

Title: “The Future of Ice” Campaign for Hobbs Ice Arena

Number and Title of Category: #9b – Best Practices in Fundraising and Development

University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

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General Description

The UW-Eau Claire Foundation is serving as the fiscal agent and campaign coordinator of a community-wide initiative to renovate and expand the Hobbs Ice Arena in Eau Claire, which is home to the UW-Eau Claire men’s and women’s hockey teams. The Future of Ice Campaign is a unique community partnership where the various user groups of Hobbs are working together, in partnership with the city, to raise private funds that will match public financing to provide a greatly improved venue for figure skating and hockey programs in the community. The consortium consists of the Eau Claire figure Skating Club, Youth Hockey Association, Eau Claire Area School District high school hockey programs, UW-Eau Claire men’s and women’s hockey teams and the City of Eau Claire Parks and Rec Department.

The City of Eau Claire owns Hobbs, but it has challenged the members of the Ice Sports Consortium to raise \$2 million in private support for the \$6 million project. The city is expected to finance the remaining balance with bonds and will cover the debt service. The city already has committed \$400,000 in planning money.

The Future of Ice Campaign was officially kicked off on January 31, 2008, with a public announcement at a major high school hockey game between the community’s two rival high schools. We developed two printed materials – a black and white folder that was distributed to those attending the January 31st game – and a four-color campaign brochure and case statement that is being distributed during solicitation calls with major donors. In addition, a comprehensive web site was developed that is located on the UW-Eau Claire web site and linked to the web sites of the various consortium members.

Since the campaign was announced five months ago, more than \$750,000 has been committed toward the \$2 million goal. While the project is still ongoing throughout the remainder of 2008, its initial momentum has been impressive.

A crowning accomplishment in the endeavor has been the visit to Eau Claire by the Stanley Cup.

An Eau Claire native and scout for the Detroit Red Wings has been following the Future of Ice Campaign. He wanted to show his appreciation for his community and help raise public awareness and support for the project. Donations were accepted and photos sold with the net proceeds going to the campaign.

The greatest strength of this endeavor has been our success in holding together the Ice Sports Consortium. Because the groups at times have differing goals and perspectives, there have been various stages in the journey where consortium members could drift away. The members have realized the collective benefit of working together for the greater community good and are dedicated to the successful conclusion of this endeavor.

This model of community collaboration and cooperation represents a new paradigm for developing and building (or renovating) facilities in our community. There now is a collective belief in our community that any new major community facilities such as a performing arts center, arena, convention center, etc., will be constructed through a collaborative partnership.

Goals and Objectives

- Raise \$2 million so that city of Eau Claire will finance \$4 million; in five months more than \$750,000 has been committed.
- Create a community collaborative group that can collective work together toward a unified end
- Develop campaign materials that tell the story and demonstrate great partnership among the consortium members without giving preferential treatment to one group over another.
- Provided the appropriate amount of leadership and support for a community project without creating the perspective that this is only a university project.
- Engage a broad and sometime diverse inner circle in a positive fashion so that there is ownership and results.

Linking to Institutional Goals

UW-Eau Claire just completed its strategic plan. A major component articulates the university's role in fostering civic leadership as a means by which we connect the university with the community to link needs and resources and communicate opportunities. This project is an excellent example of how we are linking needs and resources for a collective benefit for the entire community. This project is very closely aligned with the university's strategic missions.

Audience

- Individuals, businesses and organizations in the community that not only are interested in figure skating or hockey but that also understand the value of the facility as an important community resource.

Total number of professional and support staff who worked on the program, use of free-lancers, outside agencies or volunteers – 3

Project Budget

The total project cost was XXXX, which included printing of both of the Future of Ice publications.

Special Circumstances

The unique challenge, which is referenced above, was the task of keeping the consortium together and the message consistent. We believe we have accomplished that goal.

Results/Effectiveness

This is an ongoing campaign, but after 5 months of active solicitation, more than \$750,000 has been committed. Several more proposals are pending. A Wisconsin Junior Hockey league just got permission to play in Hobbs this year. The fees this new league will pay will help support the Ice Sports Consortium in keeping ice fees at a reasonable level to ensure accessibility.