



BJCC entertainment district to feature Ruben Studdard club

New development to capitalize on Birmingham's "American Idol" fame

Birmingham, AL – August 16, 2007

The new entertainment district at the Birmingham-Jefferson Convention Complex will include a club owned by and named after Ruben Studdard, the first of two "American Idol" winners from Birmingham. BJCC Executive Director Jack Fields announced to the BJCC board on Aug. 15 that Studdard was the first to sign a lease for the district, set for groundbreaking in the fourth quarter.

Performa Real Estate, Inc., which is developing the district, recruited Studdard to the 156,000-square foot entertainment and retail development. The club's working name is "Ruben's Club 205," and it will feature the soulful music Studdard became known for on the hit Fox TV program "American Idol."

Performa will also meet this week with representatives for Taylor Hicks, another Birmingham "Idol" winner, to work toward an agreement for a club of his own. In seven seasons, two winners and one runner up on the show, Bo Bice, have been from Birmingham.

"It will be wonderful to have both Ruben and Taylor in the district," said Performa CEO John Elkington. "That's part of our plan – to have tenants who reflect the history, culture and music of Birmingham."

Fields said he believes having the two stars' names associated with the district will help recruit quality entertainment and bring in visitors from across the region. He said it is also great news for the 2.5 million visitors the BJCC draws annually who often comment on the need for additional entertainment and dining options nearby.

Performa, which is most well know for developing the Memphis, Tenn., landmark Beale Street, plans to announce more leases and a name for the district early this fall. The development will include two hotels totaling 280 rooms between them, several restaurants, multiple entertainment venues and retail stores. The plan includes two half blocks, each of which will feature center grass courtyards available for outdoor events.

For more information about the Birmingham-Jefferson Convention Complex, go to www.bjcc.org.

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