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**SMG-managed Big Sandy Superstore Arena celebrates 40 years with highest grossing year in venue history**

Huntington, WV - The SMG-managed Big Sandy Superstore Arena is pleased to report its highest-grossing year in venue history. Events at the Arena generated ticket sales valued at more than \$3.6 million during the 2017 Fiscal Year (July 2016 – June 2017) shattering the previous record of \$2.8 million set in the 2012 Fiscal Year. The Arena opened in September 1977.

Over the past year, Def Leppard, KISS, Luke Bryan and the upcoming Journey concerts have set new standards as the Top 4 highest-grossing shows in venue history. Five Finger Death Punch/Shinedown, Thomas Rhett with Kelsea Ballerini, Jeff Dunham, Justin Moore, Lee Brice, I Love the 90's, Disturbed, and Ron White have all made stops in Huntington over the past year.

“SMG has managed the Big Sandy Superstore Arena since 1995 and during those 22 years, SMG has continually found ways to be creative in raising revenue goals, increasing concert activity, and setting records that have never been accomplished before,” said Mayor Steve Williams. “It’s truly exciting to celebrate the highest grossing year in the venue’s 40 year history! SMG has embraced Huntington as America’s Best Community. I look forward to many more exciting events at the Big Sandy Superstore Arena, which continues to provide quality entertainment for our region and adds a tremendous economic boost to our community.”

SMG Huntington is in the fourth year of a 10-year management agreement with the City of Huntington. The long-term commitment is paying off for the community as annual financial performance has improved by \$250,000 since the 2015 Fiscal Year.

Additionally, the venue has been able to grow the available Capital Fund by over \$200,000 as a direct result of the increasing ticket sales.

During the 2017 Fiscal Year, the City of Huntington re-invested those capital funds into the Arena updating the rigging system, redesigning the plaza entry, and installing a new Point of Sale system for food and beverage sales.

*Big Sandy Superstore Arena is the largest entertainment venue in the tri-state. The arena hosts concerts, family shows, trade shows, regional and state athletic competitions. The Arena Convention Center has over 15,000 square feet of flexible meeting space.*

*About SMG*

*Founded in 1977 and celebrating its 40th anniversary, SMG provides management services to 233 public assembly facilities including convention and exhibition centers, arenas, stadiums, theaters, performing arts centers, amphitheaters, equestrian facilities, science centers and a variety of other venues. With facilities across the globe, SMG manages more than 15 million square feet of exhibition space and more than 1.5 million sports and entertainment seats. As the*

*recognized global industry leader, SMG provides venue management, sales, marketing, event booking and programming, construction and design consulting, and pre-opening services for such landmark facilities as McCormick Place & Soldier Field in Chicago, Moscone Convention Center in San Francisco, Houston's NRG Park and the Mercedes-Benz Superdome in New Orleans. SMG also offers food and beverage operations through its concessions and catering companies, currently serving more than 140 accounts worldwide. For more information visit [www.smgworld.com](http://www.smgworld.com).*

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