

Next Valley Super Bowl a whole new ballgame

BY MIKE SUNNUCKS

Phoenix Business Journal

In 2008, the last time the Super Bowl came to town, the city of Glendale lost about \$2 million when calculating the direct costs of putting on the game versus sales taxes generated by the event.

Now, Glendale has a chance to alter its playbook in an attempt to break even when the National Football League brings its title game back to University of Phoenix Stadium in 2015.

A significant change for Super Bowl XLIX includes the possibility of creating a state or regional funding source to help with the hard costs of hosting the game, and higher fundraising goals.

Arizona Host Committee Chairman Mike Kennedy said the 2015 bid was based on local fundraising goals of \$20 million. That's up from \$18 million when the Valley hosted the game in 2008. Officials familiar with the bid process and other recent Super Bowls say the costs of



Kennedy



hosting the game and related events have increased, as have the NFL's requirements and demands on host cities.

Still, the cost of Arizona hosting the game would be roughly half of the \$40 million raised in Dallas to put on the Super Bowl earlier this year, and what it's expected to cost New York to host the game at the New Jersey Meadowlands in 2014.

"Those are different markets," said Kennedy, who led the 2015 bid with Arizona Cardinals President Michael Bidwill.

Kennedy said the Super Bowl group will lobby the Arizona Legislature to create a pool of money via state sales tax revenue that can be used for major events. That could help alleviate some

of the local costs of hosting mega events such as a Super Bowl. Kennedy said the idea has been pushed before by Super Bowl boosters, but hasn't gained support.

Another change that Kennedy, Bidwill and advertising agency E.B. Lane sold to NFL owners for Super Bowl XLIX was a more centralized approach to events and venues, hosting more of them in downtown Phoenix. That means Tempe and Scottsdale could see fewer Super Bowl-related events than in 2008.

The Metro light rail, Phoenix Convention Center expansion, CityScape mixed-use development, and new hotels and restaurants all have opened in downtown Phoenix since



Bidwill



FILE PHOTO

The city of Glendale lost about \$2 million when it hosted the 2008 Super Bowl at the University of Phoenix Stadium, officials said.

Super Bowl XLII. The new bid involves locating the media center at hotels in downtown Phoenix and moving concerts and parties that were held in Scottsdale and Tempe in 2008 to venues such as CityScape and the convention center instead.

Kennedy said NFL owners wanted a more centralized bid, and the downtown focus accommodated that desire.

Glendale officials are confident they won't lose Super Bowl events such as the NFL Experience or concerts that were hosted at UOP Stadium and Westgate City Center in 2008.

Glendale officials also are hoping for a better financial outcome with this Super Bowl. Like other Valley municipalities, the city has seen its finances strained by the economy and failed or underperforming real estate projects.

Glendale spokeswoman Julie Frisoni said the 2008 Super Bowl cost the city \$3.2 million -- mostly for police, fire department and transportation costs. Glendale collected \$1.2 million in sales taxes.

Frisoni said this time, Glendale will have fewer one-time equipment and infrastructure expenditures because much of the

security, transportation and other equipment acquired for the 2008 game still are being used at the stadium. She also expects the city and Super Bowl organizers to have learned plenty from 2008.

“Experience is a good teacher,” she said.

Glendale will collect a portion of sales tax revenue from the game to help cover Super Bowl costs. Last time, the city waived some sales taxes as part of the region’s 2008 bid. The NFL often requires state and local taxes be waived on Super Bowl tickets and other NFL events as a condition of a city being considered for the game. For the 2015 game, Glendale is slated to bring in some of the sales taxes that were waived in 2008. That will bring in about \$1 million in tax proceeds to help cover game costs.

Frisoni said Glendale backs a state or regional funding source, saying Texas has such a fund to help cover the costs of Super Bowls held in Dallas and Houston.



Frisoni

Kennedy said right now, the Sheraton Wild Horse Pass Resort and Spa and the Arizona Grand Resort are slated to host the 2015 Super Bowl teams. In 2008, Wild Horse Pass and Westin Kierland Resort housed the New York Giants and New England Patriots, respectively.

The NFL selected Arizona over Tampa Bay for the 2015 Super Bowl on Oct. 12.

Connect with **Mike Sunnucks** at msunnucks@bizjournals.com or on Twitter at [@amikesunx](https://twitter.com/amikesunx).