

# VALLEY & State

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SECTION B

## Glendale Arena wins top new venue award

By Monica Alonzo-Dunsmoor  
The Arizona Republic

**GLENDALE** — The Glendale Arena bagged top honors this weekend in Los Angeles as concert-industry professionals named it 2004's best new major concert venue.

"And they said it would never work out here," Glendale Mayor Elaine Scruggs said about the arena's success.

The \$220 million venue in west Glendale beat out the FedEx Forum in Memphis, Tenn., and the Everett Events Center in Everett, Wash., for the award, the latest in a string of big wins.

Ron Woodbridge, general manager and senior vice president of the arena, said it was a combination of state-of-the-art features and a friendly, professional staff that has made the Glendale Arena the latest "buzz" in the concert industry.

The arena received the award at the 16th-Annual Pollstar Concert Industry Awards and was nominated by more than 125 major agents, managers, promoters and other industry professionals.

A couple of dozen other new venues were eligible for the award but didn't get enough nominations, according to Gary Bongiovanni, editor in chief of *Pollstar* magazine, a leading concert-industry publication.

As the arena stepped into its second year of business, *Pollstar* ranked it No. 54 among the world's top 100 venues for ticket sales to non-sporting events. It sold 158,619 tickets to live-performance events last year. By comparison, Phoenix's America West Arena ranked 93rd, with 92,699 tickets sold.

Top-flight entertainers who have flocked to Glendale Arena include Prince, who drew the venue's largest audi-

ence to date; U2, which sold out two concerts in 40 minutes Saturday; and just announced Elton John, who will perform May 5.

"Clearly, this arena has proven itself as a very hot new building in our industry," Woodbridge said. He said the arena has hosted more than 105 events, 25 percent more than projected.

"We're hungry for business," he said. "We're respectful of the fact that we have stiff competition with other public-assembly venues. We're doing what we're expected to do ... filling the arena with quality events."

The arena, at 91st and Glendale avenues, is owned by Glendale, which picked up \$180 million of the \$220 million tab to build the venue, home to the Phoenix Coyotes hockey team. The rest was paid by a partnership formed by developer Steve Ellman, co-owner of the Coyotes.