



FIELDHOUSE OF DREAMS

KOSCIUSKO LEADERSHIP ACADEMY
CLASS OF 2023

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Introduction

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services “Move Your Way” campaign, The Hoosier Enduring Legacy Program (HELP) Initiative, and the K21 Health Foundation are three examples of programs/initiatives/funding that emphasize the importance of health and wellness for Kosciusko County residents. While HELP funds are specific to smaller scale and rural communities, their mission and goal inspired the idea of a larger facility.

With a singular, large-scale facility both citizens' health and the local economy could be impacted on a grander scale. The “Fieldhouse of Dreams” was proposed as a means to focus on impacting the early years of youth health and wellness development leading to lifelong habits for individuals, creating an economic boost for our county yearly, and filling the gap that inclement weather creates for Northern Indiana throughout the year.

The “Fieldhouse of Dreams” is currently that, dreams. The vision is grand and can escalate based on each individual’s goal. Our team met with community leaders, visited regional facilities, distributed a survey, and investigated newly proposed facilities in surrounding communities to best draft this whitepaper and create a playbook for next steps.

Community Feedback

To answer the question, “what does the Kosciusko County community need within an indoor facility?” Our team strategically targeted community leaders to gather anecdotal information that would support or dissuade the pursuit of this project. Within a few conversations, it became abundantly clear that a facility is wanted, yet the vision is different based upon each sector and/or group. Leaders within the community included:

Jessica Barger, Executive Director Lakeland Youth Center

Chad Briscoe, Athletic Director Grace College

Drew Flamm, President Grace College

Mike Hagy, Executive Director CCAC

Lisa Harman, President & CEO Live Well Kosciusko

Matt Metzger, Kosciusko County Park Board Member

Stephanie Overbey, CEO Kosciusko County Community Foundation

Rob Parker, President/CEO Kosciusko County Chamber of Commerce

Kevin Roberts, Provost Grace College

Craig Snow, CEO of Cedar Holdings and Indiana State Congressman

Jim Swanson, CEO Parkview Warsaw YMCA

Justin Taylor, City Planner Warsaw

Alan Tio, CEO Kosciusko Economic Development Corporation (KEDCO)

In general, community leaders appeared to be interested and supportive of this idea. Several expressed that this would be a positive asset for our community. Having an indoor facility could provide substantial financial contributions to our county. The common questions included who would take on this project and what is the sustainability plan to ensure longevity? Throughout this paper, we will begin to answer these valid questions while we explore our vision of an indoor recreational facility and its potential partners.

We also created and distributed the “Kosciusko County Recreational Facility Community Survey” that received 297 responses. This survey was informational in understanding what the general public believes is needed within a new facility and even surprising in what is being prioritized. (Appendix A).

We learned that 87% of respondents believe that Kosciusko County does not have enough indoor recreational facilities to meet the community’s needs. Additionally, 61% of respondents reported that they either frequently or occasionally travel outside of Kosciusko County to access indoor complexes. The most common activities that residents leave the county to access indoor facilities include soccer, baseball/softball, and basketball.

A startling 89.6% of survey respondents stated that “Yes,” Kosciusko County is in need of additional indoor recreational facilities. Moreover, 94.6% indicated that they would either be very or somewhat supportive if Kosciusko County would engage in a plan to provide additional facilities. When asked what activities most need an indoor facility in Kosciusko County, the results were overwhelmingly in favor of pickleball courts, soccer fields, basketball courts, baseball/softball facilities, and rock-climbing walls.

Results were consistent throughout the survey, indicating that respondents believe there are not enough indoor facilities to meet recreational and leisure needs, not enough indoor facilities to meet the needs of competitive athletic programs, and not enough indoor facilities to attract major events or tournaments. Respondents also indicated an interest in having a multi-purpose facility, unrelated to

athletics, would benefit the community. Open-ended comments gathered by the survey were overwhelmingly supportive and encouraging of this project. Additionally, we gathered a list of email addresses for individuals who were interested in either receiving more information for this project or potentially partnering in this endeavor (Appendix B).

Vision

Group members have personally traveled to numerous facilities over the years and saw the potential that a facility within Kosciusko County could become. The Plex North located in Fort Wayne, Indiana has two indoor soccer fields and “hosts soccer matches, flag football matches and a variety of other sports matches and programs all throughout the week, year-round.” The facility is approximately 45,000 square-feet and also houses a concession stand, the Summit City Soccer shop, and restrooms.

