

# TABLE OF EXPERTS

ST. LOUIS BUSINESS JOURNAL



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## MEET THE EXPERTS



CAMERON SCHOEFFEL

Cameron Schoeffel received his bachelor's degree in hospitality management from the University of Missouri - Columbia. He's worked in the hospitality industry for almost eight years with experience in restaurants, banquets, hotel sales and convention services. Schoeffel has been with Lodging Hospitality Management for four years and within the past year have taken over as the train sales and events manager. His job duties include overseeing the Polar Express, Peanuts Express, servicing groups on the trains, along with sales. Schoeffel and LHM have been able to provide guests with a number of unique experiences, such as stationary events on cars or luxury trips across the country. Schoeffel is currently in the process of developing a marketing plan to promote and re-introduce trains to Union Station and the region.



JULIA ROW

As Director of Special Events for the St. Louis Cardinals, Julia Row oversees marketing, sales and production of non-game day events at Busch Stadium and Cardinals Nation in Ballpark Village. Since Row joined the Cardinals in 2011, she has led the special events department in promoting and activating thousands of private events, as well as several stadium-wide events. The 2011 U2 concert, four internationally acclaimed soccer matches and two World Series Galas are among the notable events Row and her team have produced. She and the Cardinals Special Events team are now preparing for the upcoming Paul McCartney concert and the NHL Winter Classic; two of the biggest tickets in St. Louis for the upcoming year.



JENNY NIXON

Jenny Nixon is the executive director Tourism Innovation enterprise of Bi-State Development which is responsible for the Gateway Arch Riverboats and for the sales, marketing and operation of the Gateway Arch tram and ticketing and reservation system. In that role, she has led Bi-State Development in issuing millions of dollars in revenue bond financing for design and construction of capital projects over the past few decades. Her team leads the effort to market the Arch as a national and international symbol of St. Louis and the State of Missouri. Nixon has worked for Bi-State Development for more than 35 years. She began at Bi-State Development as an intern, completed a master's degree in public policy administration and was hired as tram operations manager at the Gateway Arch. Most recently, she has served as one of the Alliance Partners in the CityArchRiver project, which includes the renovation of the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial grounds, museum and Old Courthouse. Most notably, throughout her career Nixon has worked to build new partnerships that help market our region.



MIKE KONZEN

For the past six years, Mike Konzen has served as chairman and CEO of PGAV, which has a staff of more than 125 professionals in three operating divisions. Today, PGAV Destinations is the largest independent creator of attractions and destinations in the industry, with projects equaling more than \$5 billion over the past 10 years. PGAV has planned and designed projects at many of the world's "must see" destinations, including the Grand Canyon, Biltmore Estate, Kennedy Space Center, Chimelong Ocean Kingdom, the Georgia Aquarium, Gettysburg, Bass Pro Outdoor World, Saint Louis Zoo, Universal and SeaWorld Adventure Parks. He completed his master of architecture degree from Washington University. He is currently serving on advisory boards for both the Tisch Center for Hospitality and Tourism at New York University and the Friends of Tower Grove Park.



BRIAN HALL

Brian Hall is the chief marketing officer for Explore St. Louis and is responsible for leading St. Louis' brand marketing activity in attracting visitors of all types to the region. He also serves as the Executive Director of the St. Louis Civic Pride Foundation, a group dedicating to unleashing St. Louis civic pride. Hall is a recognized leader in the field of travel and tourism marketing and advertising with over 25 years of experience in hotels, destinations and airlines. A frequent guest lecturer at several colleges and universities, Brian regularly speaks on travel and tourism marketing issues. He is a long standing member of the Hospitality Sales and Marketing Association International (HSMIA) and holds Doctor of Management (DMgt) and MBA degrees from Webster University, and a BS degree in Economics and Marketing from the Whittemore School of Business & Economics at the University of New Hampshire.



SARA NEWELL

Sara Newell is the director of sales for Lodging Hospitality Management's Hilton St. Louis at the Ballpark and St. Louis Union Station Hotel. She is responsible for overseeing all group sales and catering functions at the two hotels. Newell joined LHM at their Westport properties in 2004 as a meeting concierge, soon transitioning into the world of hotel sales as a sales manager. She has also served as the director of sales at the Marriott St. Louis Airport and Hilton St. Louis at the Airport. She is a University of Kansas graduate, majoring in business communication with a minor in History. While not at the hotels, Newell enjoys spending time with her husband, Rob, son Cam and two beagles. She is an avid runner, Jayhawk and Cardinals fan.



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## ROUNDTABLE

## Tourism and business meetings

## ► WHY IS TOURISM IMPORTANT TO OUR REGIONAL ECONOMY?

**Brian Hall:** According to an independent research organization known as Global Insight, travel and tourism generates some \$5 billion worth of economic activity in the St. Louis region each year. The tourism industry employs more than 85,000 St. Louisans, making us one of the top 10 industries in this community. As part and parcel, we welcome an estimated 25 million travelers to St. Louis each year that come from around the globe. In fact, we have a lot of international tourists that come here. I can't tell you how often I'm over at the Arch and I run into people speaking French or German or any other language imaginable. That said, our core tourism prospects reside within a 200- to 500-mile radius surrounding St. Louis seeking all types of vacation experiences here in our community.

