

## Sun Belt Conference Relocates

Written by John McElwain  
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The Sun Belt Conference will now call “the Dome” its home as the league headquarters have officially been moved into the Mercedes-Benz Superdome. “New Orleans is a first-class city and history has shown that it is a perfect location for the Sun Belt headquarters,” said Sun Belt Conference Commissioner Karl Benson. “Our relationship with the city, the sporting events it hosts and our own events in the city continue to grow – and for good reason. Our administrators, fans and student-athletes recognize that this is a city that is great to visit and for our staff and their families to live.”

“I would also like to recognize that this move would not have been possible without our partnership with the Greater New Orleans Sports Foundation under the leadership of Jay Cicero as well as the vision and help of the Mercedes-Benz Superdome staff under SMG Senior Vice President Doug Thornton,” said Benson.

“We are very pleased to welcome the Sun Belt Conference to the Superdome as a tenant,” said Thornton, who has been with the building’s management company, SMG, since 1997. “The Sun Belt is a strong conference that continues to build its reputation – and that makes it a perfect fit for our historic, world-renowned facility. The Conference has an important affiliation with the New Orleans Bowl, a major event for the Superdome and the city. Having them as a neighbor in our facility only strengthens that partnership.”

The Sun Belt Conference has a long history with the city of New Orleans – having originally moved to the Galleria in Metairie in 1991. The league offices relocated to downtown New Orleans in the Pan American Building in 2000 and was headquartered there until June 2013. In addition to having its headquarters located in New Orleans, the Sun Belt helped found the New Orleans Bowl in 2001 which is now sponsored by R+L Carriers. The SBC has won four consecutive R+L Carriers New Orleans Bowl games and six out of the last seven New Orleans Bowls with opponents having come from CUSA, the Mid-American Conference and the MWC. Come March 2014 the Sun Belt Conference Men’s and Women’s Basketball Championships will also call New Orleans home. Lakefront Arena will play host to the two coinciding tournaments during the second week of March. The Sun Belt announced last February that New Orleans would be the site of the tournaments for the next three years.

The Sun Belt Conference also previously announced that its Men’s and Women’s Tennis Championships will be held at New Orleans’ City Park for the next two years.

**Photo Courtesy: Mercedes-Benz Superdome**