



Internal Review of Renovation Possibilities of the La Crosse Center

La Crosse, Wisconsin

This document contains a brief history of the venue, recent years' types of use of the venue and input from staff and end users of the venue.

Art Fahey
8/19/2013

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To: Brent Smith – La Crosse Center Board Chair
Bill Hoel, Dave Pretasky, Doug Farmer, Pat Zielke, Phil Addis, Dave McDowell,
Katherine Svitasky – City of La Crosse Council Representative – La Crosse Center Board

Tim Kabat – Mayor of the City of La Crosse
Richard Swantz – President of the La Crosse City Council

Reference: La Crosse Center – Convention Center Renovation La Crosse, Wisconsin

Dear Board Members, Mayor, and City Council Members:

The first phase of a renovation plan for the La Crosse Center was to look internally with the staff and some stakeholders of the venue. Staff members, promoters, convention planners, banquet and meeting planners and caterers are a few of the people we reached out to at this time.

The La Crosse Center has become the type of venue it has over the past 33 years. It opened originally opening in 1980 with the arena, the north hall and the Zielke Suite. This venue was constructed with a skywalk to the Radisson Hotel, which still is actively used. In March of 2000 an expansion project was completed, which double the square footage of the facility with addition of South Halls A and B and a Ballroom. This portion of the complex was connected to a skywalk to the La Crosse Center Parking Ramp.

The existing building has a variety of types of spaces for meetings, conventions, sporting events and entertainment. It is truly a multipurpose venue that has been very successful.

In comparison to competing venues in Wisconsin, Minnesota and northeastern Iowa many are newer with a number of amenities that comes with a newer venue.

The La Crosse Center has proven that it has the ability to attract multi-day conventions. Upgrading and remodeling with an eye on expansion would not only strengthen the financial position of the Center, but be a boast to the La Crosse overall economy.

All the best

Art Fahey
Director
La Crosse Center

Business Goals

The La Crosse Center is designed to have an economic impact for the City of La Crosse. This includes driving business to hotels, restaurants and the retail sectors.

Add to the quality of life by bringing in a wide variety of entertainment from national touring artists, Harlem Globetrotters, Monster Trucks, Sesame Street, Farm, Sports and Home shows just to name a few.

The La Crosse Center is to break even financially based on the definition given to the venue. This includes a room tax subsidy, participating in part with the City's Capital Improvement/Equipment Budget and contributing to a payback on debt retirement. The Center has been able to deliver a profitable bottom line for the past 12 years. As competition becomes keener it is important for the Center to not only keep pace, but to have an edge on the competition.

Objectives and Mission

The Center has found that it is best suited to host a number of smaller events versus a steady flow of very large conventions. Even though we have proven the Center can host conventions such as the annual Midwest Organic Farmer's Conference which brings in 3,000 attendees from 40 plus states and 4 countries annually, the strength of the venue has been its ability to host multiple events at one time.

From an entertainment stand point, the Center has been competitive in its ability to attract national touring artists, but more competition has come from festivals, fairs and casinos. The downtown venue has aged since it's opening in 1980 and is in need of remodeling and upgrades.

The Center will host 200 to 240 events in a given year and bring in 350,000 – 400,000 individuals. The La Crosse Center has regularly brought in 25-30 conventions each year. The number of touring concerts the venue hosts has been anywhere from 6 to 15. The ballroom annually hosts approximately 40 wedding receptions.

COMPETITION REMODELING IN THE STATE AND SURROUNDING STATES

Green Bay	KI Center
Wisconsin Dells	Kalahari – Wolf Run – Chula Vista
Oshkosh	Oshkosh Convention Center
Madison	Monona Terrace, Alliant Energy Center, Veteran’s Memorial Coliseum
Milwaukee	Wisconsin Center, Bradley Center
Stevens Point	Sentry World
Appleton	Appleton Convention Center run by the Radisson Paper Valley Hotel.....possibly breaking ground in spring of 2014
Rochester, MN	Rochester Mayo Civic Center
Mankato, MN	City Center Convention Campus
Duluth, MN	DECC
Rockford, IL	Metro Centre

WEDDINGS RECEPTIONS

2013	80 INQUIRIES	48 BOOKINGS
2012	71 INQUIRIES	37 BOOKINGS
2011	55 INQUIRIES	44 BOOKINGS
2010	60 INQUIRES	30 BOOKINGS

ASSOCIATION CONVENTIONS AND CONFERENCES

2013	23 BOOKINGS
2012	27 BOOKINGS
2011	24 BOOKINGS
2010	31 BOOKINGS
2009	29 BOOKINGS
2008	30 BOOKINGS
2007	33 BOOKINGS
2006	32 BOOKINGS
2005	36 BOOKINGS
2004	37 BOOKINGS
2003	34 BOOKINGS
2002	34 BOOKINGS
2001	34 BOOKINGS