**Mike Konzen:** One of the things that's wonderful about tourism, but not well known, is that it is a growing industry. It's really growing faster than the U.S. economy is growing. We see that in a number of cities. It's the unsung hero of economic development in many cities we work in. Very few people connect the dots about how important it is to grow jobs in a community, particularly jobs that reach out to the entire spectrum of experience and education for people. So, it is very powerful.

**Julia Row:** Obviously, we're proud of what the baseball team is able to do as well as the fact that fans travel from near and far to come see the team. Our Special Events team is an extension of the baseball team. We're happy about what we're able to do as a team for non-baseball events, like concerts or the upcoming NHL Winter Classic where we are keeping those in the ballpark employed year-round. That's important not only for employment in the stadium, but also for what the additional economic activity means to surrounding hotels and businesses. These additional events are not just important for the dollars that are spent within our downtown, but also I think it's also important for what it does for our community morale.

**Brian Hall:** A lot of people lose sight of the fact that because of tourism and the money tourists infuse into our economy, we have a quality of life through tourism assets that we wouldn't otherwise enjoy. For example, we wouldn't have the wonderful array of world class attractions in St. Louis, if not for tourists. Nor would we have as many entertainment options or as many restaurants available to us. Plus, tourism tax revenues save us, as residents of St. Louis, tax dollars, because many services are being offset and provided for by the revenue collected from tourists.

**Jenny Nixon:** St. Louis is second only to Washington D.C. in the most free attraction venues. We're a real bargain.

**Sara Newell:** Tourism has given us the ability to do a significant restoration at Union Station. It's given us the ability to provide some renovation of a building that has made St. Louis very special. It was the center of the country and the center of the rail lines. It was the busiest train station in the United States from 1890 until the 1940s. There's the Allegorical Window and Grand Hall and that is San Francisco and New York looking at St. Louis. This is a very important building to this country and to St. Louis.

## ► WHAT ARE SOME OF THE TRENDS IN TOURISM RIGHT NOW?

**Cameron Schoeffel:** Social media, e-commerce, and e-events, are very popular. We see a much younger generation that grew up using the internet and social media, and we've seen the impact of this in our hotels with new initiatives such as e-bookings where guests can book meeting space without ever having to speak with someone. Accessibility is one of the most important factors in our industry, everyone wants to be able to access on their phone and book a room or book a meeting space. And it's all really turning to that. It's almost making that generational changeover a bit. We've really seen this through the younger meeting planners that are overhauling the industry.

**Sara Newell:** All of the hotel brands have gone to making the process very easy for the younger population. You

can book a hotel room. You can do your menus. You can plan a meeting without picking up the phone, without talking to anyone. That is interesting for those of us in hospitality because that's not what we are about. At Hilton at the Ballpark, you can now check into a room and never speak to one human if you don't want to. You can use your phone as your key.

**Brian Hall:** One of the things that we're particularly excited about is the fact that meeting attendees are traveling with their families. They're bringing their families when they come to St. Louis, which plays perfectly into our family-friendly position, because there are so many things that family members can do when they come here. When they have a little down time, they discover some of the great attractions that we have. The second thing that we're finding is that multigenerational travel is really on the rise. Grandparents may host or they may come along, and parents and grandkids are all together enjoying an experience here in St. Louis.

**Julia Row:** We have noticed that people are now wanting memorable experiences. They want to provide their guests with something they've never done before. A lot of times people are going to meetings or conferences and it's the same thing over and over. You're sitting in a square room. You're having a lunch

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or a dinner and maybe some cocktails. It used to be more about interacting with the attendees that are there with you. Now it's more about having an amazing shared experience. And then people take away the memories of that experience that they hold onto well into the future.

► **DO YOU THINK THAT DIGITAL APPROACH WILL PERMEATE THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY?**

**Mike Konzen:** Technology is inter-

esting in that it connects with the millennial generation and many other clients. We did a recent study on attraction attendance nationwide and found out that the No. 1 pain point was the absence of Wi-Fi connectivity in attractions. That's a big issue. But I think also it's related to the fact that as consumers, millennials have different spending patterns. They have a lower incidence of home ownership because they tend to invest more in experiences. They want to collect experiences and they want to share them instantaneously with their groups of friends. This is affecting every dimension of the travel industry.

**Jenny Nixon:** For years, it was the mom that made the decision about where the family was going on a vacation. That was the absolute bottom line. Now, 20 percent of the decisions are being made by the kids, which we find incredibly astounding. Hopefully parents are providing a little bit of guidance there along the way. Another thing is that our Internet sales for the Arch trams have grown from 12 percent to 21 percent. We've just put in a new ticketing system at the Arch. The hotels are very much aware of this and they're excited. For the first time, guests can book a same-day reservation to go up

in the tram.

**Brian Hall:** If you look at the way the hospitality industry is performing in St. Louis, particularly hotels, and you compare our performance to the rest of the nation, we're actually slightly outpacing the nation in some key performance measures over the past several years. It's important that we look at our own history and understand how we're performing, but we also need to benchmark against the country. Knowing that we're actually outpacing the nation in some measures is quite encouraging.

