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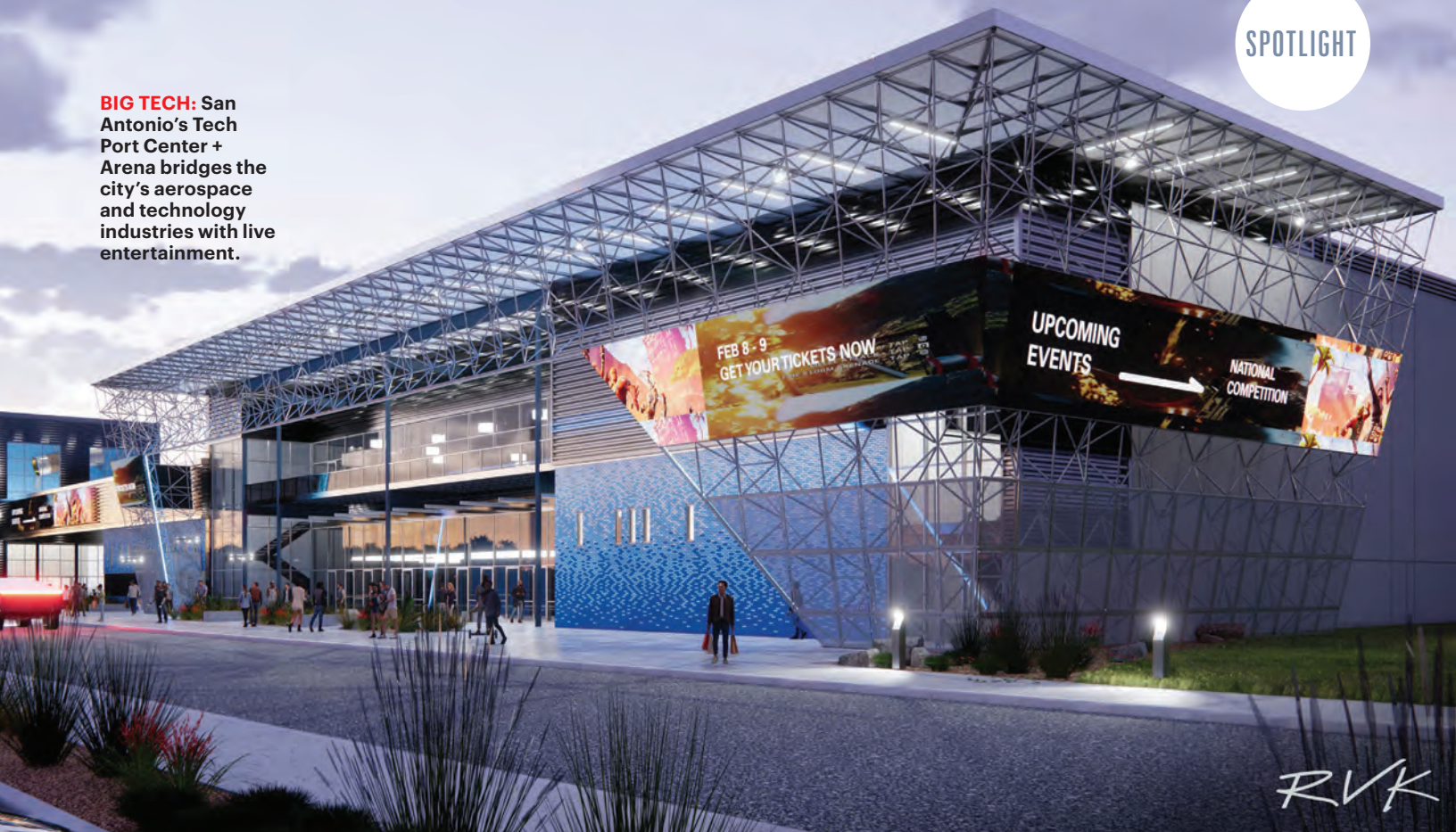
MOODY CENTER SPECIAL ISSUE

## AUSTIN'S NEW HEADLINER





**BIG TECH:** San Antonio's Tech Port Center + Arena bridges the city's aerospace and technology industries with live entertainment.



