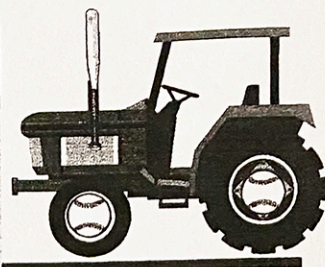


# THE FARM REPORT

A publication of the Society for American Baseball Research (SABR)



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## BE SURE TO CHECK OUT:

- The new Minor League Baseball affiliation charts and look for your favorite team
- Attendance figures for the 2006 season, by league and the top five teams by average and total
- Mapping the Canadian flight to the US
- Really cool baseball artwork



## MINORS COMPLETE AFFILIATE SWITCH FOR NEXT TWO YEARS

The dance is over — at least for the next two years. The dance is a biennial process between major league clubs and the minor league teams where players are developed to support the parent franchise.

For the next two years, minor league teams will continue to feed the parent organization and develop the farm hands until the players are ready for the "Show."

There were a number of affiliation changes. The major league team initiated some and the minor league club, shopping around, initiated others. There were a few surprise affiliation-switches after partnering for many years.

For some major league teams, the switch brings their minor league clubs closer to the parent organization.

In major Triple A news, the New York Yankees are leaving Columbus, hooking up with Scranton/Wilkes-Barre. This move was precipitated by the Philadelphia Phillies partnering with the Ottawa Lynx, a team that will re-locate to Allentown, PA, following the 2007 season. After a partnership lasting many years, the Baltimore

Orioles have signed with Norfolk, VA, a former affiliate of the New York Mets. The Mets signed with New Orleans, while the Washington Nationals signed Columbus.

Be sure to check out the affiliation charts from the various leagues throughout this issue.

Affiliate	2006 Team	New Team
<b>High Class A</b>		
Bakersfield	Rangers	Rangers
Brevard County	Brewers	Brewers
Daytona	Cubs	Cubs
Frederick	Orioles	Orioles
Fort Myers	Twins	Twins
High Desert	Royals	Mariners
Inland Empire	Mariners	Dodgers
Kinston	Indians	Indians
Lake Elsinore	Padres	Padres
Lancaster	D-Backs	Red Sox
Lynchburg	Pirates	Pirates
Modesto	Rockies	Rockies
Myrtle Beach	Braves	Braves
Potomac	Nationals	Nationals
Rancho	Angels	Angels
Salem Ays	Astros	Astros
San Jose	Giants	Giants
Sarasota	Reds	Reds
Stockton	A's	A's
Vero Beach	Dodgers	Devil Rays
Visalia	Devil Rays	D-backs
Wilmington	Red Sox	Royals
Winston-Salem	White Sox	White Sox

## ATTENDANCE AT MINOR LEAGUE GAMES REACH ALL-NEW HIGH

For the third consecutive year, Minor League Baseball reach record heights in attendance. A total of 41,710,357 fans went to the ballgame in minor league towns. The figure is up 377,078 fans from the 2005 season's 41,333,279. In 2004, minor league ball drew 39,887,755 fans. The 2004 figure broke records that stood over 50 years.

Totals include figures from 176 teams in 14 affiliated leagues, including the Triple A Mexican (Pacific) League.

The Pacific Coast League led all leagues with 7,413,505 fans. The International League came in next with 6,416,200 fans. See attendance chart on page 5 for more details.



# O CANADA, CANADA! WHEREFORE ART THOU CANADA?

BY ANTHONY SALAZAR

For the past several seasons, our neighbors to the North have witnessed a migration of their baseball teams. Since the 1999 season, Canada has lost the Vancouver Canadians, the Calgary Cannons and the Edmonton Trappers.

The Canadians moved to greener pastures in Sacramento. The Cannons became the Albuquerque Isotopes—the former Albuquerque Dukes moved to Portland to become a new generation of the Beavers. The Trappers found a deal with Round Rock, Texas, too good to pass up and became the Express, a Nolan Ryan property.

Now, Canada faces yet another club departure as the Ottawa Lynx are slated to move to Allentown, PA, after the 2007 season. The club signed a new Player Development Contract (PDC) with the Philadelphia Phillies, with the major league team intending to have their Triple A affiliate close to home in 2008.

With the demise of the Lynx, the Triple A baseball in Canada will cease. Though the Vancouver Canadians re-surfaced as a short-season Single A affiliate of the Oakland A's in the Northwest League.

Independent baseball remains in Canada with Northern League teams in Winnipeg, Calgary and Edmonton.