► **WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CHALLENGES YOU FACE IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY?**

**Sara Newell:** It's very easy in the tourism industry to see where you went wrong. But it's very difficult to see how you get to what's right. We should have seen this coming. We should have known that the Cardinals were going to host the NHL Winter Classic." The challenge is staying ahead of it all, staying ahead of the demand, and then it's working to create that demand which Explore St. Louis does very well and working as a community to do that.

**Brian Hall:** One of the biggest challenges we face is destination misperceptions. And many have read about the unrest that took place surrounding Ferguson. Many have seen misleading crime statistics that were published year after year. And so we'll never know how many people decided not to come here for those reasons. And truly, seeing is believing. When people do come here, their eyes are wide open. They're charmed and delighted and those myths and misperceptions are overcome with the contemporary reality of what's happening here. But one of the most substantial challenges that we face is meeting some of those misperceptions head on.

**Mike Konzen:** Most of PGAV's work is outside of St. Louis. So we often get an outsider's view of St. Louis, the perspective as people around the country see us. Actually, I was very proud of the fact that in spite of the unrest in Ferguson, that a lot of things that I think make our brand more resilient here had to do with the positive tourism assets in this community. But as far as the challenge, this is a super competitive industry. It's competitive in every aspect - it's competitive in marketing, it's competitive in convention sales and it's competitive in the demand generators like attractions. I'm curious how many people in the region understand how many good things have happened in downtown St. Louis in recent years, from the work here at Union Station to the Cardinals museum, to the Blues museum that just opened, and even the Inside the Economy Museum at the Fed. We're doing a lot of product development, but we have to do more, because it's always going to be competitive and we want to stay ahead of competitor cities.



► **WHAT ROLE DO ATTRACTIONS PLAY?**

**Jenny Nixon:** There's actually the St. Louis Attractions Association, of which one of my Sales Managers is the president right now. They host meetings on a bi-monthly basis. The CVC attends, as well as area hotels and attractions and we share information. Bi-State Development runs the call center on behalf of the Gateway Arch, the Gateway Arch Riverboats and the National Park Service education programs- so we take the reservations. We're one of the first calls visitors make to St. Louis. If they missed explorestlouis.com, they're going to come to gatewayarch.com, find our number and give us a call. And we have to be up on top of what our peer attractions have going on.

**Cameron Schoeffel:** St. Louis is a hot-bed for attractions if you know where to look. There are hidden pockets all over the city and each neighborhood has something new and exciting to offer. Benton Park, Central West End, Washington Avenue are all examples of areas that have seen a lot of growth and positive change recently. The redevelopment of the arch will be a huge part of the city's growth in years to come as well.

**Jenny Nixon:** Brian and his team always do a wonderful job of putting out the Visitor's Guide. But this year, if you haven't seen it, it is really cool. It talks about those pocket neighborhoods. It features Maplewood, it features U. City and other areas like that.

► **HOW BIG OF A ROLE DOES BI-STATE DEVELOPMENT PLAY IN THE LOCAL TOURISM INDUSTRY?**

**Jenny Nixon:** In the early 1960s, the federal government ran out of money building the Arch. And Bi-State Development had been created, modeled after the New York and New Jersey Port Authority, so we could issue



the design and construction of the trams. And in return, we got the right to operate them to pay off the bonds. We've operated them on behalf of the park service for nearly 50 years, and only in 1963 did we pick up the buses when we bought out the 15 privately-held bus companies, and in 1964 we bought St. Louis Downtown airport which had been closed because the region needed a reliever airport for Lambert. So the trams were actually the first things that we operated. And one of our responsibilities, in addition to oper-

*This year, we are kicking off a new speaker series that will be with current players on game days. The players will be at the ballpark already for an evening game so we developed a special luncheon event.*

**JULIA ROW,**  
St. Louis Cardinals

ating the trams, is the operation of the ticket and reservation center for the park service. We book their educational programs through that call center. Another important responsibility we have is to do the marketing and advertising on behalf of the Gateway Arch. The National Park Service cannot market themselves. They can educate; they can't market. Last year,

as you all know, was the 50th anniversary of the Arch. This year, it's the 100th anniversary of the park service. We came up with a celebration of Missouri's six national parks. We have the Memorial; Ulysses S. Grant Historic Site, Harry S. Truman Historic Site; George Washington Carver Site; Wilson's Creek Battle Field; and the Ozark National Scenic Waterway. So starting on Aug. 27, we're going to celebrate at the ballpark that night with all six superintendents coming in town, and kick off this Passport Program. If you visit all six national parks and get a stamp from each, you'll be entered to win a grand prize. There will be levels of prizes, so for those that only make it to three national parks, you'll still get something. The program will run for 16 months through the end of 2017 giving everyone plenty of time to visit the parks.