The Plassman Athletic Center at Turnstone in Fort Wayne, Indiana has a 75,000 square-foot fieldhouse that contains a 230-meter track and four collegiate-sized basketball courts. The athletic center also houses “locker rooms with showers and restrooms specially designed for easy use by athletes with disabilities”. Visit Fort Wayne listed 6 events Turnstone is hosting, bringing in just under 14,000 visitors to Fort Wayne that will capitalize on the space within the fieldhouse (Appendix C). These events are both hosted by Turnstone and outside organizations using their space.

The SportONE Fieldhouse in Fort Wayne, Indiana is projected to bring in a minimum of 25,000 visitors to Fort Wayne in 2023 with just 4 events listed. Citing Visit Fort Wayne, the economic impact of those 4 events, along with 9 others, will be \$7million. This facility “is a 57,000 square-foot multi-use facility that is professionally designed to be a premier indoor sports destination for competitions, leagues, tournaments and camps.”

The vision of a multi-purpose facility would grant a variety of ways to impact community members through their health and wellness journey. Areas that could create an economic impact could include hosting tournaments/events, creating leagues, opening the facility for outside rentals, and establishing new trade shows/conferences. The Plassman Athletic Center is a prime example of doing each of these activities as the building was established for the use of Turnstone, a “not-for-profit organization providing a comprehensive continuum of supportive services addressing the unique needs of people with disabilities and their families.”

Turnstone clients have access to the facilities during the week, while most weekends the courts are rented to outside operators for events. The Indiana Tech track and field team practiced at

Turnstone's Plassman Athletic Center for many years under a long-term agreement that saw the team win several NAIA indoor track and field championships. Community members had access to the indoor track for walk/run hours and the weight-room when not in use by Turnstone athletes. Using this facility as one of many models, we believe Kosciusko county could create a similar community-centered space.

The playbook for this structure would incorporate the anecdotal and survey results that specified the things of interest to be added. The size of the structure would be dependent on the number of areas included, such as turf, hitting cages, basketball/volleyball courts, adaptations for pickleball courts, and necessities such as concession stands, locker rooms, classrooms, with the potential for a health network to add in their own space. It should also be investigated on the possibility for such a space to hold conventions and trade shows.

So where should this facility be placed? Evaluating survey results, 75.8% respondents believe that a new fieldhouse should be located in Warsaw, with 8.4% believing that Winona Lake should house this facility. One key factor to consider is the Route 30 Corridor and accessibility to major roadways in the county. Other opportunities within the community may arise as development is projected to happen near CCAC, the County Fairgrounds, the Airport, and along the Route 30 Corridor.

Sustainability Partners

The likelihood of this facility finding success, will require many groups joining together to create strategic partnerships and defined operating expectations. The Parkview Warsaw YMCA, Kosciusko County Park Board, City-County Athletic Complex (CCAC), and Grace College have all shown an interest in running a large-scale multi-purpose facility.

Grace College could be the first entity to add to this endeavor. Thanks to the activity and investment of Lilly Endowment Inc. a new initiative *College and Community Collaboration* is open to the "35 Indiana colleges and universities that offer four-year degree programs and have physical campuses in the state are eligible to apply for grants through this initiative."

Through its initiative, College and Community Collaboration, Lilly Endowment Inc. is offering interested Indiana colleges and universities the opportunity to apply for grants to help them envision and undertake collaborative projects with community stakeholders that enhance the quality of life and place in their surrounding communities.

This new initiative would hit upon the need for greater facilities that focus on the health and wellness of Kosciusko County. Potential partners that have already approached Grace College as they pursue this grant are: K21 Health Foundation, Parkview Warsaw YMCA, and Parkview, Lutheran, Goshen, Mercy, IU Health Networks.

With their non-profit backgrounds along with a health and wellness focus, the Parkview Warsaw YMCA and CCAC could be prime candidates for overseeing the operations of such a large-scale facility. After presenting to the Kosciusko County Park Board, group members did state they were interested in a new facility that could connect the communities within the county.

In February, after the Kosciusko County Park Board Meeting, where the “Fieldhouse of Dreams” was presented to the park board, Triad Associates Inc. reached out to discuss the possibility of working with the park board and creating the fieldhouse. Triad Associates Inc. is an engineering and architecture firm based out of Indianapolis, Indiana that prioritizes architectural design and engineering, park design and municipal building design.