2012 EVENT BREAKDOWN

21 - ENTERTAINMENT 68,554 Attendance

1 - Comedians: Ron White

6 - Family Events Monster Trucks
Harlem Globetrotters
Sesame Street
Bull Riding
Circus
Dancing with the Stars (Red Cross)

3 - Theater Mamma Mia
Fiddler on the Roof
Riverdance

6 - Concert Miranda Lambert
TSO
Rob Zombie
Mannheim Steamroller
Elvis Explosion
Josh Turner

4 - Sporting Events NCAA National Wrestling Championships
Milwaukee Bucks Pre Season
Wisconsin Rumble
Cage Fighting

7 -Sporting /Music Midwest Basketball Players Invite Coulee Conference Basketball
WI Pom and Dance Competition Grand River Singers Invite
Basketball Camp Stansfield Team Darts
Stansfield Team Pool

29 - Consumer Trade Shows

Farm Show	Sports and Vacation Show	Custom Auto Show
Home Show	Career Fair	Model Train Show
Science Expo	Holiday Fair	Wedding World
Mardi Gras	Flea Market	Reinhart Food Show
Gun Show	Sportmax Sale	Chamber Career Fest
GL Health Fair	Bridal World	Wedding World
Great Tri-State Rail Sale	Family Fest	Blue Star Sale
Golf Expo	Model Train Show	Science/Math Expo
2x Reinhart Food Show	Chamber Strictly Business Expo	Wedding Party
Holiday Fair		

27 - Associations Conventions/Conferences

Apple Growers	Western WI Education Conf	MOSES Organic Conf
Future Business Leaders	Am Society of Clinical Labs	Precision Graphics
North Central Propane	Rotary District 6250	WI Square Dancers
Health Underwriters	Health Care Engineers	WI Counties
Public Transit	WI Library Association	Assembly of God
Invasive Species	WHEDA	Collegiate Registers
Cooperative Network	MVAAC	WAMO
Juvenile Diabetes Ride	Child Welfare	Milestone Materials
Organic Valley Conf	Mathy Safety Seminars	UWL Physical Therapy

48 - Meetings/Parties/Banquets

UW L Mystery Dinner	Central '92 Reunion	Night Storm
Educational Summit	Holmen HS Banquet	2x Freedom Honor Reunion
UWL Honors Banquet	La Crosse County Meeting	Dahl Ford
Ski Banquet/Awards	Gundersen Lutheran Meeting	Watkins Holiday Party
Chamber Banquet	NCAA Press Conference	NCAA Coaches Banquet
DU Banquet	NASA Banquet	Heart to Heart
WLOP	Logan Prom	Central Prom
Onalaska Prom	Dairyland Power Holiday	Operating Engineers
UWL Holiday Formal	Bishop Callahan Reception	UWL Awards
Ona HS Band	Turkey Trot	Outlaw Training
Suicide Seminar	Festmaster Ball	Tremendous Entertainment
Hmong New Year	GL Employee Picnic	Fall Choir Festival
Catholic Diocese	Ashley Banquet	Riverfront Banquet
Lutheran Women	YWCA	Main Street Ingredients
First Supply	Gundersen Nurses	Dairyland Power Annual Mtg
2x Great Officers		

11 - Community Events

MS Walk	Western College Graduation	Viterbo Graduation
UWL Graduation	UW L Mid Year Graduation	Holmen HS Graduation
Logan Graduation	Central Graduation	Blood Center Blood Drive
Memorial Service	Thanksgiving Day Banquet	

37 – Wedding Receptions

2011 EVENT BREAKDOWN

22 -ENTERTAINMENT 84,546 Attendance

Comedians

Family Events

WWE
Monster Trucks
Harlem Globetrotters
Sesame Street
Bull Riding
Taste of Home
Disney Playhouse
Circus
Dancing with the Stars (Red Cross)

Theater

Concert

Blake Shelton plus rehearsals
Avenged Sevenfold
Korn, Sevendust, Disturbed
Elton John
Hinder
Elvis Explosion
Dierks Bentley
Lady Antebellum
City Prayz

Sporting Events

Spartans Football (counted as one event)
NCAA National Wrestling Championships
Wisconsin Rumble
Bi State Wrestling