**Brian Hall:** We see the role of attractions as being both trip generators and trip extenders. So a new element that's being added to an existing attraction gives us an opportunity to generate a new trip. A great example of this is right here at Union Station with all the new tourism development taking place such as the wildly popular Polar Express. And when it comes to trip extensions, we use Cardinal Nation as a launch pad. We tell Cardinals fans that when you're coming in for a game, there's so much more to do before and after you should spend another day. We advertise on the Cardinal radio network and suggest, "You're coming in for a Cards game. Well, here are some

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things that you can do throughout the community. Visit the Gateway Arch. Go to the Magic House. Enjoy Forest Park. Enjoy whatever it might be that would be consistent with the experience that you're looking for here in St. Louis."

**Mike Konzen:** The trip extender idea is big. We're working on a Medal of Honor museum in Charleston, South Carolina. And we just did an economic impact study where more than \$50 million annually is generated mostly through extending the trip by just one

more activity in Charleston, which is a very vibrant tourism community.

► **HOW DOES EXPLORE ST. LOUIS MARKET THE REGION?**

**Brian Hall:** From a leisure standpoint, we advertise using both conventional and digital marketing solutions in markets within a 200- to 500-mile radius surrounding St. Louis. So we go about as far out as Cincinnati and Chicago, but then closer to home. We're in Des Moines and Quad Cities, Memphis, Louisville and Kansas City. We have a host of communication that is often centered on the family

friendly nature of St. Louis. All of our marketing is designed to drive traffic to [explorestlouis.com](http://explorestlouis.com), which enjoys some 7 million visits per year. On the meeting and convention side, we conduct sales and marketing activities to attract meeting professionals and decision-makers throughout the nation with a concentration in Washington, D.C., and Chicago. Washington, D.C., is really instrumental to us from the standpoint that it's the association capital of the United States, and association meetings are key prospects for us. To give you an example of a campaign that we're presently running in D.C., we're featuring the CityArchRiver project and the trans-

formation of the Arch grounds. We're using the Arch as a symbol of the transformation that's happening throughout St. Louis, and a mechanism to encourage people to re-assess their perceptions of our community inviting them to have another look. Because a lot has changed over the past decade.

**Jenny Nixon:** One of the things that we always say in my sales team is that we count on the State of Missouri to get you to Missouri. We count on the CVC to get you to St. Louis, and then we count on ourselves to get you to the Arch and the other attractions. We have two sales managers and one of them specifically works with conventions, meetings and tour and travel. We attend most of the major conventions in the tour and travel industry.

**Brian Hall:** Internationally, we're stepping up our activity because we're seeing that more and more international clients have Route 66 in particular, and certainly the Gateway Arch, on their bucket lists. They want a slice of Americana. And what better place to come than the center of the nation? Oftentimes, they'll rent motorcycles and ride along Route 66. They'll stay overnight in our hotels, take a trip to the top of the Arch, visit Ted Drewes, enjoy our barbeque, listen to our Blues music and have a great time. The way we market internationally is in cooperation with many of our partners. And one of our key partners is an organization called Brand USA that is reasonably new. In fact, it's only about five or six years old and was enacted by legislation that created the organization responsible for marketing the United States throughout the world. We coattail on a lot of that actively and it's been huge win for us.

► **WHAT COUNTRY IS THE MOST INTERESTED IN ST. LOUIS AS A VACATION DESTINATION?**

**Brian Hall:** Our top international feeder market is Canada, followed by Mexico and Western Europe. We're seeing a lot of new activity coming in from China. Interestingly, our educational institutions are demand generators for St. Louis, especially in Asia and the Pacific rim. The reputation of Washington University, Saint Louis University and others draws students and their families here because they want to attend college in the United States.

► **SO THEY'RE PART OF THE WHOLE MARKETING EFFORT, TOO, WHETHER OR NOT THEY'RE SITTING AT THE TABLE DIRECTLY?**

**Brian Hall:** Absolutely. And untold numbers of parents and students come here to see those educational institutions and that's their first impression of St. Louis.

**Sara Newell:** That's something that I know we work closely with a local university on. They go on these international recruiting trips – especially for their post graduate degrees. They come to us

and say, "Help." So we've developed a very good relationship at our hotels with local universities, and helping them go through the process and show off everything to prospective students. They're interviewing St. Louis to see if this is where they want to be.

**Brian Hall:** It's not just a university sell, it's a destination sell. They need to be convinced.

► **WHAT'S NEW AT YOUR SPECIFIC DESTINATION?**

**Jenny Nixon:** For the Arch grounds renovations, one of the major goals of this experience was accessibility, not only to the grounds but to the top of the Arch and down to the Riverfront. How do you make the museum experience itself more accessible? We're adding that. So, let me just go down my list of what we are adding: brand new museum exhibits; expanded visitor center under the Arch; high-tech interactive exhibits that will encourage repeat visits. One of the things that's going to be there is a simulation of the last piece of the top of the Arch. And in that, you'll be able to go in. And if you are unable to go to the top or actually don't want to go to the top, which if you're claustrophobic, you probably don't, then you'll get the experience of what it's like looking out the windows. So we're going to recreate that. We're very excited about that piece. The riverfront has been elevated. The ribbon cutting ceremony is going to be June 2. Great Rivers Greenway is also inviting the community to come and dine on the riverfront after the ribbon cutting in a community-wide picnic complete with a 2,016 foot table on Leonor K. Sullivan Blvd. Leonor K. Sullivan has also features new running and biking trails. The North Gateway, as it's called, up by Eads Bridge, is a seven-acre spot that will have an entertainment venue. When Kiener Plaza is done next spring, it will have many more venues that people can go to.