Many youth sport programs would also be impacted by the construction of a multi-purpose fieldhouse. Within Kosciusko county there are programs for soccer, baseball, softball, volleyball, basketball, football, dance and cheer. Working with organizations such as Agaitas, Young Tigers, Attack, Wave, 43 Boys, Empowered OVC, and Little League just to name a few, could lead to a generational impact for athlete development, but also overall health and well-being. The cycle of educating youth to give back could start within this space.

At this juncture, many groups are priming to join the discussion and want to have a seat at the table. To discover the true impact a facility would have on Kosciusko County, we would need to identify the purpose behind the facility and a mission that partners could accomplish. For long-term success, the facility would be evaluated on both its community health and well-being initiatives and economic impact.

Community Impact

Community Impact is the action of deliberately improving one’s surroundings – whether that is through directly changing behaviors, education, or contributing to the community financially. As we have laid out in our study, there are a multitude of options and business partners that have an interest in moving forward with a facility. Though all the options will have a financial impact on our community,

each has their own specific impact that could look different from one another. If built, the local and state economies would benefit from ongoing operations of the proposed facilities in several ways, including the following tangible and intangible benefits.

- Enhancing the overall quality of life and livability of our area
- Promote healthy living through youth sports
- Attracting a critical mass of visitors annually that supports area businesses
- Increasing the development of elite-level sports participants in our area
- Offering an attractive venue to residents and visitors that hosts diverse event activities
- Enhancing the area's image as a destination
- Capitalizing on existing tourism efforts
- Broadening market reach to new visitors
- Attracting visitors during off-peak months
- Receiving increased State, regional and national media exposure through hosting tournaments
- Serving as a catalyst for future economic development in the area
- Broadening the area's economic base
- Producing economic and fiscal impacts
- Generating private sector development and funding

Economic and Fiscal Impact

Though it is hard to quantify the exact impact that will be brought to our community with the creation of the facility, there is a general methodology and historical data that we can use to make assumptions. We are a community highly invested in the tourism and travel industry. With a sports and convention focus to our study, a facility of this magnitude would have the ability to draw tremendous financial impact from local and non-local residents. The economic impact isn't driven just by Direct Spending (dollars that are directly spent on goods and services), we also need to account for the Indirect Spending that takes place as well. Indirect Spending reflects the re-spending of the initial or direct expenditures, or business to business transactions required to satisfy the Direct Spending. For example, an attendee's direct expenditure at a restaurant requires the restaurant owner to purchase food and items from suppliers. The portion of these restaurants that source supplies locally are impacting our local economy indirectly. Another indirect impact that a facility locally would have on our economy is

the dollars spent by local residents that no longer need to leave our community for another to participate in services that our facility would satisfy.

According to a study that was completed by the Kosciusko County Visitors Bureau, the tourism and travel industry contributed \$200 million to the Kosciusko County economy. This figure is up from \$184.5 million in 2017. In addition, the tourism and travel industry has created 2,161 jobs in our county and provides more than \$39 million dollars in wages that most directly stay in our community. In comparison, it is estimated that local residents contributed an additional \$21.2 million to our local tourism industry and generated 254 jobs.

The industry has also contributed 47.1 million in tax revenue, of which 9.3 million stayed in our local Kosciusko County community. A large portion of the tax growth during this time has to do with the impact of the Indiana Innkeepers Tax. The Innkeepers tax is a tax on those businesses that are engaged in the business of renting or furnishing accommodations in fewer than 30 day increments. This means that travelers that spend money in our community on lodging (hotels, motels, resorts, rental properties), rental on all banquet and gymnasium rentals, and campsites receive a 5% Innkeepers tax that directly impacts our community. In 2022 Kosciusko County collected \$902,386.12 with execution of the Innkeepers Tax. Kosciusko county ranked 15th overall out of the 92 Indiana counties in Innkeepers Tax revenue.

It is also estimated by the Visitors Bureau that visitors are spending their dollars in the following ways...

- 34% - Food and Beverage
- 23% - Attractions
- 17% - Lodging
- 16% - Shopping
- 7% - Travel
- 3% - Souvenirs

All of these dollars spent will continue to drive economic prosperity in our community and impact the overall perception of our county.

