

## **Suburbs readying own events as part of Super Bowl festivities**

By Jennette Smith  
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Craig Covey expects his Ferndale blues festival to double or triple in size as a result of **Super Bowl XL**.

The **Ferndale Metro Blues Festival** stretches over nine days, including Super Bowl week. Covey, festival founder, expects about half of the expected 30,000 to 40,000 people to be from out of town. Attendance was about 15,000 last year.

"Not only do visitors want to go (to) the Super Bowl but they want to get a flavor of a community," he said. "We wouldn't think of trying to take the spotlight away from the city but visitors want to sample, see what the culinary interests are — the ambience of the area. It's shopping in Troy. It's nightlife in Royal Oak and Ferndale."

Ferndale is one of eight cities designated as "Super Cities" — meaning the communities are included in print and Web site materials from the **Super Bowl XL Host Committee**. On top of that, teams and many NFL sponsors and corporate guests are staying at suburban hotels.

The communities and venues are working on final planning for the suburban piece of the Super Bowl. The event's total estimated economic impact for the region is more than \$302 million, with a significant share of that to be felt in the suburbs. An impact study predicted \$138 million for Wayne, \$111 million for Oakland County, \$20 million for Macomb and \$33 million combined for Livingston, St. Clair and Lapeer counties.

Of the 19,507 hotel rooms booked for the Super Bowl, 5,899 are in Oakland County, 4,959 are in Wayne County, 1,005 are in Macomb County and 1,012 are in the Ann Arbor area. Toledo and Windsor are also major hot spots for the 119 hotels involved. Those rooms make up the NFL block, so the actual final room count, including other nonaffiliated groups, is expected to reach 30,000, said Ken Kettenbeil, vice president of communications for the host committee.

"This is huge," said Victor Martin, the general manager of the **Best Western Sterling Inn** in Sterling Heights. "They're booking as far out as Flint, Ann Arbor, Windsor. It's the teams. It's the news media, trainers, entertainers and everyone else."

While Detroit is the core for events like the Motown Winter Blast and NFL Experience, Mike Dietz, president of **Dietz Trott Sports Entertainment** in Bingham Farms, said many out-of-town guests will be interested in exploring the suburbs. Dietz said when he went to the 2004 game in Houston, he stayed in the city but went into the suburbs for dining and some activities.

"The hotels are spread out so much that people will be staying in all the suburban cities," he said. "They'll be listening to radio, hearing about things going on through word of mouth."

Covey, also a councilman in Ferndale, said the blues festival will include more than 40 concerts in 18 venues. It is a sanctioned event with proceeds going to two charities.

Downtown Mt. Clemens is hosting an ice sculpture show, chili cook-off and pub crawl and a tailgate party. Arthur Mullen, executive director of the **Mt. Clemens Downtown Development Authority**, said he didn't have a crowd estimate but expected the more than 20 ice sculptures planned along downtown streets should be a draw along with the city's nightlife.

Mt. Clemens, another "Super City," is also hosting at least one high-profile private party: the *Sports Illustrated* invite-only event at the Emerald Theatre.

The suburban hotels hosting Super Bowl guests have a few hospitality receptions planned but are focused on making sure their guests receive top service and information on things to do.

The **Hyatt Regency Dearborn** is the NFC team hotel and all 772 rooms are sold out between the team and sponsors. The Hyatt is the region's second-largest hotel by room count.



"We will definitely have all hands on deck," said Pat Trammell, senior director of sales and marketing. "We do countdowns every day and we have a special Super Bowl committee."

Trammell said the hotel will hold special events in the hotel's restaurant and plans extra resources for transportation needs.

NFL sponsors and corporate groups from **Sirius Satellite Radio** and **Citigroup** are among the guests staying at the Sterling Inn, said Susan Bullotta, director of sales and marketing. The hotel also is hosting NFL charities and the **Professional Football Mothers' Association**. The hotel is fully booked with Super Bowl guests, with 246 rooms at a four-night minimum stay.

The Sterling Inn plans a few hospitality receptions in its banquet center area but still has plenty of banquet space available during Super Bowl week.

Matt Prentice, CEO of Bingham Farms-based **Matt Prentice Restaurant Group**, said he expects restaurant reservations at such suburban locations as **No. VI Chop House**, **Morels** and **Northern Lakes Seafood** to start once people start getting into town and getting acclimated.

There has been little demand so far for suburban parties at hotel sites like **Hotel Baronette** and the **Radisson Kingsley**, he said.

"We've had inquiries but it's nothing like what we're booking downtown," he said. Prentice expects the partying to be a mostly downtown phenomenon while the suburbs will attract dining business.

Troy is playing up shopping and dining with a Jan. 29 Troy Supper Bowl event for local residents at **Somerset Collection** and various events during Super Bowl week to attract out-of-town guests.

Hotels will offer shuttles to take guests to Somerset and the mall will install an NFL theater showing Super Bowl highlight film. Player appearances are also planned.

"I'm getting a lot of calls from companies that want to host events, bring groups out," said Linda McIntosh, marketing director for Somerset.

"We're part of Detroit."

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## **NFL Experience plans announced**

Plans were unveiled last week for the **NFL Experience**, the public interactive event for football fans to be held at **Cobo Center** during Super Bowl week.

The Feb. 1-5 event will include 800,000 square feet of interactive games and displays. Proceeds from ticket sales support **Youth Education Town**, the youth and athletics center planned in west Detroit.

Tickets for the NFL Experience are on sale through **Ford Field**, **TicketMaster**, at [www.superbowl.com](http://www.superbowl.com) or by calling (866) TIX-4NFL. Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$10 for children, and permit entry for a particular day and time.

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