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AEG Presents targets May opening for new Glove Iron concert, events venue

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Globe Iron, AEG Presents's new concert and events venue is under development at the West Bank of the Flats.

Grace McConnell

AEG Presents' optimism for the Cleveland market is on full display with the Globe Iron, the company's new concert and events venue under development at the West Bank of the Flats.

Plans for the Globe Iron — located in a mid-1800s building at 2325 Elm St. — came to light in the summer of 2023.

In a partnership with property owner Jacobs Entertainment Inc., AEG has been busy since then completing some \$5.5 million in renovations at the space, which is leaning into its industrial vibe. The long-empty building, last used as a nightclub, was originally a foundry and then a shipyard.

"This will be one-of-a-kind," said Justin Miller, vice president of operations for AEG Presents Great Lakes and PromoWest Productions, while surveying the still-raw space.

"We'll be featuring a lot of things that the building has been over the years," he said. "You'll be getting a sense of history when you come in for a show."

"We are working on highlighting a lot of cool features in there already, like the exposed brick and brick archways and open beams, which we will light," added Jason Rogalewski, senior vice president of AEG Presents Great Lakes and PromoWest Productions. "It'll have a clean aesthetic with rich tones and a lot of indirect lighting, sort of moody. A space like this could be a little industrial chic or cold. But this will be warm and inviting."

"To me," he added, "it's got a feel that screams Cleveland."



Globe Iron Rendering

A soft opening previously slated for March has now been pushed back to May 1.

But to build some buzz, AEG is soon announcing a slate of inaugural shows featuring some well-known artists.

For AEG, the venue is also another step forward in developing its Cleveland footprint.

"Cleveland has always been an important — and some would say legendary — market in terms of its music scene," said Shawn Trell, chief operating officer for Los Angeles-based AEG Presents.

"There's a reason the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Museum picked Cleveland as its home. It's got thriving nightlife and a committed fanbase who loves to go out to see live music," Trell said. "We've been bullish on the market for years, beginning with our partnership with PromoWest, which gave us added insight into the market and the opportunities here."

It was 2018 when AEG acquired PromoWest Productions, the Columbus-based concert promoter that set shows throughout the Midwest.

But that deal was actually predicated by AEG's acquisition of the iconic Agora Theatre and Ballroom, which it has been operating since summer 2017.

Later, amid the throes of the COVID pandemic and a downturn for the live events business, AEG doubled down on Cleveland by partnering with Nautica Entertainment LLC, a subsidiary of Jacobs Entertainment Inc., in signing a 10-year lease to operate the Jacobs Pavilion amphitheater. That's one of many properties owned by Jacobs along the Nautica Entertainment Complex, which includes Shooters, the Greater Cleveland Aquarium and Windows on the River banquet hall.

Pat McKinley and Mike Brachna, executive vice president and vice president for Nautica, respectively, said they were more than happy to work with AEG on the Globe Iron space following what's already been a fruitful partnership thus far.

Citing nondisclosure agreements, officials declined to discuss financial details regarding revenues or their leases.

But since AEG took over the Jacobs Pavilion from LiveNation in 2022, Brachna noted that the volume of events there over the summer season has increased materially from about 20 to more than 30. The goal for next year is 40.

"That venue is exceeding our expectations for where we thought we would be a few years into it as far as shows and profitability," Rogalewski said.



Globe Iron Bar Area Rendering

The initial goal for the Globe Iron is to have about 100 live events annually plus a few dozen more private events, including weddings (a few are already booked), fundraisers and galas.

On the Nautica/Jacobs side, the Globe Iron is viewed as another piece in the ongoing rebirth of the Flats West Bank.

“That will bring life to the Flats, and we are always looking to bring more excitement down here,” Brachna said. “And it will help develop bands that can grow and eventually perform in the (Jacobs) Pavilion. We are very excited about it and look forward to the grand opening.”

“Shooters is also transforming itself under new ownership,” McKinley said. “So next year is going to potentially be one of our best years ever. That is very encouraging. We’ll have two new entities in 2025, and that’s awesome.”

There’s still plenty of work to be completed before the Globe Iron comes online both inside and out, including creating a courtyard that will funnel guests into the club.



Globe Iron Courtyard Rendering

For now, that structure remains in place. Miller and Rogalewski don’t really mind as they’ll work with whatever they have. Plus, they see it as just another piece of the industrial vibe there.

Nautica officials might like to change that someday, though.

“Ideally, we would like to have that down,” Brachna said. “But right now, we’re just focused on getting the Globe Iron and the surrounding parking lots up and running, and then we will go back and make a determination with that building.”

As far as AEG's operations, the 1,200-capacity Globe Iron — where AEG has signed a 20-plus year lease — fits neatly as a missing piece in its growing Cleveland portfolio alongside the roughly 2,000-capacity Agora and the 5,000-capacity Jacobs Pavilion.

"We're always looking for rooms that fill a gap in both the market and our venue portfolio," Trell said. "AEG Presents prides itself on being able to work with any performer through each rung on the ladder of their career, while also super-serving a variety of audiences in every city where we have a presence."

There are no concerns about taking away business from the other properties. On the contrary, the expectation is it will develop bands that could play those larger spaces in the future, or just be another option for performers as they set tour routes.



"We find that the cannibalizing thing is a fear that I think a lot of people or businesses might naturally have, but we've found that the complete opposite effect happens," Rogalewski said. "It opens us up for more conversations, more connections. Now we have more available that we can present to you and talk about as we understand what your needs are."

"And it gives us more options on the private events side," Miller said. "Now we've got three places that we can present a client. So we're not losing events or robbing from one place to bolster another. They'll all support each other, and that pushes the whole thing forward for us."

As AEG's love for Cleveland continues to blossom it could look to develop even more venues here in the future.

However, Trell said that they're taking one step at a time.

"If the right opportunity comes along that makes sense for our business plan and the market in question, we are interested, Trell said. "Right now, our focus is on getting a great new venue that we're excited about up and running."