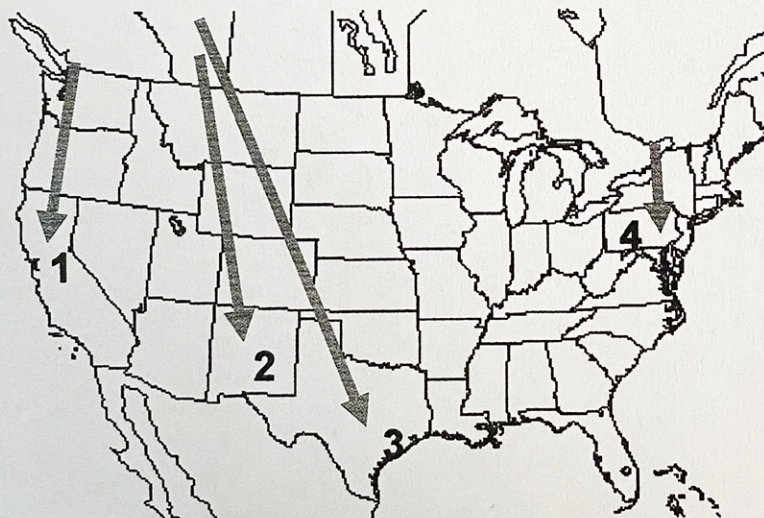
The sole major league team is, of course, the Toronto Blue Jays.

Arguments have been made as to why Canadian baseball, in a sense, failed. (The failure of the Canadian Baseball League is another story.) Geographic isolation, the difficult travel schedule and the aging facilities certainly contributed. The main problem, however, was declining attendance. The cities simply could not support the teams.

It is perhaps no coincidence that three former Canadian clubs were leaders in Minor League Baseball (MiLB) attendance this year. Check the attendance charts located within this issue.

Baseball in Canada has seen better days. It could only be hoped that Northern League teams have a better go at it than their MiLB counterparts.

## Going, Going....South!



	OLD TEAM	NEW TEAM	DATE MOVED
1	Vancouver Canadians	Sacramento RiverCats	1999
2	Calgary Cannons	Albuquerque Isotopes	2002
3	Edmonton Trappers	Round Rock Express	2005
4	Ottawa Lynx	Allentown, PA	2008

Affiliate	Team	New Team
<b>Class AAA</b>		
Albuquerque	Marlins	Marlins
Buffalo	Indians	Indians
Charlotte	White Sox	White Sox
Colorado Springs	Rockies	Rockies
Columbus	Yankees	Nationals
Durham	Devil Rays	Devil Rays
Fresno	Giants	Giants
Indianapolis	Pirates	Pirates
Iowa	Cubs	Cubs
Las Vegas	Dodgers	Dodgers
Louisville	Reds	Reds
Memphis	Cardinals	Cardinals
Nashville	Brewers	Brewers
New Orleans	Nationals	Mets
Norfolk	Mets	Orioles
Oklahoma	Rangers	Rangers
Omaha	Royals	Royals
Ottawa*	Orioles	Phillies
Pawtucket	Red Sox	Red Sox
Portland	Padres	Padres
Rochester	Twins	Twins
Round Rock	Astros	Astros
Sacramento	A's	A's
Salt Lake	Angels	Angels
Scranton/W-B	Phillies	Yankees
Syracuse	Blue Jays	Blue Jays
Tacoma	Mariners	Mariners
Toledo	Tigers	Tigers
Tucson	D-Backs	D-Backs



**BEHIND THE SCENES IN THE MINORS:****An Interview with Jason Klein of Plan B. Branding***By Anthony Salazar*

Jason Klein and business partner Casey White of **Plan B. Branding** have created quite a buzz throughout the country with their fun and innovative logos for a number of minor league teams. Their branding services have produced profitable results for their clients. *THE FARM REPORT* caught up with Jason Klein to talk about the more creative side of minor league baseball business.

**Does the club come to you and say, "We need a new image, can you help us out?" Or do you go to them tell them, "We have some ideas that might freshen your look a bit?"**

Generally, clubs come to us with a business problem:

1. Attendance is falling;
2. Sponsorship sales are falling;
3. Retail sales are falling; or
4. Team is up for sale, and management wants to increase the team's worth

Sometimes attendance is down, and the team wants to communicate: "Hey, we have a new ballpark experience here!" So, not only do we develop their identity, we provide custom ideas to improve their experience. This can be anything from developing rituals and traditions, to creating unique concession items, to selecting music and staff uniforms.

Remember, you can have the best logo in the world, but if fans don't have a great time, they won't buy your merchandise. When a fan buys a retail item, they're saying "This experience was great, I want a keepsake." Furthermore, wearing team apparel publicly makes the statement that your experience is worthy enough to identify with.