**Sara Newell:** At the Hilton at the Ballpark, we're very excited about everything that Jenny was just talking about. That affects us. At Union Station, we've just completed our renovation of our historic rooms. So the hotel itself is finished, now it's on to the station. We spent a significant amount of money on these historic rooms. The finishes are very high end. They're gorgeous. We are not a five star hotel but our goal is to give that five-star experience at every LHM property, but especially in the head house rooms at Union Station. If you haven't been in them, and if you don't know the history of them, that is the original hotel of the station. They were just rooms, that's all. There was nothing in them. There were no restrooms. And when Omni made it a hotel, they were tasked with putting restrooms in there. So these rooms are all uniquely shaped. They have a lot of character to them. They're real hardwood floors, they have sound bars in them, 42-inch TVs. We have 65 of them

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**SARA NEWELL,**  
Hilton St. Louis at the Ballpark,  
St. Louis Union Station Hotel



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- Eero Saarinen, Designer of the Gateway Arch

At Bi-State Development, we devote the same optimism and dedication to strengthening the St. Louis region as Eero Saarinen did in designing the iconic Gateway Arch.

For more than five decades, Bi-State Development's Tourism Innovation enterprise boasts a highly trained team of operations & marketing professionals partnering with the National Park Service at the Gateway Arch to deliver quality one-of-a-kind tourism experiences.

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now, and they're fantastic. Then we move on to the station where we're looking to potentially add some additional meeting space, maybe a family attraction. And then we start in the train park in the back of Union Station. That will involve some pop-up restaurants. We're talking with some local restaurants and some chain restaurants to get involved. We're still working through the logistics of that. There will be a light show, a fountain show. It will be a great spot for the St. Louis community, both locals

and tourists.

**Cameron Schoeffel:** LHM decided to make a reinvestment. We all know there's a rich history of train travel at Union Station dating back to the late 1800s. The Terminal Hotel was used by hundreds of thousands of people in St. Louis and really acted as the epicenter of transportation in the Midwest. LHM felt it was important to reinvest and bring a piece of that rich history back to the station. The train cars today are able to provide a service and a setting that most hotels in the country are not able to pro-

vide. We feel very fortunate that we're at the forefront of expanding that footprint. Whether it's a private event for an organization, a public event such as Polar Express or Peanuts Express, we've got a lot of fun things on the horizon. The St. Louis Union Station Train Park will really play into not only the trains but the entire property. We're trying to incorporate all that. There's lots of new things, fun things coming into the station. So we're excited. Our partnership with The Terminal Railroad Association has been wonderful for use and they do a great job handling all of our local excursions

around the city. That's a one- to three-our excursion around the city from a vantage point that not many people have ever experienced. The folks over at the Terminal Railroad Association provide us with the locomotive and crew so that we're able to provide our guests with this unique setting. Because of this partnership and the purchase of these cars, we're able to differentiate ourselves from our competitors and provide a once of a kind experience here in St. Louis. We're able to cater right out of our hotel, which provides wonderful options, quality service and stunning views of the city. It's a really unique experience, and you see that when our guests get off the train. They've got the smile ear-to-ear, and it's an experience that they'll remember forever.



**Because of tourism and the money tourists infuse into our economy, we have quality of life through tourism assets that we wouldn't otherwise enjoy.**

**BRIAN HALL,**  
Explore St. Louis

#### ► WHAT ABOUT THE BALLPARK?

**Julia Row:** We are always looking for new and interesting ways to engage with fans. So recently we kicked off a speaker series that we have on non-game day evenings. It is "An Evening With" a particular Hall of Famer, whether it is Bob Gibson or Tony LaRussa. We had Lou Brock with Red Schoendienst and Ozzie Smith with Willie McGee. Our guests are able to enjoy a cocktail party on the warning track, which is very special as many people have never been that close to the field, let alone on it. And then they go upstairs and there's a seated, plated dinner with a 90-minute Q-and-A with a familiar voice, broadcaster Dan McLaughlin. And then everyone leaves with an autographed baseball. It was a new and interesting way for fans to engage with former players, and it feels good for the former players to also have



that opportunity to engage with fans. We're also utilizing the ballpark in a different way. We found that people were traveling from all over the country, and we actually had a few from Canada that came in over the past year. This year, we are kicking off a new series with current players on game days. The players will be at the ballpark already for an evening game, so we developed a special luncheon event. This is a condensed version of the evening event we have with former players. Fans will be able to go out on to the warning track for a photo opportunity. They'll come in for an upscale lunch, and then a 45-minute Q-and-A with Dan McLaughlin. There are a couple upcoming events that I'm really eager to share the details about – the next evening speakers series is with Whitey Herzog, and that's on May 16. Just a few days later we will have our first daytime speaker series with Matt Holliday, and that's on May 19. It is a unique experience and it is one that comes with a limited capacity. We can host 288 guests for the evening events, and 140 for the daytime events. Anyone can find more information at [cardinals.com/speakerseries](http://cardinals.com/speakerseries). It is something that sells out quite quickly, but it's something that the fans have really enjoyed.

