

Oshkosh Area Community Foundation commits \$500,000 matching pledge for OSC

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The Oshkosh Sports Complex fundraising efforts received a boost from the Oshkosh Area Community Foundation to support completion of phase two of the Oshkosh Sports Complex. The Community Foundation pledged \$500,000 over 10 years with a caveat – the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh must raise \$1.5 million in the next 90 days to receive the pledge.

“The Community Foundation saw the opportunity to propel this project forward by offering a matching pledge with a timeline,” said Bill Wyman, chairman of the Oshkosh Area Community Foundation. “We hope this will encourage others to step up and support this valuable project.”

If the UW Oshkosh Foundation is successful in meeting the \$1.5 million match, the project will have \$3.65 million of the \$4.3 million needed to fund the second phase of renovations, which includes the construction of a plaza entrance, renovated and expanded locker rooms, coaching offices, classrooms, an improved softball field, restroom facilities and parking.

“Already the Oshkosh Sports Complex is a superb facility,” said Al Ackerman, UW Oshkosh athletics director. “However, the second phase of improvements will make the complex a national model for such venues.”

The complex, which saw \$5.5 million in phase one enhancements, currently features the state-of-the-art J.J. Keller Field, a football/soccer field featuring synthetic turf designed to reduce injury. The field is considered to be Wisconsin’s third-most valued behind Lambeau Field and Camp Randall Stadium, according to Darryl Sims, athletics advancement officer. Other features include a renovated stadium; softball and baseball fields; and an Olympic-quality outdoor track.

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. Additionally, the Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (WIAC) holds 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. Additionally, Oshkosh Lourdes High School hosts its trailways conference competition at the complex.

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

“This complex offers significant benefit for the greater Oshkosh community,” said Eileen Connolly-Keesler, Oshkosh Area Community Foundation President and CEO. “Not only does it support athletics in our area schools, but it also has the potential to attract large-scale sporting events and tourism dollars.”

The facility is a unique collaboration between the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, the Oshkosh 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.

“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.

“This new pledge helps us propel our campaign forward by providing a match for dollars raised in the next 90 days. Because it is an all-or-nothing pledge – meaning we will not receive any of the \$500,000 if we don’t raise the full \$1.5 million – we are confident that the community will ensure that this opportunity does not pass.”

For more information about the Oshkosh Sports Complex, visit <http://www.titans.uwosh.edu/OshkoshSportsComplex/>.