

Tulane Business Forum highlights the business of sports

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From the NBA All-Star Game and the BCS College Football Championship to the NCAA Men's Final Four and the Super Bowl, New Orleans has in the last four years reemerged as one of the nation's leading destinations for major sporting events. At Friday's (Sept. 28) [Tulane Business Forum](#), a panel of local sports officials said that impressive post-Katrina run isn't an accident.



Talking about the business of sports at the annual Tulane Business Forum are, from left, moderator Mark Romig with expert panelists Jay Cicero, Rick Dickson, Dennis Lauscha and Doug Thornton. (Photo by Cheryl Gerber)

"I can think back five or six years ago to conversations that all of us here had in terms of what can our industry do to impact and contribute to the recovery of our state," said panelist Rick Dickson, Tulane athletics director. "It's been very gratifying to help to facilitate these events."

Joining Dickson for the discussion of sports and economic development were Dennis Lauscha, president, New Orleans Saints and New Orleans Hornets; Doug Thornton, senior vice president of SMG, the management company for the Mercedes-Benz Superdome and the New Orleans Arena; and Jay Cicero, president and CEO, Greater

New Orleans Sports Foundation. Mark Romig, president and CEO of New Orleans Tourism Marketing Corp., moderated the session.

Increased collaboration has been a big factor in attracting major sporting events to the city, but an even bigger factor may be the city itself. According to the panelists, no other city in the nation features world-class venues and abundant hotel rooms within walking distance of a hospitality center like the French Quarter.

That compact footprint enables the city to save millions in hosting expenses. While Super Bowls in Indianapolis and Dallas cost upwards of \$35 million, New Orleans is hosting Super Bowl XLVII for about \$13.5 million.

"The reason we can do that is because of our footprint and because of everyone working together," Lauscha said. "It's really amazing when you think we're going to have one of the best Super Bowls, and we're going to do it for about a third of the cost of Dallas."

Mark Miester is the editor of Freeman magazine for the A. B. Freeman School of Business.