



# Concession Bites

Dedicated to the promotion of professional and successful concession and catering operations at college campuses across the country.

info@nacc-online.com | www.nacc-online.com | July 2019

## UNLV 2020 Host for the NACC Conference

By Shawn Corr

Manager

UNLV

Past President NACC

The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over, expecting a different outcome. I guess with that definition I am not insane. I truly expect to be able to successfully host the NACC conference next year. I have big shoes to fill after Penn State did such a wonderful job this year.

I think that the hardest part about hosting for a third time is trying to keep it fresh and new. We have done rafting the past two times and it was great. We tried golf when we hosted in 2008, it was hot. In attempt to give you more of the off the strip things to do in Vegas, we are going to take the Dam Tour.... I mean tour of the Hoover Dam. You will get to see the inside of the Hoover Dam and learn the story of how in the middle of the Great Depression, they undertook this massive project. Once we get done taking the tour, we will then have a golf experience at Top Golf Las Vegas. For the opening reception, we will head over the UNLV to have dinner in the new Strip View Pavilion. This is our newest building and has an amazing view of the strip from Mandalay Bay to Downtown, just ask Chris and Chuck.

We will again head to UNLV to hold the first day of the conference and trade show. We will hold our meetings in the new expanded Redd Room, named after William "Si" Redd, who pioneered two slot machine breakthroughs, video poker and wide-area progressives, and was the owner of the Oasis, a hotel and casino in Mesquite, Nevada. The opening speaker is still being decided, but they will have deep roots in the Las Vegas community. We will again have the trade show on the concourse of the Thomas and Mack Center. After the trade show we will take tours of the recently remodeled Thomas and Mack Center, led by Managers with no less than 60 years of combined College Concessions experience. Have you had a chance to check out the video on the NACC website to see the conversion from a UNLV Runnin' Rebels basketball game to National Finals Rodeo?

Thursday's meetings will be held at the South Point Hotel and Casino convention center. South Point is a true locals casino. They have public bowling alleys, a movie theatre, bingo, a plethora of first-class restaurants and an event center that is primarily Equine

based. The General Manager of the South Point Event Center is a

former Rebel, who played Quarterback for UNLV from 1982-1986. He then went on to be Associate Director for the Thomas & Mack Center, Sam Boyd Stadium, and Cox Pavilion, where he attended a NACC conference. Steve is a true Rebel from the word go.

I will admit that I may have had a couple drinks when I volunteered to host again next year, but I just love the friendships that I have made through NACC. Hosting has changed over the years. When we hosted in 2008, we had to do most of the legwork to get things done, but that has changed, and the Board has taken a bigger role in assisting the host school. I don't know if it is in the cards to host again in the future, but as long as I am at UNLV, we will always be open to hosting, whether it is a conference or just when somebody is in town and wants to swing by. Looking forward to seeing you all next year in Las Vegas for NACC 2020.



### Save the Date!

See you at UNLV for the 2020 Conference! Mark your calendar June 16-19, 2020. [www.nacc-online.com](http://www.nacc-online.com)



## The Advantages of Inventory Management 2019 Conference Keynote Speaker

**By Heather Ivy Miranti**

*Concession Coordinator  
Southern Illinois University Carbondale  
Secretary – NACC*

I know when people hear the word inventory it can create a feeling of dread. Inventory is tedious and time consuming and sometimes concessionaires just don't have time to do it. But for many of us it is just part of the job. I believe inventory is crucial to running an effective concession business. I know some schools don't take a physical inventory and that is okay. Inventory is all about tracking and control and the method depends on how you like to manage it. Some managers take mental notes and others like hard numbers collected by physical counts or POS systems.

I use inventory counts more before an event than during and here is why. Inventory counts build a data base that you can reference in the future. I take inventory every event. So, what do I do with that data? During the event we use it to balance sales and inventory use. Our school does not have a POS system to reference. This helps controls theft from the group and my student employees. After the event I use the numbers to track food cost and build my orders based on event needs. I also use it to control waste by stocking stands with only what is needed. We all know, even with our best stand manager, as soon as we turn our backs the NPO will have a whole case of hot dogs on the grill. My method is only stock what they need based on previous numbers. They can't over cook what they don't have. This data also allows me to talk my boss into closing under producing stands during the dreaded football/basketball overlap in November. Closing stands allows me to control labor. For some school's efficiency is important because storage space between events is limited. Inventory helps you prepare without over producing.

Inventory management is a useful tool that many already use. Hopefully I provided some insight on how and why we use inventory in our operation, and I encourage everyone to post on the NACC message boards other ways you use your inventory.