# Plan B. Branding

## IDEAS COMPANY

**How does your process begin?**

As I mentioned, a brand is the sum total of all of the experiences people have with your club. We begin by visiting the team in their home town, meeting with fans, eating at local restaurants — becoming honorary citizens. We want a firsthand account of local traditions, icons, stories, and the community's personality. We tour the city, absorb the city's color palate, meet with mayors, visit local history museums — anything we can do to immerse ourselves in the community's heart and soul. Then we collaborate with the club on fresh ways to tell the community's story through the ballpark experience. People love being told stories — and they love their hometowns. The ballparks that connect these [things] see the biggest financial results.

**Once you have established the relationship with the club, how do you decide what nicknames to consider? And how does the branding process continue from there? Use the Clearwater Threshers, the Philadelphia Phillies affiliate, as an example.**

When we arrived in Clearwater, they were considering several names. Number one was the Beach Dogs, which people loved or hated, and the Sand Sharks, which kids liked but it wasn't aggressive enough. There were also the Barracudas and King Fish.

We decided to visit the Clearwater docks to ask local fishermen what they're pulling out of the water. One fisherman told us about this mysterious shark with a long tail that beats its prey to death — a Thresher shark. We thought, "That's COOL!" From that point we developed the whole Florida/Ocean experience. We launched the brand by covering the city with billboards that just said, "Clearwater

See Plan B, page 4



## Plan B, from page 3

of tourism received phone calls from concerned citizens. Before the team even had a name, they were part of Clearwater pop culture. It was fantastic.

**Are there differences in approaches you use when a club wants a new name, versus the club that just wants a new look? I'm thinking of the Tulsa Drillers, for example.**

In Clearwater, we had to develop new rituals and traditions, icons and experiences from scratch — the brand was a blank canvas. Tulsa already had a heart and soul, traditions, heritage and even a theme song. The challenge was bringing everything together and communicating the experience and identity in a clear way. Tulsa is the "Original Oil Capital of the World"... oil tycoons, Cadillacs with bull horns, and the mighty pursuit of "Black Gold." So the identity was made to look mythical and indus-

trial. We also produced gas-station attendant uniforms for staff members and resurrected a throwback line of 1950s "Tulsa Oilers" baseball apparel.

**What other minor league clubs have you helped re-brand, and how successful were those projects? Are there more teams in the pipeline?**

We're currently collaborating with 6 franchises on their new looks including Boise and Lakeland. To date, we've developed fresh identities for the Clearwater Threshers, Tulsa Drillers, Swing of the Quad Cities, Fresno Grizzlies, West Virginia Power, Harrisburg Senators and State College Spikes. All of these clubs set franchise retailing and attendance in one year of collaborating with us. We're also collaborating with many more clubs who simply want to enhance their experience.

**Thanks, Jason. We appreciate you taking the time to spend with us! Good luck on your future projects.**

For information on Plan B. Branding, check out their website at: [www.PlanBBranding.com](http://www.PlanBBranding.com)

Affiliate	2006 Team	New Team
<b>Class AA</b>		
Akron	Indians	Indians
Altoona	Pirates	Pirates
Arkansas	Angels	Angels
Binghamton	Mets	Mets
Birmingham	White Sox	White Sox
Bowie	Orioles	Orioles
Carolina	Marlins	Marlins
Chattanooga	Reds	Reds
Connecticut	Giants	Giants
Corpus Christi	Astros	Astros
Erie	Tigers	Tigers
Frisco	Rangers	Rangers
Harrisburg	Nationals	Nationals
Huntsville	Brewers	Brewers
Jacksonville	Dodgers	Dodgers
Midland	A's	A's
Mobile	Padres	D-Backs
Montgomery	Devil Rays	Devil Rays
New Britain	Twins	Twins
New Hampshire	Blue Jays	Blue Jays
Portland	Red Sox	Red Sox
Reading	Phillies	Phillies
San Antonio	Mariners	Padres
Springfield	Cards	Cards
Tennessee	D-Backs	Cubs
Trenton	Yankees	Yankees
Tulsa	Rockies	Rockies
West Tenn	Cubs	Mariners
Wichita	Royals	Royals





