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FAIR'S PLANNER TEACHES CLASS ON SPECIAL EVENTS\*

BY

NAN PERALES, STAFF WRITER

THE TIMES-PICAYUNE  
NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA 70140

Jim Brandt, one of the men who put together the 1984 World's Fair, wants to keep history from repeating itself.

So he's teaching 12 University of New Orleans students some of the things not to do when planning a special event such as a fair.

"It's a luxury to me to be out of the heat of the battle and to see how certain decisions were made and why--what was done right and wrong," he told his students during the first class Tuesday.

"In the heat of the battle, you don't always get to look at that."

As the fair's vice president for planning, Brandt did a bit of everything, from scheduling to making financial studies to working with architects and engineers on the fair's design. Now he heads a company that supplies managers and staff to trade associations, clubs and others to organize their special events.

Brandt, 37, said he wishes he and his fair colleagues had a course like the one he's teaching when they were putting together the exposition. The six-month fair, acclaimed as an artistic success, drew 3.7 million fewer visitors than expected; it closed in November at least \$81 million in debt.

"We learned the best we could as we went along," Brandt said. But, "there really should be a better way to pass along information about fairs.

"There's really no way now. There's a small group of people who have been involved in more than one fair, but there aren't any books or seminars," he said. "There's a body of knowledge out there and transmission of it should be better."

To that end, Brandt will spend 35 hours during the 14-week term discussing what he learned from the New Orleans fair.

He'll talk about the planning methods the fair used in areas such as transportation, entertainment, and site development and how they should or shouldn't be applied to other special events. He'll also explore methods others have used.

Maybe he and his students will even write a textbook on planning

special events, Brandt said. He said he couldn't find any when he cast around for one to use in the class, which he teaches for the graduate-level School of Regional Urban Studies.

The planning class began last year, taught by Robert Becker, executive director of the City Planning Commission. Brandt said he was asked to sign on this year by his friend, Fritz Wagner, director of the urban studies school. Brandt said he receives \$2,200 a semester.

Brandt says the fair is a good study for special events planners because it used most of the principles of that specialty. And enough time has passed to reflect rationally on what happened and why, he said.

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