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### **Fox Cities Champion Center Moves Forward**

*Indoor Sports Facility Planned for Town of Grand Chute will be funded by hotel room tax and focus on attracting visitors to the region*

**Fox Cities, WI.** – In December 2017, the Town of Grand Chute approved a gift of land, valued at \$1 million, to the Fox Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau for the development of a premier indoor sports facility. Fast forward to today and the facility, now called the Fox Cities Champion Center is moving forward toward a July groundbreaking.

The Fox Cities Champion Center, scheduled to open in Fall 2019, will be funded through hotel room tax and is being developed with a “tourism first” mission. The new sports facility will focus on attracting sports teams from outside the Fox Cities, providing them with the opportunity to participate in tournaments and events.

The land is located in the Town of Grand Chute near the northeast corner of the intersection of McCarthy Road and County Road GV. The Fox Cities Champion Center will be located less than two miles from I-41, the Fox River Mall, Fox Cities Stadium, hotels and dozens of restaurants.

As building design and financing continued through the spring, the ownership structure has been modified to take advantage of better municipal financing.

“The initial thought was that the facility would be owned by Fox Cities Sports Development, a 501 c3 subsidiary of the Fox Cities Convention Visitors Bureau, however as we explored financing options, it became clear that bonding and municipal financing were the best options, and this predicated municipal ownership,” said Pam Seidl, Executive Director of the Fox Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau.

The Town of Grand Chute will now own the facility and finance it through its Community Development Authority.

“From an economic development perspective, this project makes sense for the Town of Grand Chute and anything we can do to bring it to reality brings value to the Town,” Robert Buckingham, Grand Chute community development director, said. “A sports facility like this needs to be in Grand Chute, where the highest concentration of hotels, retail and restaurant establishments are located. The McCarthy Road site provides close access to the interstate and proximity to the Fox River Mall/hotel corridor. Transforming the land into a tourism destination is ideal for what we want to accomplish in the coming years.”

A study commissioned by the Fox Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau demonstrates this type of indoor sports facility will bring an estimated economic impact of up to \$8.9 million in the first year. The Fox Cities Champion Center will be a combination of ice and hard-court surfaces. A final design of the facility will be announced in summer 2018.

“We are extremely thankful to the Town of Grand Chute for continuing their support of this facility, as the project would most likely have stalled without their agreement to own and facilitate the financing” said Seidl,. “Grand Chute, along with the other nine municipalities that have agreed to provide hotel room tax for facility development, recognizes the impact this venue will have to draw thousands of tourists to our region.”

While tourism is a primary focus of the new facility, other local groups are looking forward to having additional space for the demand they are currently experiencing. The facility will complement other venues in the area to help fulfill unmet local needs during time when there are no tourism events.

Municipalities supporting the initiative through the collection of room tax include: The City of Appleton, Village of Fox Crossing, Town of Grand Chute, City of Kaukauna, Village of Kimberly, Village of Little Chute, City of Menasha, City of Neenah, Town of Neenah and the Village of Sherwood.

The Fox Cities Champion Center will be operated by the not-for-profit Fox Cities Sports Development, Inc., a subsidiary of the Fox Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau. This operating structure was created to help maximize the tourism impact of the facility and provide the opportunity for profits from the facility to impact other projects that could benefit the community.

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### **About the Bureau**

The Fox Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau is an economic development organization that strengthens the Fox Cities by attracting visitors in the convention, sports and leisure markets through sales, marketing and destination development.

Visitor spending in the Fox Cities was more than \$470 million in 2017. The Fox Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau estimates that this direct spending created jobs and \$102 million in income for Fox Cities Residents.

Fox Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau

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