

A&M Restructures Sales Staff With Regional Emphasis

■ BY DEBORAH RUSSELL

LOS ANGELES—A&M Records' sales department has been restructured to maximize its strategies for breaking acts on the regional and local levels.

Richie Gallo, senior VP of sales and distribution, helms the department, which now revolves around dual sales directors.

A&M's Jeff Dean, most recently sales director in Chicago, is now national sales director based in L.A. The label's Al Marks, formerly Southwest regional sales director, is now national director of field sales. He is based in Atlanta.

Dean oversees a regional staff that features three new appointments: Robin Lunine Kirby, a former PGD staffer, is now West Coast regional sales director; John Kiernan, also from PGD, is now Southeast/Southwest regional sales director; and Tracy Donihoo, formerly of the retail chain Sound Warehouse, is now Midwest regional sales director. Craig Burton remains East Coast regional sales director.

Marks, who will take on a more active role in the formation of sales strategies, will act as a "rover," traveling to various markets in which product starts to hit, and making use of the resources of the regional staffers in each of PGD's nine branch offices around the country. He will coordinate sales, marketing, tour, radio, press, video, and publicity efforts on a specific, market-by-market basis.

"We're trying to identify opportunities for artists and create marketing teams within each region," says Jim Guerinot, senior VP/GM at A&M. "We'll take the corresponding sales and marketing people and match them up with a specific promotion person in each region, to

(Continued on page 52)

A&M RESTRUCTURING

(Continued from page 11)

make sure our marketing efforts come in a timely fashion."

Dean "quarterbacks" the system out of A&M's headquarters, connecting the field sales activities with the national office, while Marks acts "almost as a gunslinger" who goes into a market once the people in the region have gotten the most opportunity out of a project and takes the campaign one step further, Guerinot says.

Changes in the sales department began in late 1993, Guerinot says, as the label began to see a payoff from campaigns for the Gin Blossoms (Billboard, July 31, 1993) and Sheryl Crow (Billboard, April 16), which were created around information provided by such systems as SoundScan and Broadcast Data Systems. With better focus and timing, Guerinot says, the label can synthesize a number of regional success stories into one national hit.

"We still sell records one at a time," Guerinot says. "It's all about little teams of people doing what they can do to break records out of their markets. It's too big a country to do in one fell swoop."