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ST. LOUIS BUSINESS JOURNAL

TOURISM AND BUSINESS MEETINGS

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BI-STATE DEVELOPMENT

 Gateway to growth. On both sides of the river.

ST. LOUIS UNION STATION HOTEL

A DoubleTree by Hilton

PGAV DESTINATIONS

Global Leaders in Planning and Design
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, banquet halls, hotel and convention services. Schoeffel has been with Lodging Hospitality Management and Service for the past year, with his most recent experience at a leading hotel in the St. Louis region. He completed his master of architecture degree at the University and the Friends of Tower Grove Park, Center for Hospitality and Tourism at New York University and the Whittemore School of Business and Economics at the University of New Hampshire.

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 and well as several stadium-wide events. The 2012 G 1 concert, four nationally acclaimed soccer matches, and two NHL Winter Classics were a few memorable 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 season.

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, raising millions of dollars in revenue bond financing for design and construction of capital projects over the past few years. Nixon has a master’s degree in public administration in her role at the Gateway Arch Center and is responsible for overseeing all group sales and catering functions at the two hotels. Newell joined the Cardinals in 2002 after working as a sales manager in the hospitality industry. She is a native of Washington University. She has a bachelor’s degree in hospitality management from the University of Washington. She 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.

Cameron Schoeffel

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 exceeding 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, Brigham Young University, Kennedy Space Center, Glenstone Ettington Kingdom, the Gaylord Family-Oklahoma Memorial Stadium, the CityArchRiver project, which includes the renovation of the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial grounds, museum and Old Courthouse. She has served as one of the Alliance Partners for 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

BRIAN HALL

Brian Hall is the chief marketing officer for Explore St. Louis and is responsible for leading St. Louis’ brand marketing strategy in attracting visitors of all types to the region. He also serves as the Executive Director of the St. Louis Pride Festival, a group dedicated to unifying 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 has presented on a wide variety of marketing topics and issues. He is a long-standing member of the Hospitality Sales and Marketing Association (HMSA) and holds Doctor of Management (DMin) and MBA degrees from Webster University, a BS degree in Economics and Marketing from the Wharton School of Business and Economics at the University of New Hampshire.

Sara Newell

BRIAN HALL

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 unheralded area 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’s very powerful.

Sara Newell:

All of the hotel brands have gone about 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 Hillion in 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.

Jenny Nixon:

China has been a very powerful experience and education for people. So, that’s 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 mentally.

Brian Hall: A bit 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 won- derful 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 famous tourist attraction venues. We’re a real bargain.
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 along the way. Another thing that's important to us is the internet sales for the Arch teams have grown from 12 percent to 21 percent. We 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 performance in the context of the entire national performance, 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 got to where you're at. We should have seen this coming. We should have known that the Cardinals were going to host the NHC 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 misconceptions. And many here about the untruth that took place surrounding Ferguson. Many have seen misleading commentary that were published year after year about Ferguson, it's the idea that many people decided not to come here for those stories. Then seeing people's behavior when people do come here, their eyes are wide open. They're charmed and delighted and those myths and misconceptions are overcome with the contemporaneous support of what's going on today. But one of the most substantial challenges is that we face is meeting some of those misconceptions head on.

Mike Konzen: Most of PGA V'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 untruth in Ferguson, that a lot of things that I think we 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, to the World's Fair. We're doing a lot of product development, but we see this unseasoned and suggest, “You're coming in on the 50th anniversary of the park. You're coming in on the 50th anniversary of the park. It's going to be competitive and we want to stay ahead of competitive 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 CCA, at times 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 explorist Louis.com, they're going to come to gatewayarch.com, find our number and give us a call. And we have to be on top of what our peer attractions have going on.

Cameron Schoeffel: St. Louis is a hotbed 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 University City and other areas like that.

HOW BIG IS 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. Bi-State Development was created, modeled after the New York and New Jersey Port Authority, so we could issue bonds for transportation among other things. The superintendent of the park reported to our executive director and said, “You can issue bonds for public transportation.” Are you interested?” So we issued $3.5 million in bonds for the design and construction of the trams. Back in return, we get 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 leases when we bought out the 25 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 operating 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 Mereol- al, Odyssey S Grant Historic Site, Harry S. Truman Historic Site, George Washington Carver Site, Wilson's Creek Battle Site, and the Ozark National Scenic Waterway. So starting on Aug. 27, we're going to celebrate at the ballpark that will be with all six superintendents coming in on 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 six 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 transport 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 right here at Union Station with all the new tourism development taking place such as the newly-openedci Park Express. And when it comes to trip extensions, we use Cardinal Nation as a launch pad. We tell Cardi- nals 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 Cardinals radio network in St. Louis, you’re coming in on the 50th anniversary of the park. It's going to be competitive and we want to stay ahead of competitive cities.
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.

Sara Newell
Hilton St. Louis at the Ballpark
St. Louis Union Station Hotel

TO CREATE A MONUMENT WHICH WOULD HAVE JUST SIGNIFICANCE AND WOULD BE A LANDMARK OF OUR TIME... HERE, AT THE EDGE OF THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER, A GREAT ARCH DID SEEM RIGHT.

Eero Saarinen, Designer of the Gateway Arch

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Mike Konnen: The trip extender idea is big. We’re working on a Melpick of Honor museum in Charleston, South Carolina. And we want to add 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 our two business and entertainment venues.

The City Is Humming, Come Experience It All.

St. Louis is in the middle of a much-deserved renaissance. Young, lively and fun, St. Louis is the place to go for both business and leisure travel. We are constantly improving and renovating our properties, so when you come to St. Louis, you are sure to enjoy the best of all worlds.

We’re back. You’ll be fine.

The Gateway Arch is the story of a dream, a vision, and a reality. It is a symbol of the American spirit, a monument to the future of our nation, and a tribute to the past.

St. Louis Business Journal
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 fans. So recently we kicked off a new series with current players on game days. The players will be at the ballpark already for batting practice, so we provided a special lunchtime event. This is a condensed version of the evening event we have with former players. Fans will be able to go out to the stadium track for a photo opportunity. They’ll come in for an upscale lunch, and then a 45-minute Q&A with Dan McLaughlin. There’s a couple of upcoming events that I’m really eager to share the details about — the next evening speakers series is with Whiting Herring, 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 18. 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. It’s something that sells out quite quickly, but it’s something that fans have really enjoyed.

What’s a perfect mix of sales at your properties, and how do you go about achieving it?

SARA NESSL: All of our tourism really drives those hotels. We need the individual travelers. We need the families. We need the corporate travelers that come to one for one night. We need those corporate travelers, consultants that stay for a few days. We need the groups that have a lot of money to spend. We need the groups that are more budget conscious. For downtown events, 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. If we are going to be successful, we have to make wise decisions as a property owner. That’s different from the TV broadcast. There’s a specific demographic that we’re reaching on the radio broadcast and 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.

MeetinG on the mOund.

St. Louis Business Journal
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

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, there 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 in, “there’s nothing special for me” or, “there’s nothing that’s within my price range.” All of us can be fickle 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 excited to provide our guests with that special setting. I think that’s one of the things that we here at LHM pride ourselves 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 Union Station, CityArchRiver, and Jefferson National Park Association. Early on, MoDOT did a lot of improvements. So one of the first things that you need to do is you need to provide an enhanced experience at game days. 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.

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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.

**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 promote 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 Schoeffer:** 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.

**MIKE KONZEN, PGAV Destinations**

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