



Mayor: Many reasons to get excited.

By Dave Genereux, Crookston Mayor
Crookston Daily Times

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Crookston — Good afternoon and thank you for taking time to join us for the Crookston Sports Center Dedication. What an exciting time for the City of Crookston and the many project partners that has made this project so successful.

The construction and dedication of the Crookston Sports Center marks the culmination of many blessings for the Crookston community. First and foremost, it provides the opportunity for quality flood protection to the area around the former Civic and Sports Arenas, the birthplace of Crookston's ice skating legacy. With all the different segments of flood projects going on within the community, how can you not get excited about this!

In consultation with Widseth Smith Nolting Project Manager Ron Jasmer, the Crookston Ice Arena Advisory Committee developed a facility layout that is functional, maintainable, and something of which the community can be very proud. The Committee's "Sheets and Seats" design philosophy is complemented by an innovative approach to energy conservation throughout the facility, and its integrated layout will give you an unparalleled spectator, user, and player experience. Now, how can you not get excited about that!

In addition to all of the ice related activities the CSC will support, we are equally excited about other activities that can be accommodated within the facility. I come from a non ice skating family. Today is the first time I ever stood on the ice of an ice rink. This next portion is what brings smiles to me. The turf will provide a venue for local and area teams to practice during the weather challenged spring and fall sports seasons. Our youth will also be able to enjoy additional recreation opportunities such as indoor flag football, indoor soccer, batting cages, golf nets, and a host of other opportunities.

Walking and running will also be accommodated on the ¼ mile walking track on the upper level of the facility. From young to old there is something for everyone. If reducing obesity or having healthier individuals is important to you, than how can you not get excited about that!

The Crookston Sports Center would not exist without the generous financial contributions provided by the State of Minnesota, Midwest Minnesota Community Development Corporation, the City of Crookston, and the Protecting the Legacy fundraising campaign. THANK YOU ALL!

As I reflect, how can you not get excited about going to a two sheet ice facility with its aging antiquated heating and cooling systems, to a three sheet facility with additional community spaces and uses, with better locker rooms for our youth, high school, and university programs and, and as long as the fundraising pledges go come as expected, this facility is PAID FOR! NOW - Get excited about that!

With the time, treasure and talents-many people contributed to the success of the project. Special acknowledgement goes out to State Representative Bernard Lieder and State Senator LeRoy Stumpf; the Minnesota House and Senate Capital Investment Committees; Governor Tim Pawlenty; all of the local elected officials and citizens who visited and wrote letters to legislators in Saint Paul; members of the Ice Arena Advisory Committee for offering stakeholder feedback in the design process; the University of Minnesota-Crookston; Crookston Public Schools; KROX and the Crookston Times for their extensive media coverage; Widseth Smith Nolting for their design leadership; and the construction team for making the dream a reality.

I want to take a moment to thank all of our City staff who worked diligently to make the CSC a community asset. I hesitate to single out folks individually less I forget someone, but this is important.

Aaron Parish, City Administrator for the City of Crookston, Aaron did a good job, no a great job in cementing all the pieces together! From financial planning, to lobbying at the state capitol, to designing the facility, to the bidding process, to ground breaking, to construction, and finally to this grand opening. He was instrumental in cementing all the parts together and doing what asked of him by the City Council. — Thank you Aaron

Betty Arvidson, City Clerk-Treasurer was instrumental in putting together a financial design, a plan if you will, that was acceptable to the State of MN for the use of its \$10M grant, a plan that was acceptable to meet the federal tax laws so we could use the New Market Tax Credits, and finally a financial package simple enough that even I could understand. Betty had a very tight time line to get all the pieces of the puzzle together. If you ever worked with government red tape, you will begin to appreciate the stress and frustration she went through. Betty blazed a path, a template if you will that others in the state will follow. - Thank you Betty.

Dan Johanneck, Director of Crookston Housing and Economic Development Authority (CHEDA) — Dan was instrumental in putting us in touch with the Midwest Minnesota Community Development Corporation. The \$2M of new market tax credits made the difference of a two sheet facility to a three sheet facility. Up to that point we were at a cross road and seriously looking at the two sheet facility. In addition Dan was very helpful in leading CHEDA to form the Limited Liability Corporation. Without the LLC, this whole project would have unraveled. For those of you who don't remember this tid bit, the LLC technically owns and operates this facility for seven years and leases it back to the City. — Thank you Dan.

Scott Kleven and Scott Riopelle, Director and Asst Director of the Park and Rec Department — both have been instrumental in getting the details completed within the facility. From programming to light switches, it all has to be checked and double checked. You don't

close one facility and move to another without missing a beat without a lot of hard work. – Thank you Scott Kleven and Scott Riopelle.

Craig Morgan, man on many hats – owner of Titan Machinery, President of the CHEDA Board of Directors, Member of the Blue Line Club, and Leader of the Protecting the Legacy Fundraising Campaign. This has been one heck of a successful fundraising effort. With his leadership and the help of others on the Protecting the Legacy committee, the community will have a facility equipped with amenities that we can be proud of. – Thank you Craig.

Finally, I want to extend my personal appreciation to the City Council, the Park Board, CHEDA Board, and the Blue Line Club for their role in developing policies that will make the facility successful. Again, thank you for coming, and enjoy all that the CSC has to offer! Now get excited about that!

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Dave, I wish you would have been clear in your speech that the 'State of Minnesota' and the 'City of Crookston' boils down to hard working folks who now have less to spend at their own discretion. When you state entities like you did it sounds so distant when it is not.

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