

City wants to know value of name rights

Study looks at sports, entertainment venues

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The two worlds of corporate marketing and entertainment can make for a lucrative partnership. RBC Centura Bank, for example, pays \$4 million a year to have its name associated with the RBC Center in Raleigh.

Winston-Salem officials don't expect to get a corporate sponsor to pay that much to be associated with the city's sports and entertainment venues, but officials said they are trying to find out how much could be collected by selling naming rights on

them. Sports & Properties Inc., based in Raleigh, was hired this week to study just that, said Hill Carrow, the chief executive.

But the process started earlier this year, when the Winston-Salem City Council approved a new logo and name — the Winston-Salem Entertainment and Sports Complex — that puts all the city-owned venues under one umbrella, said Bucky Dame, the director of Joel Coliseum.

"When the logo and branding took place, one of the things

See **STUDY**, Page A6

STUDY

Continued From Page A1

we were thinking of was to position ourselves to have the additional naming in the logo," Dame said.

The sports and entertainment complex includes Joel Coliseum (15,000 seats); Coliseum Annex (4,500 seats); Ernie Shore Field (6,200 seats); the Dixie Classic Fairgrounds; and Bowman Gray Stadium (17,000 seats).

Combined, these venues at-

tract about 1 million people a year.

Carrow, whose company represents RBC Centura, said that the question that Sports & Properties must answer now is whether to take the entertainment and sports complex as a whole or as individual venues to attract the highest potential for naming-rights sponsorship.

Companies interested in buying naming rights tend to come from the local market, Carrow said, though there also are out-of-state companies trying to make a name here, as

First Horizon did with Greensboro's baseball park.

The Winston-Salem sports and entertainment complex is a destination, Carrow said.

"That's probably as important as anything, and the clustering of facilities. Having Wake Forest University as an anchor tenant," he said.

He plans to submit the study to city officials in two months.

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