# ASM Global and Tech Port Center + Arena Herald New Era of Esports, Concerts

BY RYAN BORBA

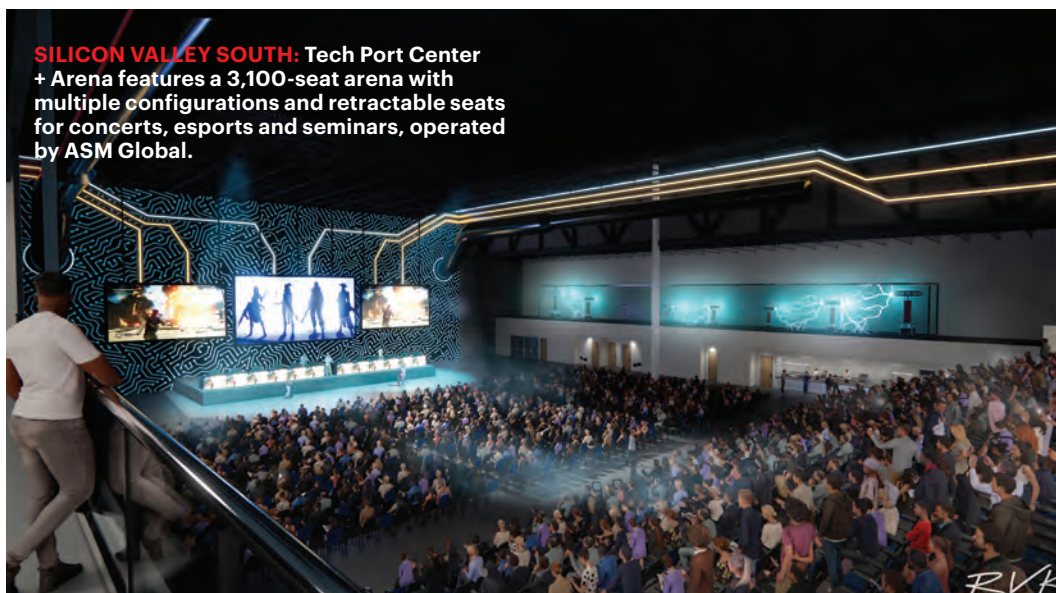
**T**ECH, SPORTS AND entertainment are most associated with leisure, and multi-use developments across the world have largely mirrored that. Anchor sports and entertainment venues attract patrons to restaurants, hotels, city downtowns, which can be a boon for a struggling downtown or jumpstart a new commercial development.

At Tech Port Center + Arena, an ASM Global-managed facility located just 10 minutes from downtown San Antonio, the model is somewhat switched, with the Port San Antonio technology campus already home to 15,000 employees in high-tech aerospace, robotics and military science sectors, with the 24-hour campus being home to divisions from industry titans like Boeing, Lockheed Martin and Plus One Robotics.

The Port Authority operating the campus, on the site of the former Kelly Air Force base in the South Texas city, had a vision to connect technology, education and industry — and has added 4,000 jobs since unveiling its “Tech Port” vision in 2018. That vision requires a unique building.

“They are kind of the South Texas Silicon Valley and are starting to gain a lot of momentum bringing these innovations and ideas here,” says Eric Blockie, General Manager for ASM Global at Tech Port Center + Arena, who was brought in to run the venue in September. “The Port thought it would be a great idea to develop what would be the hub, a place for the CEOs and line workers and everyone in San Antonio to come have a great time.”

**SILICON VALLEY SOUTH:** Tech Port Center + Arena features a 3,100-seat arena with multiple configurations and retractable seats for concerts, esports and seminars, operated by ASM Global.





# WORLD'S MOST TECHNOLOGICALLY ADVANCED ENTERTAINMENT VENUE



## TECH PORT

CENTER + ARENA

Tech Port Center + Arena is the evolution of lifestyle and live entertainment, located just 10 minutes from downtown San Antonio, with a mission to electrify the senses in more ways than one.

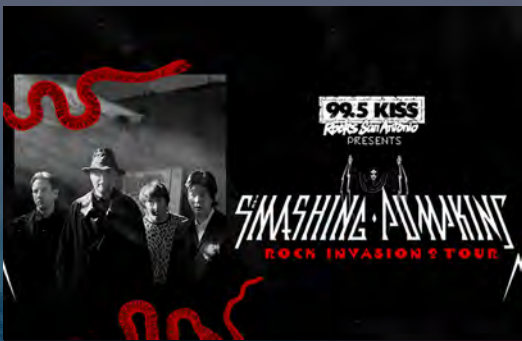
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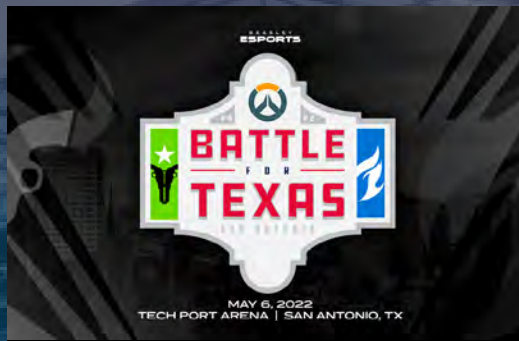


# TECH PORT ARENA

## GRAND OPENING SEASON



MAY 2



MAY 6



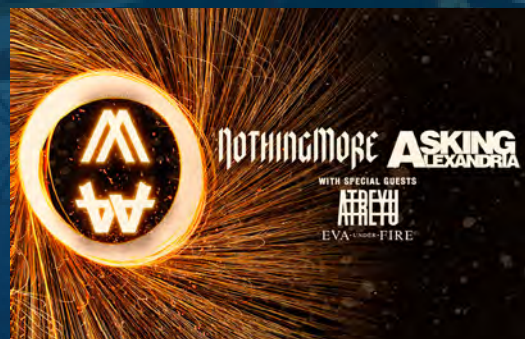
MAY 14



MAY 21



MAY 26



JUNE 18



AUG 2



AUG 12

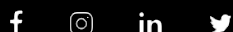


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**LOCAL FLAVOR:**  
The venue's Tech Port Provisions food hall features six local restaurants, to be announced in the coming weeks.