#### ► WHAT'S A PERFECT MIX OF SALES AT YOUR PROPERTIES, AND HOW DO YOU GO ABOUT ACHIEVING IT?

**Sara Newell:** All of our tourism really

drives these hotels. We need the individual travelers. We need the families. We need the corporate travelers that come in for one night. We need those project travelers – consultants that stay for a year. We need the groups that have a lot of money to spend. We need the groups that are more budget conscious. For downtown hotels, when we have about 50 percent of our house dedicated to our groups, any meetings coming in with 10 or more rooms on their peak night, and then 49 and some change for our, as we call them, individual travelers. That less than 1 percent is kind of everything else. I know a lot of people that are outside the tourism industry think, "Hey, why don't you just sell it to your groups and just put in meeting after meeting after meeting?" Well, we can't, that's not how we can be successful. It's different for every market for every hotel. It's whatever makes you the most successful. And there's a sweet spot – some people know it, some people don't know it. And we have to have that because our associations and their dedicated efforts into Washington, D.C. Those associations are really important to hotels, especially like Union Station. They were made to meet and they like to meet. These people are coming on their own dime. Some of them are from an organization that maybe their company sends them, but a lot of times they're not. The destina-

tion is a big deal for them. And what St. Louis can offer is a big deal for them and in a unique setting such as Union Station and Hilton at the Ballpark. Those are very important to association clients that are coming here. Our free attractions are very important, too. Because once they get here, they want to do stuff. They want to experience the city. I was talking to some ladies that were here for the Counsel of Exceptional Children that was two weeks ago. They said, "Get us to Forest Park. We came a whole day early just to go to Forest Park. We've heard how amazing it was and everything's free and we can't wait to get there. We want to go to the Boathouse."

**Brian Hall:** It's all about having a diversified portfolio. You need a strong base of meeting and convention bookings, business travelers who book short-term, and tourists that come in on weekends and midweek during the summer. So we need to make wise decisions as a destination to invest in tourism Infrastructure and sales and marketing activity that's going to maximize the return on our investment, and that means having a diversified portfolio that appeals to a wide variety of guests year-round.

**Sara Newell:** Bring them all. They all make this economy go.

**Jenny Nixon:** We've had a relationship with the Cardinals for years, and we've gotten more than our money's worth out of the radio spots that we buy. Not only does Mike Shannon talk about how great it is to go to the top of the Arch, he loves the riverboats and he just waxes poetic. Furthermore, what we did this year was in response to the region's enthusiasm about soccer, we've entered into a sponsorship agreement with St. Louis Scott Gallagher Soccer Club that's going to hit an entirely different demographic.

**Julia Row:** We look at reaching our fan base where they consume media. The demographics are different across the board – there are a wide variety of ages that come through the turnstiles. There's a specific demographic that we're reaching on the radio broadcast that's different from the TV broadcast. The same can be said with social media – we reach different demographics with Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. Our sales strategy varies depending on where fans connect with the Cardinals.

#### ► HOW DO THE DEMOGRAPHICS OF WEEKEND GAMES COMPARE WITH DAY GAMES?

**Julia Row:** There's a lot of data at our

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

# MEETING ON THE MOUND.



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**This \$380 million (CityArchRiver) project is one of the biggest public/private partnerships in the nation going on right now.**

**JENNY NIXON,**  
Bi-State Development

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

fingertips and we are really constantly requesting and analyzing data on all fronts. Who's coming through the turnstiles on what days? Where is our web traffic coming from? How are we engaging with people, and how do we do that in a meaningful way? As we learn more about our fans we want to learn how to provide an enhanced experience for them on game days. And there are a lot of people in different departments within the St. Louis Cardinals organization that are focused on the fan experience at game days. What new food items are there? What new experiences are there for pregame? There are a lot of departments that are focused on game-day experiences and enhancing that fan experience each time the game is played at Busch Stadium. My team is really focused on how to enhance the experience on a non-game day. So our clients come in and they might be able to have a dinner on the field. For someone who wants to host a business meeting, we allow them to have batting practice in the cages, or they can have a pitching session in the bullpen.

**Mike Konzen:** I love these aspirational experiences like what you're talking about, including all the train experiences. Even if you don't participate in them, I think people love knowing that they're there, and that someday on a special occasion they might be able to enjoy that.

**Cameron Schoeffel:** I'll never pass up an opportunity to show people the trains. They are so different from other settings that you would typically find at or within a hotel property. The possibilities are endless on these cars, whether it's for a birthday party, an anniversary or something like that. There's always an opportunity somewhere. I've noticed that there seems to be a certain stigma or misconception behind trains that they may be old, out of date, or somewhat boring. However as I think you would all agree after seeing them today, they are so much more than what people might expect. You notice that the second they walk in the door, the expressions of their faces speak volumes about what we have here.

