



LDC Hockey

Sound the Buzzer

Let's make ice...

HOW WE GOT HERE: Dassel and Cokato have been communities committed to hockey for generations. Cold Minnesota winters have never deterred families from using local lakes and rinks for skating and hockey. Since the 1970's our communities have shown a strong interest in youth hockey until the early 1990's when Minnesota Amateur Hockey (MAHA) required DC's outdoor program to terminate and join Litchfield's indoor youth hockey program.

Families from Dassel and Cokato have been driving their children to and from the neighboring community Litchfield since creating their partnership as the LDC Hockey program. However there has always been the recognition that a local rink would strengthen that partnership and give more DC kids the opportunity to play hockey. In 1999, a retired businessman, Willard (Bill Hempel) wanted to give back to the community by donating \$400,000 towards the construction of a multi-use community ice center.

Bill's wish, "I hope that our community will work together to bring this project to completion." This donation spurred the creation of the Dassel-Cokato Regional Ice and Sports Center (DCRISC) board, whose sole mission was fundraising and the construction of the arena. What was once a dream suddenly became a possibility.

PERIOD ONE: Community fundraising efforts spanned nearly 17 years and raised \$1.3 million in cash, in addition to the nearly \$725,000 of in-kind donations. An arena shell was constructed in 2012, including sprinkler system, inground plumbing, a well and key HVAC components.

PERIOD TWO: In 2021 monies received from a bonding bill from the state, combined with a Mighty Ducks Grant and unused funds donated from the DCRISC, were applied

toward the in-ground rink refrigeration system and a concrete floor for the entire facility. Hockey boards have been purchased and arrived in mid-May and \$240,000 has been invested in the chiller system which will be connected in the fall of 2022. In addition, a community member generously donated a refurbished Zamboni.

We have a community full of passionate kids and families who continue working towards a dream that has spanned more than 20 years. What was once a distant dream, is now reality—with refrigerated ice and indoor hockey coming to fruition late autumn 2022. The recreation center shell is complete (Period One), as well as the refrigerated ice, boards and Zamboni (Period Two). All work done to date is paid for and the facility has been granted a certificate of occupancy. However, while the recreation center will have the capacity to serve as a functioning practice



facility for youth hockey, there is much work to do before it will be a fans-in-the-stands competitive hockey arena.

PERIOD THREE: FANS-IN-THE-STANDS

With the conclusion of Period Two, the facility has many multi-purpose capabilities. In addition to organized hockey, it will also be:

- Available for school use for ice-based phy-ed activities and can be used as a "field house" practice facility for spring and fall sports (track, golf, baseball, softball, and football).
- Available for community use: amateur hockey, open skating, summer in-line roller hockey leagues, and large venue community events/shows.

Practice time helps prepare athletes for competition, and the same comparison can be made with this facility. In order to prepare this facility for competitions, further work is needed, including stadium seating/viewing area, locker rooms, concessions area, and reception lobby.

At one point, there were kids in the community hoping to have the opportunity to skate on a home sheet of ice. Those kids are now parents themselves, and their children are close to realizing that dream. As a community, as a team, we are close to the final goal.

Donation Information

LDC Youth Hockey is a 501(c)3 Charitable Organization
Tax Deductible Donations can be made to:

LDC Youth Hockey DCRC Ice Arena
PO Box 2
Litchfield, MN 55355
ISD466 FBO DCRC Ice Arena
4852 Reardon Ave SW
Cokato, MN 55321