That hub, Tech Port Center + Arena, includes a 3,100-seat theater designed for concerts and esports, six local restaurants as part of the Tech Port Provisions food hall, high-tech LAN Gaming Center open to the public and a new home for the San Antonio Museum of Science and Technology (SAM-SAT). The building spans 130,000 square feet, with project costs estimated at about \$70 million.

"This venue not only does great live shows, and has a lot of the technology and infrastructure the tours are looking for, but we feel ASM Global and the Port have collaboratively developed this fantastic area for esports, which is going to be a \$1.2 billion business in 2024," Blockie says, adding that fans and league players are flying from as far as Australia and South Korea for upcoming esports events.

The arena's first ticketed performance is rock band Smashing Pumpkins on May 2, followed on May 6 by the launch of the 2022 "Overwatch" season, billed as "The Battle For Texas" with the Houston Outlaws vs. Dallas Fuel, played on a new version of the popular multiplayer first-person shooter game. ASM Global utilized top AV consultant Anthony James Partners for Tech Port's new Interior Gaming Center to assist in the design and acquisition of state-of-the-art AV technology systems, including LED Displays and Video Production, Network Infrastructure, Broadcast Cabling, IPTV, 5G Cellular High-Density WIFI, Audio, and Entertainment Lighting.

While the arena has upcoming concerts including Kevin Gates, Carla Morrison, Papa Roach, Nothing More + Asking Alexandria, Rise Against with The Used, Boyz II Men and more, what makes the building unique are its esports-specific features.

"It's in 7.1 Surround sound, which [is what you need] in esports," says Blockie, noting a full JBL system including line array. "When the artists – or competitors – are playing on stage, and the audience is in the house, it'll sound like they're immersed in the games with the players. We have gone out and acquired the stage from Blizzard, the biggest esports company in the world, that they used for their esports events. The stage is 20 feet wider than any normal rock concert stage. ... this stage is 80 feet wide and 40 feet deep." Blockie mentions other impressive features including three trusses of moving lights, a 60 by 20 foot LED wall, and the ability to broadcast live with up to eight cameras and to uplink to anywhere in the country.

"Interestingly, we also have the world's largest tesla coil display for public viewing, that can be controlled by the artists," Blockie adds. "It's 100 feet long and has four tesla coils that can zap each other. Artists can do a show and hit this coil – or not hit this coil – but it's a really cool piece of it."

The arena can be set up in multiple configurations for esports, with a flat floor and retractable seating allowing for general admission or seated events,

including guests being able to bring their own computers and participate from the audience.

"We're getting calls from all around the world because no one else has this," says Blockie, who was most recently event programming manager at the Alamodome and has served as GM at arenas and amphitheaters including Shoreline Amphitheater near San Francisco, where he worked with Bill Graham Presents. "(Other esports venues) have been convention centers or restaurants. We're the first esports venue built in the United States from the ground up."

Blockie, with extensive experience in the concerts space, says the esports realm resembles the "wild west" of concert promotion in the '80s, where operators are coming from the underground and becoming mainstream. "This is going to be a model for anybody in the world," he says.

Adding to the momentum is venture capital firm Capital Factory, which is expanding its Center For Defense Innovation to Tech Port Center and will make use of the complex's restaurants, meeting spaces and a collaborative lab, with spaces open 24 hours a day.

"We love the shows," Blockie says, noting that Tech Port Arena fills a capacity niche in the market. "A lot of bands that might otherwise skip San Antonio are looking for this perfect play."

However, with multiple spaces and different types of events being needed, Blockie says there won't ever be a dark day.

"With our partners at Tobin

Center (in San Antonio) and all the promoters bringing content here, the goal is to maximize it," Blockie says. "Everybody's target, and we think we can hit it, is 60-80 shows a year, but we're going to have another 100-120 private events here per year, whether it's a luncheon for a local medical unit, or a product launch or any other aspect. We're operating every single day. We could have three or four silos going on at the same time." With multiple types of events and spaces within the complex, ticketing is handled by Etix.

While the venue is high tech and catering to influential industry in the city, Blockie says it's a priority to give back to the community and provide opportunity for locals, with the LAN Gaming Center being open to the public for a low price to use high-quality computers, the SAMSAT museum hosting exhibits, demonstrations and classes, and Tech Port Provisions Food Hall featuring local restaurants.

"This is a great asset to the whole community," Blockie says.

Although many events are booked well into summer, Blockie says they got one unexpected request, which would be the venue's first public showing.

"The mayor has the yearly state of the city, and they called us up two weeks ago and asked if we could host it here," says Blockie, noting he expects Tech Port Center to get its full certificate of occupancy this week. "We are going to make an effort and are looking forward to having that event here Tuesday, April 26." ▀