**Julia Row:** Brian was talking about these common misconceptions earlier. I know that you have them and I know that we do as well. And I think that some of the common misconceptions that some of us have is, "There's nothing special for me" or, "There's nothing that's within my price range." All of us can be flexible and make something customizable for a varied budget.

**Cameron Schoeffel:** I think that's a challenge, but I look at it as a positive one. Whether it's the rail cars, 360 at Hilton Ballpark or Westport Plaza we're able to provide our guests with that special setting. I think that's one of the things that we here at LHM pride our-

selves on. We're into building different experiences.

**Brian Hall:** The only limiting factor is your imagination.

► **WHAT ELSE IS GOING ON AT THE ARCH AND BUSCH STADIUM?**

**Jenny Nixon:** This \$380 million project is one of the biggest public/private partnerships going on in the nation right now. There are partners called the Alliance. They include Bi-State Development, the National Park Service, CityArchRiver, a huge private fundraiser, Great Rivers Greenway, St. Louis City and Jefferson National Parks Association. Early on, MoDOT did a lot of improvements. So one of the first things



**Whether it's a private event for an organization, a public event such as Polar Express or Peanuts Express, we've got a lot of fun things on the horizon.**

**CAMERON SCHOEFFEL,**  
Lodging Hospitality Management

that you saw completed was a MoDOT project. And that was the Park Over the Highway - the lid over the depressed lanes of 44 downtown. They've already opened Luther Ely Smith Square, located between the Arch and the Old Courthouse- and that's where we'll hold the celebration this year for the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service. So that's one venue. The Visitor's Center is going to have a mezzanine area that can seat 200 people-that's a brand new venue for the Gateway Arch. You'll have the old Visitor's Center, now called the tram lobby. And that can hold up to 800 people for events. One of the caveats to having the Arch as a venue is you only can hold them during the nonpublic hours.

## TABLE OF EXPERTS

Otherwise, you can negatively affect the public because-- they're the taxpayer. So that's why in the summer, it's very difficult to host an event in the Arch itself because it's open to the public from 8am - 10pm. But with all this new, expanded green space, including Kiener Plaza and the North Gateway, we've got all these new venue opportunities.

**Julia Row:** We host a limited number of pre-game events in the ballpark on gameday for those who have tickets to the game. That is a wonderful opportunity if

you are hosting a group. We are thrilled to be providing an additional opportunity for fans with our gameday Speaker Series events. We also do all sorts of social and corporate events on non-gamedays. We offer a wide variety of options for both. On the corporate side, you can have a business meeting at Busch Stadium. You can have a planning meeting there or team building activities. And those can be all over the ballpark including the Conference Center, the clubs and the concourse. They can be on the field if you want to have a fantasy batting practice. You're actually play-

ing baseball on the field where the players play. You can have a business meeting and then have a breakfast in the bullpen. We take tables out there and you can have breakfast with your team in the bullpen. Maybe you'll have a corporate event and decide to add on another amenity, like I was talking about, batting in the cages or pitching in the bullpen. And then there are quite a few social options that we have. People have weddings at home plate. We also have a significant amount of proms

