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Local companies make Super Bowl plays



VIOREL FLORESCU/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Royal invitation: Kyle Bradford, who plays King Carlos at Medieval Times in Lyndhurst.

■ At convention, tout activities for crowds and services for events.

By LINDA MOSS
STAFF WRITER

SECAUCUS - As food and spirits were sampled on the lively exhibit floor, area businesses and local town officials gathered Wednesday to network, all looking for ways to snatch a piece of the \$550 million windfall that the Super Bowl is expected to bring to the New York metro area next February.

More than 1,000 attendees and 135 vendors came to "The Big Game Experience" at the Meadowlands Exposition Center. Several large ice sculptures, including one of a football helmet, adorned the show floor, as

did a 10-foot-tall version of the Statue of Liberty.

The event, sponsored by the Meadowlands Regional Chamber and the Meadowlands Liberty Convention and Visitors Bureau, was a showcase for vendors of food, services, goods and location venues looking for opportunities to profit from the big game at the MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford. The idea is to make New Jersey, not just Manhattan, a destination for anyone trekking Northeast for the game, or the festivities before it.

Representatives of two municipalities, Ridgewood and Secaucus, talked about the events they have planned to piggyback off

the Super Bowl.

John Saraceno Jr., representing the Ridgewood Super Bowl Committee, spoke at one panel and said his group is well on its way to raising the \$300,000 to \$350,000 needed to stage an event in the village.

The committee plans to turn Van Ness Square, a downtown park, into a skating rink, Saraceno said, as "an anchor" for an event that will probably run from Wednesday through Saturday, the week before the game.

"Our goal is to be Bryant Park West," Saraceno said.

Secaucus Mayor Michael Gonnelli outlined his town's

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plans for events to draw the 6,000 to 7,000 visitors who will be staying in the municipality's 16 hotels.

The vendors included a variety of caterers and restaurants, many offering expansive spreads of their food; Westfield Garden State Plaza and The Shops at Riverside; Macys; Meadowlands Hospital Medical Center; and the Southern Ocean County Chamber of Commerce, which was promoting its "Souper Bowl 2013" Chowderfest, which runs Oct. 5 and 6.

Benn and Steven Well, owners of Party Box in Lodi, had a booth displaying examples of their balloons, paper products and novelties.

"Napkins, banners, we do fa-

vors," Benn Well said. "We're a full party supply store. ... People are taking our brochures and hopefully will get back to us."

Classic Party Rentals of Secaucus had five lavish tables set up, with place settings, to try to draw catering clients.

Don Dazzo, director of strategic accounts for regional staffing firm The Premier Group in Rutherford, was among those walking the exhibit floor. Dazzo said he is active in the Meadowlands chamber.

"I'm here to support the event, and to talk to any businesses that might need any event staffing or longer-term staffing," he said. "Hospitality, checking people in, catering help, administrative support for events."

Circle Line Downtown, at the booth with the Statue of Liberty, was hoping to entice businesses to use its ships to transport attendees to the game, as well as for cruises in the days leading up to the game, said Kiernan Carley, charters and events assistant.

Come shop

Macy's booth was adjacent to the one for Garden State Plaza. Nancy Gallagher, manager of tourism partnerships, said the retailer hopes to bring Super Bowl visitors to Macy's in both Herald Square and Paramus.

"We want everyone to shop," Gallagher said.

Jim Kirkos, president of the Meadowlands Chamber, said during one of two afternoon panels,

"It's my job to get you as much as that \$550 million as I can."

The Super Bowl is expected to draw about 75,000 game attendees and from 150,000 to 200,000 additional visitors.

The speakers also included Al Kelly, chief executive of the New York New Jersey Super Bowl Host Committee, and Stephen Borg, president of North Jersey Media Group, publisher of The Record and Herald News, which will help publish the Super Bowl committee's commemorative magazine.

Kelly told the audience at his panel that North Jersey can compete with Manhattan for visitors' time and dollars.

"We've got culture, we've got shopping," he said.



VIDREL FLORESCU/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Ice sculptures showcased at "The Big Game Experience," at the Meadowlands Exposition Center on Wednesday.