**By Chris Lauber**

*Concession Manager  
Ralph Engelstad Arena  
President - NACC*

At this year's conference at Penn State, we had the pleasure of hearing from Bruce Leith, Manager of Concessions Development for the Philadelphia Phillies Major League Baseball Team. Bruce likes to tell people that he gets paid by an MLB team to travel the country and eat food, however there is much more to his job than just eating. Not only does Bruce work with the concessions team, he is also responsible for spring training each year.

When Bruce first started in his role about 28 years ago, concessions was different, only a few basic menu items like hot dogs, soda, popcorn and beer. Today, as the longest tenured person in the concessions development role in MLB, concessions is still based on the basic concessions items. Bruce stated that about 75% of sales are the core concessions items, hot dogs, popcorn, pretzels, beer, soda, etc. and the other 25% are more unique items. These items include gluten free items, crab fries, gourmet burgers, and many more items. Bruce talked about several items and how the serve so many of each item and keep the food quality top notch. When Bruce started, the city told him the stadium food was horrible, 10 years later they had been named best ball park food. How did he do it? Simple, put out a great product. For hot dogs, they found that par baking the dog, then finishing on the roller grill is ideal. They do not hot hold their dogs, once the dog is ordered, they pull it off the grill, bun it and serve it. They can sell about 12,000 dogs on a regular day. They also get long lines for their crab fries. These are basic fries coated in an Old Bay type seasoning and they are a huge hit. Finally, he said, if you market your food as the best, and you put out a quality product, the public will hope on the train and agree with you.



Some other ideas he passed along to the group includes, open house for Sub-Contractors, then they narrowed it down to the ones they liked and would work and bought the licensing rights. Make sure to put food in the right areas of the venue. Don't put the \$15 crab sandwich in the student section, put it by the donor section. Finally, offer sizes and let them choose, but don't go crazy and offer too many. Thank You Bruce for taking the time to speak to the NACC. We appreciate the time and energy and the helpful ideas. Go Phillies!

## Small, Medium & Large School Discussions

By John Gibson

Director of Concessions  
University of North Texas  
President – NACC

As part of the NACC Conference Education Sessions, one of my favorite round table discussions revolves around the sharing of ideas between Small, Medium and Large Schools. Any time there is a chance for Concessions Operations of similar size, to join together and hold discussion amongst common issues, great ideas can be shared between all parties.

The first challenge is determining is your Concessions Operations size; are you a Small, Medium or Large Operation? To separate for this specific Conference exercise, we asked University Members to break into three groups, determined by the combined size of their two largest event facilities. The wild card in the process was for some operations who may have lots of seats available, but low attendance and small sales volume. Conversely, a relatively small arena may not have tens of thousands of seats but may have hundreds of packed events throughout the year equating to high sales volume. Ultimately, your operation is the size you believe that it is. The underlying truth to this exercise is that no matter what size category your operation falls under, we all share many of the same challenges, special requests, Customer demands, and new events that enter our day-to-day lives as Concessions Managers. This Round Table discussion provides the group with an opportunity to discuss these issues and determine some possible strategies and solutions.



In the Medium School Round Table, some of the key discussion topics centered around:

- Facility Challenges – do you have stands that are too small, do not enough electricity, are lacking in food cooking equipment and space? Most of the group shared that they all face many of these challenges and shared ideas on how to solve them.

- Staffing Challenges – It seemed that many schools in this group faced challenges of recruiting or finding good Non-Profit Groups. One idea discussed was to use Temporary Staffing Professionals to help bridge the gap, and help find either individual help, or groups that are looking to fund-raise. The Temp Staffing team would receive a fee for each group provided. It seemed that in tough times, the extra staffing cost was worth the benefit of finding good support staff.
- Recruiting Student Workers – Many schools shared that finding good student workers was challenging. One shared idea was to tag-team with the Summer New Student Orientations on campus to help reach out and recruit new workers to join your Concessions Team.
- Nacho Cheese – One question asked in the group was can you reuse heated bags of Cheese from the Nacho dispensers, if they have not been opened? One response, from a discussion with a Nacho Cheese Vendor during the previous Conference, determined that unopened bags of cheese are shelf stable and can be removed from the heated warmer and left at room temperature, so long as they have not been opened or punctured in any way. Once a bag of cheese has been opened, it must be kept hot and used within 5 days. If the open bag is cooled properly, it must be heated above 165 degrees before being served.
- Obtaining Customer Feedback – One question asked was if anyone in the group solicits or receives feedback from Customers to help their operation.
  - Some of the group shared that they utilize an Athletic Department post-season survey to gauge the success of the Concessions Operation, but also receive feedback/comments to identify any areas that need improvement. One other operation stated that they meet with key Athletic Department team members (marketing, tickets, etc.) to recap the season, share strengths and determine areas to improve in the future.

