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Firm hired to manage Two Rivers and Avalon

Article date: Feb 3 2017



Greg Caton

Phil Castle, The Business Times

A company that manages entertainment, events and sports facilities has been selected to run Two Rivers Convention Center and the Avalon Theater in Grand Junction.

The Grand Junction City Council approved a contract with Pinnacle Venue Services to manage the city owned facilities.

Grand Junction City Manager Greg Caton said he expects the arrangement to benefit not only the city and company, but also the community. "We're extremely excited," Caton said. "It's a triple win."

Tom Paquette, managing partner of Pinnacle Venue Services, said he's excited about managing Two Rivers and the Avalon. "Grand Junction is a beautiful and growing city and with the venues has so much to offer and provides endless possibilities. Our team is immediately going to work to bring exciting events to the area, and we look forward to making a positive impact in the community."

Two Rivers Conventions Center offers 23,000 square feet of space for meetings, conventions and other events. The Avalon Theater seats up to 1,100 for concerts, movies and other functions.

Under the contract with the City of Grand Junction, Pinnacle Venue Services will receive an annual fee of \$225,000 and will be entitled to keep the first \$100,000 of revenue collected from Two Rivers and the Avalon. The city and company will split revenues above \$100,000, Caton said.

By capping expenditures at \$225,000, the city will realize a savings of \$220,000 from the \$440,000 initially budgeted for 2017, he said.

City employees who work at Two Rivers and the Avalon will become Pinnacle employees, Caton said. The staff includes 10 full-time employees and 70 part-time and seasonal employees.

Pinnacle brings to its new role experience and systems to maintain the quality services offered at Two Rivers and the Avalon, he said.

Pinnacle Venue Services operates offices in San Antonio and Virginia Beach, Va. and offers a range of services related to venue management, including assessments, events programming and security. The company manages the Seminole Theatre and Watsco Center at the University of Miami in Florida as well as the Kovalchick Complex at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. The company also provides booking services for the AT&T Performing Arts Center in Dallas and Bob Carpenter Center at the University of Delaware.

In Grand Junction, Maria Rainsdon has been named general manager of Two Rivers Convention Center and the Avalon Theater. She brings to the position experience as event sales manager for the University of Colorado South Denver, assistant general manager of Canalside Buffalo in New York and general manager of the Clovis Civic Center in New Mexico.

Pinnacle Venue Services also offers industry contacts that will help in bringing conferences, concerts and other events to Grand Junction, Caton said. "They're very bullish on the facilities and so are we."

Such events can bolster subsequent tourism and even economic development when people who attend return for vacations or decide to relocate their businesses, he said.

New and renovated facilities could add to the attraction.

The city has placed a measure on the April 4 municipal election ballot asking voters to approve a quarter-percent increase in city sales tax to fund the construction of a 5,000-seat events center

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downtown as well as renovations at Two Rivers Convention Center.

Caton said it remains to be seen if Pinnacle also would manage the events center if the measure passes, but that discussion likely would occur.

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About Phil Castle

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Phil Castle is editor of the Grand Valley Business Times, a twice-monthly business journal published in Grand Junction. Castle brings to his duties nearly 30 years of experience in editorial management positions with Western Colorado newspapers. In addition, his free-lance work has appeared in a variety of publications, including the Washington Post. He holds a bachelor's degree in technical journalism from Colorado State University.

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