9 - Sporting/Music

Midwest Basketball Players Invite	Coulee Conference Basketball
WI Pom and Dance Competition	NCAA Nat'l Wrestling
Grand River Singers Invite	La Crosse Marathon
Basketball Camp	Band Extravaganza
Archery Tournament	

29 -Consumer Trade Shows

Farm Show	Sports and Vacation Show	Custom Auto Show
Home Show	Career Fair	Model Train Show
Science Expo	Holiday Fair	Wedding World
Mardi Gras	Flea Market	Reinhart Food Show
Gun Show	Sportsmax Sale	Bridal World
2x Flea Market	Great State Rail Sale	Family Fest
Golf Expo	Blue Star Sales	Shop Your Colors
Gene-A-Rama	Science/Math Expo	Man Fest
National Sales	Chamber Career Fest	2x Reinhart Foods

24 - Associations Conventions/Conferences

Apple Growers	WI Educational Conference	MOSES Organic Conf
Organic Valley Conf	Wisconsin Cheesemakers	WAMO
WASBO	WI Fire Chiefs	Juvenile Diabetes Ride
Wisconsin Pharmacy	Health Care Engineers	Waste Water Operators
State Telecommunications	Archeology Society	WI School Administrators
Assembly of God	Milestone Materials	Great Officers – 3x
First Supply	Stansfield Team Dart	Stansfield Singles Pool
Mathy Safety		

48 - Meetings/Parties/Banquets

Main Street Ingredients	Altra Credit Union	La Crosse County
Dahl Ford	UWL Baseball Fund Raiser	Habitat for Humanity

GL Medical Staff Meeting	Viterbo Homecoming	Sports Commission Banquet
Ski Banquet	Chamber Banquet	Spring String Concert
Badger Corrugating	NCAA Coaches Banquet	DU Banquet
Kicking Bear Banquet	Stephen's Anniversary	City Safety Meeting
NASA	WLOP	UWL Banquet
Dr. Lehman Event	LACVB Annual Banquet	Dairyland Power
Cancer Survivors	2x Freedom Honor Flight	Symbiotic Meeting
Catbird Reunion	Educational Summit	UWL Mystery Banquet
YWCA	Turkey Trot	Suicide Seminar
Altra Credit Union	Festmaster Ball	Burgermeister Breakfast
Heritage Night	Chamber Banquet	GL Employees Picnic
CMN	Strictly Business Expo	Ashley Banquet
Riverfront Banquet	Kwik Trip Meetings	Breakfast with Santa
UW L Format	Care and Share	Interstate Roofing

14 - Community Events

MS Walk	Onalaska Prom	Central Prom
Logan Prom	WTC Graduation	Viterbo Graduation
Holmen Graduation	Blood Center Blood Drive	Logan Graduation
Central Graduation	Viterbo Master Graduation	Thanksgiving Banquet
UW L Mid Year Graduation	Big Family New Year's Eve Event	

44 - Wedding Receptions

2010 EVENT BREAKDOWN

25 - ENTERTAINMENT 79,652 Attendance

Comedians	Ron White
Family Events	WWE
	Monster Trucks
	Harlem Globetrotters
	Sesame Street
	Bull Riding
	Wisconsin Badger Band
	Taste of Home
	Disney Playhouse
	Circus
Theater	Wizard of Oz
Concert	3 Days Grace
	Willie Nelson
	Seether
	Mannheim Steamroller
	Elvis Explosion
	4x City Prayz
Sporting Events	Spartans Football
	Siren Skating
	Wisconsin Rumble
	Cage Fighting
	Bi State Wrestling

26 - Consumer Trade Shows

Farm Show	Sports and Vacation Show	Custom Auto Show
Home Show	Career Fair	Model Train Show
Science Expo	Holiday Fair	Wedding World
Mardi Gras	3x Flea Market	2x Reinhart Food Show
Gun Show	Athletes Advantage	Bridal Expo
Tattoo Show	Great Rail Sale	Badger Corrugating
Family Fest	Man Fest	Wedding Party
Holiday Fair	Golf Expo	

31 - Associations Conventions/Conferences

Apple Growers	WI Education Conference	Miles Stone Materials
MOSES Conference	Hazel Nut Growers	Mathy Safety Meetings
Organic Valley Meetings	White Privilege Conf	Science Teachers
PTA	WI Legislation	Library Conference
Home Services Conf	Railway Employees	Rotary 6250
Child Maltreatment Conf	North Central Propane	United Methodists Conf
WI School Nutritionists	WI Fire Chiefs	Diabetes Bike Ride
Health Care Engineers	GREAT	WI Towns
Autism Conf	National Veterans	Art Education
Assembly of God	Fund Raising Professionals	WI Park and Rec
Cooperative Networks		

