

## **\$1.5-million pledge gives boost to OSC**

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<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/78/15-million-pledge-gives-boost-to-osc/>

A pledge of \$1.5 million from the Oshkosh Convention and Visitors Bureau provides another boost for the Oshkosh Sports Complex — one of the premier community athletic facilities in the Midwest.

As the largest single pledge in the history of the University for a collaborative community project, the \$1.5 million pledge — to be funded over seven to 10 years — launches the second phase of fundraising for the Oshkosh Sports Complex. The successful completion of the first phase of the endeavor resulted in \$5.5 million in enhancements for the facility. The second phase seeks to raise \$3.7 million and will include construction of a plaza entrance, renovated and expanded locker rooms, coaching offices, classrooms, restroom facilities and facility parking.

“The Oshkosh Sports Complex is already a great community asset,” said Darryl Sims, UW Oshkosh athletics advancement officer. “The facilities that are created or improved as a result of this gift will make the complex one of the nation’s finest for multi-sport use. We can’t thank the Oshkosh Convention and Visitors Bureau and the city’s hotel operators enough. Without their support, this community asset would not be possible.”

The facility is a unique collaborative endeavor of the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, the Unified Catholic Schools, the Oshkosh Area School District and the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh Foundation. The innovative partnership demonstrates how public and private organizations can collaborate to advance and achieve goals while saving taxpayers the expense of constructing and maintaining duplicate athletic facilities and venues.

Already the complex has brought national attention to Oshkosh. In 2007, the NCAA held its national Division III men’s and women’s track meets at the facility, during which more than 3,000 room nights were sold in Oshkosh; an estimated 1,000 room nights were sold outside of the city. The NCAA is expected to return in 2008. Additionally, the Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (WIAC) holds its conference meets at the complex, and the Fox Valley Association brings student athletes from Appleton, Fond du Lac, Kaukauna, Kimberly, Menasha, Neenah and Oshkosh to the facility for its conference event.

Based on economic impact models and other projections, it is anticipated the Oshkosh Sports Complex will generate \$25 million for the local economy.

“Over the years, taxpayers are saving millions due to the nationally unique collaboration between the University and public and private high school and middle schools,” said UW Oshkosh Chancellor Richard H. Wells. “The collaboration allows student athletes to compete in a safe, world-class facility. It is imperative that we continue to move forward with the second phase of the project.”

The ability of the Oshkosh Sports Complex to serve as an economic engine was a major factor in the

Oshkosh Convention and Visitor's Bureau's decision to commit to the project.

The complex currently features a state-of-the-art football/soccer field featuring synthetic turf designed to reduce injury, which is considered to be Wisconsin's third-most valued field behind Lambeau Field and Camp Randall Stadium; a renovated stadium; softball and baseball fields; and an Olympic-quality outdoor track. Prior to \$5.5 million in renovations, the facility hosted 30 events each year. Currently, the Oshkosh Sports Complex hosts approximately 119 events each year.

"The Oshkosh Convention and Visitors Bureau is proud to support this project," said Wendy Hielsberg, executive director of the Oshkosh Convention and Visitors Bureau. "We have analyzed past attributes in the community and determined no single project would have the ability to impact tourism the way the Oshkosh Sports Complex would. Once complete, this top-rate facility would draw attendees from all over the Midwest, making Oshkosh a sports destination. The Oshkosh Convention and Visitors Bureau's core mission is to enhance the economic impact of our community through tourism. Funding this project fulfills that commitment."