

## **We need your help in order for a new rink to gain momentum.**

We understand information regarding the new ice facility is coming from all sides. We want to take an opportunity as our member base to have you understand MAHA's position on this topic and what has been done to date. Please understand this is not just an MAHA issue, as ASA has 61 other user groups, but MAHA is one of the largest user groups so we feel a significant impact to our program versus other groups. Many of us have been having multiple meetings with city officials, potential donors, landowners and city council members. We have worked side by side with the Minnesota Amateur Sports Commission to develop a usage plan, visit with other communities that have built facilities, and created a feasibility study to show the profitability of an extra sheet of ice. All of these supporting documents were given to the city back in May of 2019. Back in June of 2019, the city council approved an independent feasibility study to be done on multiple sites for a sheet of ice along with other groups requesting funding from the sales tax. We were told this would be completed by November. The city decided to administer an internal pro forma on the construction cost and profitability of an extra sheet. Their feasibility study did not address the ice shortage or need of another ice sheet for the community. However, in 2013, a feasibility study was conducted by an outside third party to look at the community ice needs. This study determined, for a community the size of Mankato and the popularity of on ice sports, more ice is absolutely needed. For MAHA, the only thing that has changed, since this study was conducted, is the size of our organization. We have always said we want to solve the need and are trying to bring multiple groups together including the city to find a solution to this problem.

The important message we are trying to convey to the community and city council is MAHA isn't looking for a facility we have sole control over. We are looking for something all community members can use and be proud of. The proposal we provided to the city was very similar to what other communities have found a way to get done. If it is something that won't work at this point, we are open and willing to discuss other ideas that will work for both MAHA, the community and the city. Many of us working on this project understand this isn't something we want for our children, as they will likely be done with hockey by the time a project is completed. We view it as improving a growing community by having a facility that functions the way an ice rink should and one that represents our community well.

Here are the issues at hand:

### **1. MAHA Growth**

MAHA is proud that we have the most kids ever in MAHA this year with 469 skaters!

We have grown by **more than 35%** since we started seeking a new sheet of ice way back in 2010. The fact remains, we do not have enough indoor ice to support our current and projected number of skaters.

With the numbers of participants at all-time highs and no additional ice in our community, the quality of our programming is being affected.

MAHA is currently short a significant amount of hours based on the recommendations of USA Hockey and this shortage is only getting worse as the number of skaters increase year after year.

### **2. Independent Feasibility Study**

In **2013**, there was an independent market analysis completed on ice facilities in Mankato that stated, “ice hockey and figure skating are so popular & demand for more ice time so great, that the need for one additional rink now and the ability to add another later has been established.” Since that independent feasibility study was completed, exponential growth in these program areas have created a stronger need for additional ice.

### **3. Economic Benefits for the Community**

MAHA currently only hosts 6 tournaments due to the extremely limited ice availability. Discussions have been occurring regarding the potential elimination of tournaments in order to utilize the limited ice availability. This ultimately affects our youth hockey experience as more traveling is required of our families let alone the economic loss within the Greater Mankato Community. The initial estimates of this annual economic loss of not hosting any tournaments compared to the 15 plus tournaments currently desired would be between \$1,715,250 and \$2,287,000. (Data supplied by Visit Mankato)

### **4. Sales Tax Utilization**

The sports commission that was created to help develop a plan for utilizing funds created with the new tax levy extension. This group of people looked at communities of our size and identified a strong need for us to improve our facilities. An ice facility was the main point from the commission as an identified need in this community.

### **5. Current Facility**

Our current facility has a lot of issues including:

- the need for a new refrigeration system
- The lack of parking
- Poor general layout of the facility including a significant lack of lobby/meeting space

Our research into other communities has shown a significant gap in regard to amount of ice, facility amenities, and community partners. Other communities are investing heavily in indoor ice facilities as they see the value added to their communities. Sioux Falls, Marshall, Rochester, St. Cloud, Fargo have all made substantial upgrades to their facilities in recent years.

### **6. More public skating for our community**

Other communities are able to have more open skating to the public. We would like our community to have more public skating with less congestion when there is public skating. We would also like to see family nights and cosmic skating nights that are scheduled on a regular basis for families to spend time at.

## **We need your help!**

The Mankato City Council will be prioritizing, in the upcoming weeks, the projects to be funded with the sales tax funds. The ice rink proposal is scheduled to be heard at the **February 3<sup>rd</sup> work session at 6pm.**

At this time, a new ice rink in the Mankato Area is not getting the support from our elected officials that we need to get the additional iced rink completed. There are several very viable options that would fulfill our ice needs problem but we need leadership from our elected officials to make this happen. A new rink has a lot positives verses other projects; a new ice rink project can cash flow positively, we are prepared to fundraise and the need for the new facility has been proven by an independent feasibility study.

Let your city council member(s) and mayor and county commissioners know that you want a new ice facility to be the priority and that you would like them to lead the way on finding viable solutions to our ice needs problem for this community. Below is a link to their contact information.

City of Mankato

<https://www.mankatomn.gov/city-services-a-z/maps/wards-and-precincts>

City of Eagle Lake

<https://eaglelakemn.com/city/city-council>

Blue Earth County

<http://www.blueearthcountymn.gov/94/Board-of-Commissioners>

City of North Mankato

<https://www.northmankato.com/mayor-and-council-members>

Nicollet County

<http://www.co.nicollet.mn.us/370/County-Commissioners>

Please feel free to copy this information below and send to your elected officials:

To:

Please accept this e-mail as my support for the city of Mankato, North Mankato, Blue Earth County, and ISD #77 to find a feasible solution in expanding indoor ice opportunities in our community. This need has been identified since 2013 in an independent feasibility study and still we are not any closer to a solution. Never before has a community of our size offered to bring private support to a public project, but here we stand. Please take action now in allocating sales tax revenue to make this project happen. We support Raising the Rink!

Signed