No matter the topic discussed, many of these issues were shared between groups of varying size. Between now and the next NACC Conference, if you have a specific question about a special event you are hosting, a facility challenge you've encountered, or are diving into the new world of selling alcohol in your venue, the NACC Message Board Forum is present on the NACC website to use as a resource. It can be located at: <https://nacc-online.com/index.php/forum> Feel free to login and send out your message or question to the group. We are all happy to help as best we can. Have a great summer!



## 25th Anniversary of the NACC

This year the NACC celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Our opening reception took many of us down memory lane with pictures of the past conferences and our past board members.

Dave Baker who is currently the Associate AD, Business Operations for PSU and a Past President of the NACC welcomed us and talked about the beginnings of the organization and provided some great history of our organization.



Mike Jacobs from Churchill Containers is the longest vendor member of the organization attending every conference, except one, in the 25 years of the organization and was a part of the Midwest Concessionaire Association before the NACC was incorporated. Mike also provided some great insight into the organization and its beginnings while telling some great stories.



Thank you both for your continued support of the NACC!

## NACC Conference Trade Show

The NACC would like to thank all our vendors for their support!

### Sponsors

- J&J Snack Foods
- Dynamic Drinkware
- Whirley-Drinkworks
- Churchill Container
- Crescor
- Iowa Rotocast Plastics
- Hormel Foods
- BelGioioso Cheese
- Copa Di Vina
- Pratt Industries

### Vendors

- Ben's Soft Pretzels
- Bypass
- Casio
- CBORD
- Chanks Pizza Cone
- ConAgra
- Dippin Dots
- Finger Foods
- Garner Foods
- Gehl Foods
- JR Simplot
- Kelloggs
- MegaMix Foods
- Mountain Waffle Company
- Multeria
- NCR Corporation
- Nexgo
- Nuts About You
- Oracle
- Sugar Foods Corporation
- TMI Trading Corp
- Transact
- Waddington North America



## Sponsorships

**By Joe Blando**

*Director of Sales*

*Dynamic Drinkware*

*Allied Board Member - NACC*

Simply mentioning the word “sponsors” causes most concessionaires to cringe! I’m talking about those sponsors at your venues that cause you to do all kinds of things you don’t want to do.

At this year’s NACC conference, we had an opportunity to hear from Matt Craig with Learfield/ IMG at Penn State University. Matt did a fantastic job in explaining his role and the role of his sales staff in acquiring new sponsors for Penn State. The presentation focused on new sponsors as it relates to concession items and how those can benefit concessionaires.

From my perspective as a vendor, I thought the audience somewhat lacked interest in the topic because sponsors typically just cause issues for concessionaires. For example, Learfield gets a new hotdog sponsor and it’s not with the hotdog vendor the concessionaire would prefer to use. It might not even be with a hotdog that tastes very good. I’m sure there are a ton of examples where this has happened with just about every product sold in concessions. However, this presentation was different. Matt spent a lot of time talking about working together with the concessionaire so that they find sponsors that work for the university as well as the concessionaire.

The NACC membership is represented by colleges and universities throughout the country. Each one of those schools has a brand that is valuable to local businesses. Those businesses understand the power of these brands and what potential sales can look like when you’re partnered with a school whose logo and marks often represent the most powerful brand in the area. A few examples of those brands would be Notre Dame, Alabama and Ohio State. In each case those school names and logos are the biggest and most sought after in their perspective state. In each case they are even bigger than the closest NFL team. Colleges and universities want to sell the licensing rights to use those brands and often do this in the form of sponsorships. Penn State is a good example. I expect every company in the state of Pennsylvania would want to say they are a sponsor at Penn State or that they are the official hotdog, candy bar, pretzel or countless other product of Penn State. Businesses understand the power of sponsorships and know that entering into these agreements could result in great exposure of their product.

Learfield/ IMG is just one of several companies that handle licensing rights throughout the country. At some universities they handle the licensing and sponsorships themselves without the use of a third party. Indiana is one example of a school that handles those rights themselves.