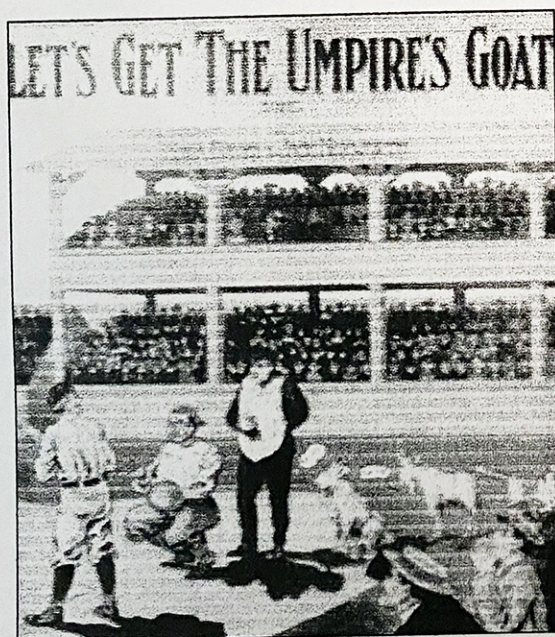
# MILB ATTENDANCE SETS RECORDS IN 2006

TOTAL ATTENDANCE BY LEAGUE	
LEAGUE	TOTAL ATTENDANCE
Pacific Coast League	7,413,505
International League	6,416,200
Eastern League	3,812,907
Mexican League	3,803,467
Sally League	3,795,550
Midwest League	3,298,095
Texas League	2,842,013
Southern League	2,445,800
NY-Penn League	1,751,967
Carolina League	1,601,427
California League	1,573,718
Florida State League	1,078,123
Northwest League	893,821
Pioneer League	661,624
Appalachian League	322,140



TOP TEN ATTENDANCE BY AVERAGE	
TEAM	TOTAL AVERAGE
1. Monterrey Sultans (MXL)	17,990
2. Saltillo Sarape Makers (MXL)	10,634
3. Sacramento River Cats (PCL)	10,256
4. Memphis Redbirds (PCL)	9,752
5. Round Rock Express (PCL)	9,412
6. Pawtucket Red Sox (IL)	9,288
7. Louisville Bats (IL)	9,192
8. Buffalo Bisons (IL)	8,810
9. Potros de Tijuana (MXL)	8,735
10. Dayton Dragons (MWL)	8,447

TOTAL ATTENDANCE BY TEAM	
TEAM	TOTAL ATTENDANCE
1. Monterrey Sultans (MXL)	989,454
2. Sacramento River Cats (PCL)	728,227
3. Memphis Redbirds (PCL)	692,426
4. Round Rock Express (PCL)	677,706
5. Louisville Bats (IL)	652,692
6. Pawtucket Red Sox (IL)	613,065
7. Buffalo Bisons (IL)	607,929
8. Dayton Dragons (MWL)	582,903
9. Albuquerque Isotopes (PCL)	581,308
10. Frisco RoughRiders (IL)	580,480



Affiliate	2006 Team	New Team
<b>Low Class A</b>		
Asheville	Rockies	Rockies
Augusta	Giants	Giants
Beloit	Twins	Twins
Burlington	Royals	Royals
Cedar Rapids	Angels	Angels
Charleston	Yankees	Yankees
Clinton	Rangers	Rangers
Columbus	Dodgers	Devil Rays
Dayton	Reds	Reds
Delmarva	Orioles	Orioles
Fort Wayne	Padres	Padres
Great Lakes	D-Rays	Dodgers
Greensboro	Marlins	Marlins
Greenville	Red Sox	Red Sox
Hagerstown	Mets	Nationals
Hickory	Pirates	Pirates
Kane County	A's	A's
Kannapolis	White Sox	White Sox
Lake County	Indians	Indians
Lakewood	Phillies	Phillies
Lansing	Blue Jays	Blue Jays
Lexington	Astros	Astros
Peoria	Cubs	Cubs
Quad Cities	Cards	Cards
Savannah	Nationals	Mets
South Bend	D-Backs	D-Backs
West Michigan	Tigers	Tigers
West Virginia	Brewers	Brewers
Wisconsin	Mariners	Mariners



**The Farm Report: The Business of Minor League Baseball**

Anthony Salazar, Editor

*The Farm Report: The Business of Minor League Baseball is a newsletter published quarterly by the Society for American Baseball Research (SABR). Inquiries and submissions should be directed to Anthony Salazar at salazar8017@yahoo.com.*

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**The Business of Minor League Baseball**

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**EDITORS NOTE**

Greetings! This is the first issue of **The Farm Report: The Business of Minor League Baseball**. Actually this is more like a resurrection of a previous model that had been let go by the wayside a few years ago when I got busy with other SABR committees. For those of you who do not know me, hello. I'm Anthony Salazar and I chair the Latino baseball committee and edit its publication, **La Prensa del Béisbol Latino**. As it so happens, I have a very profound interest in the minor leagues and its business aspects. By education, I'm an social and urban historian and find the rise of baseball in small town America a fascinating study.

The business of minor league baseball is an interesting proposition, I think, because it touches on two very central SABR committees: the Business of Baseball committee and the Minor League committee. This is why the publication will be distributed to both entities. I trust that what you read, and will continue to read, will provide noteworthy information and entertainment to you. Please feel free to submit contributions, otherwise I will continue to publish articles I find interesting. To submit articles, email me at: salazar8017@yahoo.com. Thanks!

