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Greensboro Coliseum debuts greener concourse for ACC fans and players

Fran Daniel/Winston-Salem Journal

GREENSBORO, N.C., March 13, 2014 -- Fans and players attending the ACC tournament are getting a chance to see a much greener Greensboro Coliseum this year.

More than 50 oversized banners made from recycled material now span the coliseum's concourse. They were installed just in time for the tournament, which runs through Sunday at the coliseum.

At 10 feet tall and 18 feet wide, the bright and colorful banners highlight entertainers who have appeared at the coliseum, including Bon Jovi, the Eagles, Jimmy Buffett, Tina Turner, circuses and Disney On Ice. Some of the banners depict local facilities and coliseum sponsors.

The banners were made from Repreve recycled fiber, a product made at Unifi Inc.'s plant in Yadkinville. Graphic Visual Solutions, based in Greensboro, printed the banners and displayed them in light-weight aluminum frames. Coliseum staff installed them. The Repreve yarn used for the fabric in the banners is made from recycled plastic bottles.

"There are 54 total banners and there's an average of 296 bottles per banner," said Roger Berrier, the president and chief operating officer for Unifi. "So a total of roughly 16,000 bottles are in the banners around the Greensboro Coliseum."

This is the first time that Unifi's yarn has been used in permanent banners, but its Repreve product has been used previously in what Berrier considers more temporary banners.

In January, all of the banners that lined the ESPN 2014 X Games activities shown on TV were made from Repreve fabric, he said.

Berrier said he is glad that the banners were installed in the coliseum before the ACC tournament because the tournament is one of the coliseum's biggest events.

“We’re trying to raise the importance and visibility of recycling and the benefits of recycling,” he said.

He said that if it weren’t for the recycling of bottles at Unifi, the company would have to buy virgin polyester material, which comes from crude oil.

“Typically our supply chain comes from up and down the East Coast for bottles,” he said.

Matt Brown, the managing director of the Greensboro Coliseum, said that the banners serve two purposes.

They hide heating, ventilation, and air conditioning ductwork from the view of people attending coliseum events.

The banners also accent the new \$8.5 million renovations at the coliseum, including a wider concourse, new restrooms and new concession areas.

“They give us a chance to showcase a number of the great artists and events that have taken place at the Greensboro Coliseum, and we had a chance to even recognize some of our great sponsors that we have here at the coliseum,” Brown said.

The renovations are the second phase of coliseum improvements started last year.

“The first phase was done in 2013,” Brown said. “Before the last ACC Tournament, we did all new seating in the arena. We put in a new scoreboard. That was \$8 million.”

Brown said that people attending the ACC Tournament can now look up in the Greensboro Coliseum and see “quite a novel accent to our facility.”

“We want to put our best foot forward for the new schools that are coming in that have never been in the coliseum — the fans from Syracuse and Notre Dame and the University of Pittsburgh,” Brown said.

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