage right now, and operating one of the concession windows at the coliseum runs on the same food-truck model.

Business would be event-based rather than the restaurant being open all the time, adding that some of the MPEC's events are huge.

"Ranch Roundup is a big event. We get more than 10,000 people out there."

Snow said it has been a slow, but steady, process refashioning how the MPEC handles its food service.

When Spectra took over the city's events facility management, it became the exclusive caterer for all MPEC and Memorial Auditorium events. MPEC includes Ray Clymer Exhibit Hall, the coliseum and the J.S. Bridwell Agricultural Center.

Spectra hired a chef, Chef Tom Agius, who came up with a catering menu and hired staff for catered events.

The events management group has since started upgrading the concessions areas at Kay Yeager Coliseum.

"It's just a basic face-lift," Snow said of those other three concessions areas: The Falls Fryer, Blue Skies Kitchen and 5th Street Grill. "Rather than offering one type of fare at each one, there's a well-rounded offering (at all three)," she said, adding how the MPEC also launched a craft beer corner for customers.

"We are in the process of revamping the concession menu, as well as our suite menu, and are planning a roll-out in the beginning of August."

Also, MPEC attendees will see new liquid crystal display screens that will display the concessions menus.

Snow hopes to have a local business or chain in place at that fourth Kay Yeager Coliseum concessions window by the time the Texas Ranch Roundup rolls around at the end of August.

As for what's coming up on the schedule, tickets are on sale for the June 10 Olivia Newton-John and Sept. 21 Kansas concerts at Memorial Auditorium, and Spectra just announced a concert by Mannheim Steamroller Dec. 27 at the auditorium.