46 - Meetings/Parties/Banquets

La Crosse County	Holiday Inn	Badger Corrugating
GL Medical Staff	Viterbo Homecoming	Ski Banquet
Habitat for Humanity	Sports Commission Banquet	Naval Reserve
Diocese of La Crosse	Candle Wood Suites	Spring String
DU Banquet	NASA Banquet	WLOP
Slim Good Body	GL Celebration/Picnic	Salvation Army
Holmen HS Banquet	Class of '70 Reunion	2x Freedom Fest Reunion
City Safety Mtg	Jazz Fest	Modeling School
2x Night Storm	Ace Hardare	Khaki Ball
FM Ball	Heritage Night	Burgermeister Breakfast
La Crosse County Mtg	Chamber Strictly Business	Ashley Furniture Banquet
State Bar	Dement Ceremony	All City Vocal
YWCA	Thanks Giving Day	Kwik Trip Meetings
Focus Fire	Interstate Roofing	Spartans NYE Event
Dairyland Power Meetings		Renk Seed Corner

7 - Community Events

MS Walk	Western College Graduation	Viterbo Graduation
Holmen HS Graduation	Logan Graduation	Central Graduation
Viterbo Master Graduation		

30 – Wedding Receptions

NEEDS AND GOALS

ARENA

- a) Increase capacity
- b) Change out seating (include larger seats)
- c) Better ADA seating and locations
- d) Additional truck/semi entrance or access
- e) Remodel bathrooms
- f) Remodel and expand concessions stands
- g) Remodel and enlarge dressing rooms
- h) Create a back of house room for catering area
- i) Create a VIP for premium seating or events
- j) Widen outer concourse
- k) Replace inside/outside doors
- l) Replace scoreboard system
- m) Replace basketball hoops and backboard system
- n) Create a business office for promoters / convention planners / trade shows
- o) Aisle rails for guests
- p) Lighting upgrade to include a portable fly system
- q) In house sound system upgrade
- r) Paint and replace hand rails
- s) Grind down and epoxy the arena floor
- t) Remodel and relocate Box Office
- u) Create a Security/First Aid Room

- v) Remodel and or relocate employee break room
- w) Update the exterior arena, north hall and any new structure to blend together
- x) Roof Top Terrace

NORTH HALL

- a. Replace portable walls with consideration for a new configuration of rooms
- b. Remodel / upgrade north hall kitchen area (including support rooms coolers, freezers, bathrooms, washrooms etc.
- c. Upgrade the ceiling system to resemble a ballroom feel (such as recessed chandeliers similar to current ballroom).
- d. New and / or improved in house sound system
- e. New and improved lighting system
- f. Redo the tile floor
- g. New doors inside and out
- h. Registration booth remodel on the 2nd Street level
- i. Built in registration booth on the lower level
- j. Upgrade of the escalator

ZIELKE SUITE

Complete remodel of bathrooms, ceiling, wall and floor treatment along with sound and lights

SOUTH HALL

Remodel South Hall main lobby ticket booth to become a registration booth with windows opening to the 2nd Street entrance

LOBBIES

Over the years the major entrances to the venue have changed --- North, arena, and south hall lobbies have created some conflicts in the flow and circulation for guests. The following suggestions have been brought forth:

- a) Create a universal lobby to accommodate all entrances
- b) Expand out to the "pad" for additional space and create an attractive major lobby, which can be used for multipurpose.

ADMINISTRATION OFFICES

With the potential of the 2nd Street area becoming one common/universal lobby, create a second floor area for office space. This office space would not only be for the Center, but also for other departments with a need such as the Convention and Visitors Bureau.

GENERAL SUGGESTIONS

- a) Way finding signage upgrades – electronic and static
- b) House phones and/or emergency phones strategically placed.
- c) Small cafeteria area for vending or self serve beverages and snacks for guests of the venue
- d) Guest business office area

WISHLIST

- a) Second floor ballroom expansion (or more) either adjacent to the current ballroom and/or above the north hall if the structure can accommodate this expansion
- b) Ballroom on a second floor level over the west parking lot expanding the Zielke Suite
- c) We look to general expansion to secure more events and to retain larger events in the convention and meeting worlds. Our growth with the 2000 expansion was with some larger events, but we saw more capabilities to host multiple events concurrently.