

Multiplex to get ice plant

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DAILY NEWS

There will be an ice plant in the Event Centre at the South Peace Community Multiplex.

And the City hopes to have a Jr. A hockey franchise as the building's main tenant.

At Monday's regular council meeting, it was announced that the EnCana Event Centre portion of the Multiplex has been altered to include an ice plant and a concrete floor after a new Memorandum of Understanding was signed with Arizona-based Global Entertainment Cooperation.

The 6,500 seat centre was originally designed to have a dirt floor. However, as part of the management deal, Global Entertainment has agreed in principle to finance an estimated \$3 million of

capital improvements that will include the ice plant, a digital scoreboard and clock, a dozen suites, and additional change rooms.

"One of the things that they wanted when they contacted us, in order for them to make it viable, was to have an ice surface because they want to secure a Jr. A hockey franchise for the city," said Mayor Wayne Dahlen shortly after making the announcement. "We said, 'well we don't have the money'. So, they have guaranteed us that they will pick up the tab for the \$3 million in additional costs to satisfy their requirement."

Dahlen stressed that the improvements will not cost the City or taxpayers any more money.

"We were approached by Global who put forward the business case that

adding the ice plant would open up the opportunity to stage many more events which would keep operating costs at a minimum," said Dahlen. "We wanted to be fiscally prudent so we requested staff to complete a review of the proposal and based on that advice we have signed this MOU with Global Entertainment."

The MOU includes Global's commitment for the capital improvements as well as the framework for an agreement that the City will receive 70 per cent of net revenue from the facility. Global will be compensated four per cent of the gross revenue and 30 per cent of the net revenue for managing the facility.

The term of the agreement is likely to be set at 10 years with an option to renew for another 10 years.

No binding legal deal has been reached yet; the MOU is the basic framework of the eventual contract.

Global Entertainment Cooperation is a subsidiary of International Coliseums Company. ICC is the third largest facility management company in the United States and last summer completed a deal to manage a centre in Penticton.

The company, which boasts several Canadian investors, is also the operator of the Central Hockey League, which owns and operates 18 franchises throughout the southern United States.

Dahlen said that the deal would not affect current leases at the Memorial Arena, and that Global Entertainment would set the price for rentals of the EnCana Centre.

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Taxpayers won't be burdened

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"If somebody else wants to use that facility they would have to negotiate with Global," said Dahlen. "(The deal) will allow us assurance that taxpayers in this city will not have to be burdened with the cost of operating that facility. So I think it is a good deal, it is very

exciting."

Councillor Calvin Kruk, who is challenging Dahlen for the city's top job in the upcoming municipal election, said he agreed with the deal.

"Here is a professional company that is willing to take on the risk," said Kruk. "I think it is a good thing. The

only thing I have ever taken issue with about the Multiplex is that we need to have accountability with the original numbers. This is a huge project, probably the biggest thing the South Peace has seen since the Alaska Highway, and so getting it into the hands of professionals is a good thing."