For tangible comparison, Mishawaka, IN has an approved plan and resources to construct a 191,000 square foot fieldhouse that includes 10 courts (dual sport usability), two indoor turf fields and a

14,000 square foot tenant building that would serve as additional convention space. Card and Associates, the development firm for this project, estimates that the facility will be able to generate 30-40 events a year that will bring in tournaments of youth and children's teams alone. This number would not include any additional convention and weekly local usage that would be generated. The assumption is that this type of facility will be able to draw visitors from local communities as well as from regional surrounding states (Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio). They estimate that the facility could bring in as much as \$64 million in economic impact locally.

Though our project does not project to be as large of a facility as being completed by the Mishawaka community, the economic impact of building a facility of this kind in our community would be immense.

Talent Attraction Impact

One of the largest challenges that faces our County currently is talent attraction. Also, talent attraction is one of the biggest needle movers when it comes to business retention in our community. Kosciusko County is growing and in turn employers are increasingly seeking talent to fill open roles within their organizations. KEDCO (Kosciusko Economic Development Corporation) estimates that the industries in our community create 400+ new jobs each year. Given that, seeking to attract talent from outside of our community is imperative to the future success of our local business and our community as we do not have the talent infrastructure to meet the growing talent need. At the same time, job seekers are looking for the right fit to have a fulfilling career and life where they live. To be successful in growing our community from a talent perspective, we have to be adept at marketing our community. One of the easiest ways to market ourselves will be by communicating our diverse amenities.

When looking at Grace College as a sustainability partner specifically, this would be a creative way to attract and retain talent in our community. Though having a facility supported by Grace could look very different from a Municipal support facility, the athletic Fieldhouse would be a great way to attract students to live in our community. As a county we have seen tremendous success in the retention of Grace students in our community after graduation. They are in the unique position of being able to live in and experience all the Kosciusko County has to offer prior to making a career/life decision as to where they want to live. As a community we should be invested in helping Grace College be successful and attract students as we continue to have the opportunity to retain those former students

and plug them into our workforce and community. A Fieldhouse athletic attraction would certainly help to continue to modernize Grace College and attract talent.

A Multi-purpose Fieldhouse will continue to diversify our existing amenity offerings to be able to continue to build our appeal to outside talent to make Kosciusko their home. We would expect that a facility like this would not only help with attracting visitor utilization, but as well be a marketing piece expressing how progressive we are as a community.

Recommendation

Though we identify that this project is at the very beginning of its infancy and at this point is a “dream”. We have found through our research that there is a large support for a multi-purpose facility in our community. We have sought to create a playbook for what a multi-purpose facility in our community would look like. We have found that there is not one look to this type of project as the eventual sustainability partner is going to influence the eventual purpose and impact that it will have on our community, however, as we have shared there is no doubt that a facility of this nature would have a great impact.

Our recommendation to future interested parties would be to create a road map to facilitate local collaboration to see this project through. There are many different interested parties that we have discussed that have varying skill sets that would lead to a successful implementation and sustainable project such as the Fieldhouse. Not one organization is going to be able to pull this project together in a silo... it will take a community to make this project successful. Our team feels as if a Fieldhouse project is one to invest in as a way to impact our community and our residents and though our current involvement ends with this initial project, we desire to see the “dream” live on. As a function of continuing to move this project along, if our team were to win the Northenor Award, we would look to use the funds as a retainer towards the already engaged architectural firm we have been working with. We feel that this is best means for the dollars as a way to continue to see this project move forward and create a sense of urgency.

Works Cited

<https://www.southbendtribune.com/story/news/local/2022/11/03/mishawaka-fieldhouse-proposal-gets-developer-on-board/69612031007/>

<https://www.plexsports.com/locations>

<https://www.visitfortwayne.com/listing/plasman-athletic-center-at-turnstone/52919/>

<https://lillyendowment.org/college-and-community-collaboration/>

<https://www.triadassoc.net/about/>

[IN.gov | The Official Website of the State of Indiana](#)

[Innkeeper Tax Info / Kosciusko County, IN \(kcgov.com\)](#)

<https://sportonefieldhouse.com/about/>

Appendix A: Kosciusko County Recreational Facility Community Survey

Appendix B: List of Email Addresses

Survey Question: If you have any questions or a desire to partner in this project, please provide us with a good email address so that we can contact you.

- mooreme@grace.edu
- Vossmd@grace.edu
- chad.briscoe@grace.edu
- Patricaf@grace.edu
- mhagy@ccacwarsaw.com
- toni@safeharborinsurance.net
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Appendix C: Visit Fort Wayne 2023 Sporting Events & Tournaments Incl. Adaptive Sports