

Stadiums from page 1F



Louis Rossetti

portant is the VIP," he said. "Without them paying a penalty, if you will (for suites), tickets (for everyone else) would go out of sight.

"They want to get out of their car and be secure... so where they go in is important. They want quality food, quality restrooms, a club-like atmosphere. They generally like being catered to.

"The next group in importance is probably the press and photographers," Rossetti said. "They want no hassles by the public. So we have isolated elevators to get them down to their work. They

need immediate access to a dark-room. Then there's food."

Plant operations — administrative offices, security and first aid — also must be considered. "Underneath the stands, it's almost like a city," he said.

Then come sight lines, seating, acoustics and lighting. For the majority of fans in the stands, Rossetti said.

Luxury, practicality

Stadiums used to be owned and operated by municipalities and consequently were built on the cheap, Rossetti said. Team ownership was more an ego thing than

money maker, he added.

As expenses escalated, owners sought more revenue by cycling parking and concessions. It dawned on them that owning the stadium rather than renting could eventually lead to more money for them.

Luxury suites turned into a major financing tool, Rossetti explained.

"Lenders felt better banking on (auto) leaseholders. If you have 120 suites that average close to \$70,000 per year, that's close to \$9 million a year for debt service," he said.

And because a general rule of thumb is \$9 of loan for every \$1 of

personal investment, 120 suites in the preceding example could leverage more than \$75 million.

Not just for games

Auxiliary uses at stadiums — food courts, picnic areas and quiet rooms for parents — have become increasingly important as profit points. They also offer an escape from the non-fan who might want a people-watching experience.

"What we're giving is a lot more variety, a choice for the public," Rossetti said.

Extending uses of a stadium beyond a handful of dates or even

a seasonal sport also is under review.

In the Ottawa Palladium, some suites normally 20-by-25 feet will be extended 50 feet to result in an additional 1,000 square feet of space which Rossetti says can be turned into working office space for a start-up company or small sales firm.

Sort of a go to work then stay for the game philosophy.

Suggestions: Rossetti has some ideas about what a new Tiger Stadium ought to look like. Please see Page 3F for the story.

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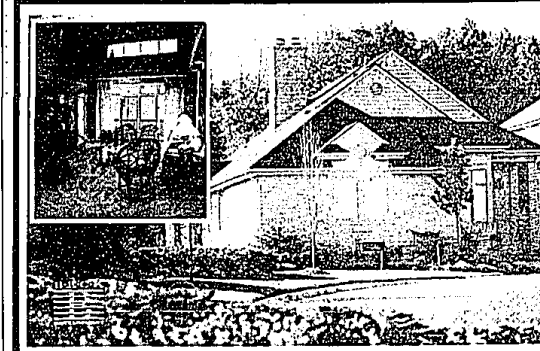
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