

Coachella festival tickets sold out

Organizers say they expect crowds to match last year's 60,000 a day

by Bruce Fessier, *The Desert Sun*

Music fans reacted with tears and rage against the Coachella ticket-selling machine Tuesday.

All three days of the Coachella Valley Music and Arts festival officially sold out Tuesday afternoon.

That means that a total of up to 180,000 people will come to the music fest held at the Empire Polo Club in Indio April 27 through April 29.

The Goldenvoice promoters refused to estimate the number of tickets sold, but an Indio city official said the Los Angeles-based company wrote on its special event application that it was expecting 55,000 to 60,000 people a day.

Goldenvoice co-founder Paul Tollett and publicist Marcee Rondan earlier said they expect to limit daily attendance to last year's numbers, roughly 60,000 people a day.

Goldenvoice has offered to pay \$200,000 a day for public safety and other city expenses, said city Human Services Supervisor Jim Curtis. Their application will go before the Indio City Council for approval next month.

After emerging as one of the nation's top music festivals, Coachella was expanded to three days from two this year.

This also is the first time the festival sold out in February.

Single-day passes to Saturday and Sunday concerts, featuring Red Hot Chili Peppers and the re-united Rage Against the Machine, sold out at the end of January. Now the three-day passes also are sold out.

The news caught many young music fans at College of the Desert by surprise.

"How can it be just sold out like that without any warning?" said Abraham Curiel of Indio. "Last year, it wasn't like that. There's going to be a lot of people disappointed."

"That's absolutely unbelievable," said Stefanie Gonzalez of La Quinta. There's got to be people who bought tickets that are going to be scalping. That may be a big issue now."

Tickets for day three originally sold for \$85 plus fees. However, sellers of tickets for that day were asking for nearly \$1,000 on eBay.

Rondan said some tickets could still be sold at the gate, as Goldenvoice has done at past sold-out Coachella festivals. "Anything's possible," said Rondan, "but I don't think we want to make promises at this point. Everybody should just keep checking (the Web site.)"

Coachella.com says gates will open at 11:00 a.m. each day of the festival but no official announcement has been made about when the Friday concerts will begin or end.