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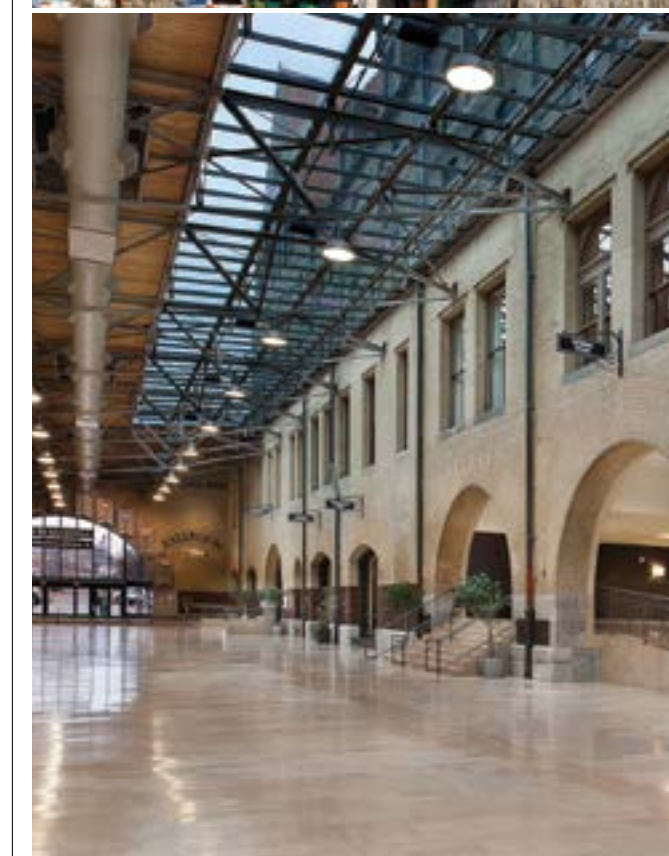
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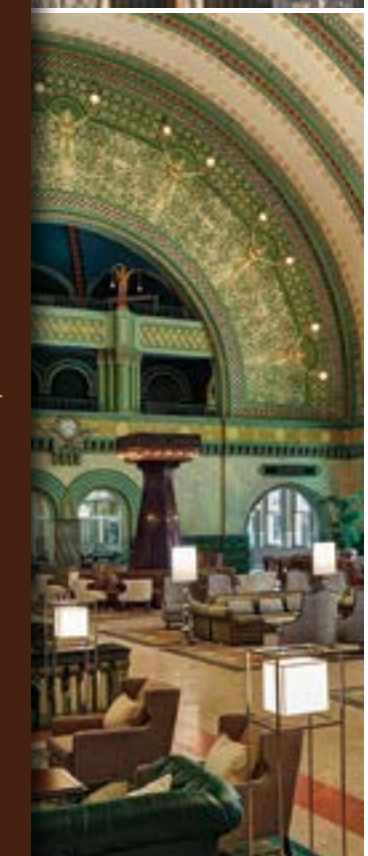
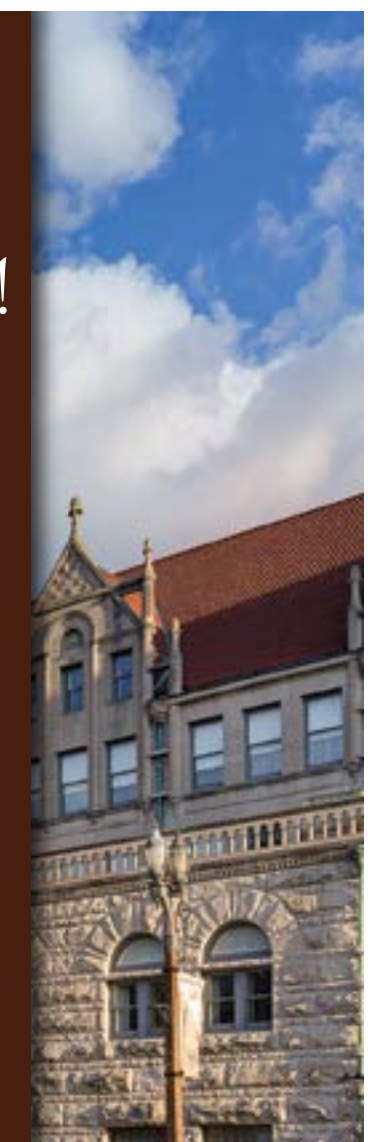


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and celebrations, like milestone birthdays, bar and bat mitzvahs. It's really only limited to the guest's imagination. We're happy to host and happy to bring to life anything anyone can dream up.

**Jenny Nixon:** I attended a really fun rehearsal dinner in March. They served ballpark food because these are big Cardinals fans. It was really unusual venue. It was great.

**Julia Row:** Our executive chef, Larry Johnson, really does a fabulous job. Obviously he has to do ballpark fare well, and they do it well because we're serving ballpark food during the games. But they're also, during the games, having more upscale food options in the suites. And then for our events on non-game days, there's a variety. So sometimes people are eating hot dogs and bratwurst and nachos and they're happy with that. There are other people that really expect to have high-end seated, plated dinners. We can also accommodate you on the non-baseball side with really unique, plated options. It can be steak and lobster in a really interesting presentation.

► **OTHER THAN TRADITIONAL MARKETING, WHAT'S THE BEST WAY TO SHOWCASE ST. LOUIS?**

**Brian Hall:** Word of mouth is actually one of the most fundamental ways that information is transferred. And the more we can encourage St. Louisans to explore the treasure trove of attractions we have, become familiar with them, and advocate for our community through their social networks, the more they can help spread the word. I think that will help us meet some of the challenges that we were talking about earlier concerning misperceptions of this destination. The more people that are exposed to it, the more people can evangelize for it.

**Sara Newell:** St. Louisans love to be experts in their own city. If we don't tell them, they don't know. We can't all get everywhere. So I think education is the biggest issue.

**Mike Konzen:** We're growing and we're recruiting nationally. And so the perception of someone being recruited from a place like Southern California to come to St. Louis is important. We're going to promote all the positives. In fact, we're going to pro-



*We did a recent study on attraction attendance nationwide and found out that the No. 1 pain point was the absence of Wi-Fi.*

**MIKE KONZEN,**  
PGAV Destinations

mote attractions like our museums, zoo, train rides and the rest. The main point is, that tourism and the community's image to an outsider is important for business. So the work that Brian's team does helps, but I think we all pitch in to do more. We have so many best-in-class tourism assets that someone wouldn't necessarily know unless we help them find them.

**Jenny Nixon:** A study just came out by an independent firm working for the National Park Services that said these six Missouri parks have a \$334 million economic impact on the state.

**Cameron Schoeffel:** We're planning some great things for our holiday experience here at Union Station. We're really excited about it. More information to come on that. Stay tuned. It's going to be bigger and better than ever. We are thrilled about how we're able to incorporate the trains, the building, the old retail area and the history of the building into one experience. And I think it will be great not only for St. Louis and the community, but also the outlying areas and the region as a whole. We really do see a wide variety of guests and people from all over coming for a holiday experience.