The most valuable takeaway I heard from the presentation at the

NACC conference was the suggestion for concessionaires to work with the licensing and sponsorship teams on campus. In my earlier

example of a hotdog sponsor, concessionaires truly do have the

ability to influence who is and isn’t a sponsor. By simply reaching out to the folks who handle sponsorships, you can have a positive influence on who is a sponsor at your venues. I would challenge you to not only reach out and develop a relationship with your campus sponsorship teams, but also try to understand sponsorships and the role you can play to make those sponsorships work for all involved. It’s extremely difficult for the sponsorship teams to get sponsors because they are often asked to enter into multi-year agreements that are often priced at more than six figures per year. What’s even more difficult than getting those sponsorships is getting renewals. Your involvement at the beginning of the sponsorship process can prove valuable to getting the initial sponsorship in place and then also renewals.

Concessionaires should have awareness of sponsors and as much information about those agreements as possible. I mention this because there could possibly be cost savings for you and your concessions operation. For example, at Dynamic Drinkware we often run programs for Coca Cola with their sip and scan technology. For these souvenir cup orders there is a reduced price for the cup because Coca Cola picks up a portion of the cost. Perhaps this is something you can ask about that provides you some savings. I would additionally suggest bringing products you want to offer to the sponsorship teams. Bring them samples and have a presentation put together as to why you want to offer a certain product. Your reasons for showing these new products, and potential new sponsorship may be related to the quality of the product but also could be that it’s a locally produced product or one that your fans have requested.

I would encourage all concessionaires to look at your concession stands and see what brands you’re currently advertising. Your fountain and beer vendors will likely be the most obvious but look for others as well and then ask yourself if they are sponsors of the university. Too often you see brands that are being advertised while there is no sponsorship involved. When this happens, you should contact the department that handles sponsorships and simply ask if that brand has a sponsorship in place.

Get involved in the sponsorship process and become educated on how these agreements work. They will prove vital to your operation and will allow you great insight as to how another department on campus operates.



## Evacuation Planning

**By: Chuck Aldridge**  
Executive Director  
NACC

Pam Soule with the Penn St University's Office of Emergency Management discussed a hot topic in the sports world today, evacuation planning. She discussed the planning and execution of PSU procedures during athletic events and had a great conversation with other schools and how they operate.

Several years ago, we never thought about the need to discuss evacuation planning until we, at the University of Maryland, had to do a mandatory evacuation due to severe weather approaching the stadium. Yes, there was a plan in place, but the questions were does everyone know what to do and where to go? My staff did, but many other game day departments did not know, and it created a confusing situation not only for fans but staff too.

A few days after, meetings were held to discuss what everyone had done. Our Office of Emergency Management and Fire Marshalls office realized more coordination and exercises needed to be done for everyone to understand and implement the procedure, if needed. This eventually added more detailed information regarding not just severe weather, but active shooter incidents and fire emergencies. We have a table top exercise scheduled within the next few weeks.

Every school has a procedure in place. Do you know the procedure for your school? If not, it would be in your best interest to learn and understand it and become part of the discussions. You never know when something will happen, and you will need to react.



## Vendor Product Advisory Committee

**By Brian Ward**  
Director – Non-Commercial  
Sugar Foods  
Allied Board Member – NACC

I have been fortunate enough to sit on both sides of the vendor product committee. Both as a first-time vendor seeing if the NACC was worth the financial and time investment based on the products we have; And as an allied board vendor. The insights shared has helped us shape the way we do business from a concession's standpoint. The most immediate learning, is that concessions and campus foodservice do not operate the same, meaning the cookie cutter approach won't cut it.

As a board member, I was able to sit in on a couple vendor presentations and I have learned that the NACC truly wants to help vendors grow their business by offering up insightful information that shouldn't be taken lightly. I have seen vendors come and go from the organization, but I would implore vendors to use the 3-year rule. The first two years I was part of the organization there didn't come much in the way of growth in product sales. However, I was able to start building relationships and conveyed that Sugar Foods is here should a need arise. By year 3, this all turned around and we were able to get into some locations, that frankly, would've been not easily accessible without the NACC. As I tell perspective vendors all the time, IT ONLY TAKES ONE. As in, it only takes 1 large school account to pay for the up-front slow movement you may face for the first 2+ years. I've even found that medium schools have the buying power to help replenish financial losses showcasing your items at past conferences.

There are no other organizations that I am aware of that takes the inclusive stance the NACC does when it comes to vendors. There are no additional fees to access the members during the whole conference, which is quite unheard of. You can choose to be as active, or inactive in the day to day activities as you'd like to be. This really does set the NACC apart from other organizations. As a vendor I have been completely satisfied with my decision to become part of this wonderful organization.

