

BUILDING INDIANA

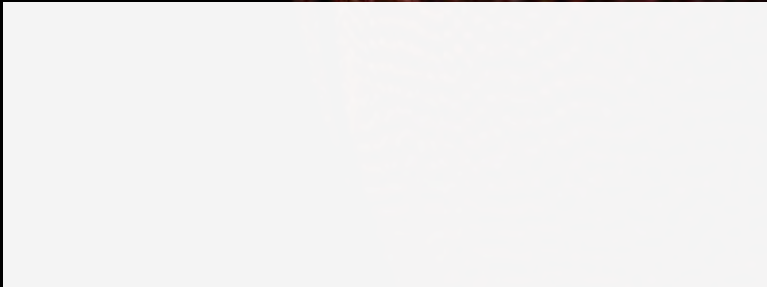
NORTHERN INDIANA'S SOURCE FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND CONSTRUCTION NEWS

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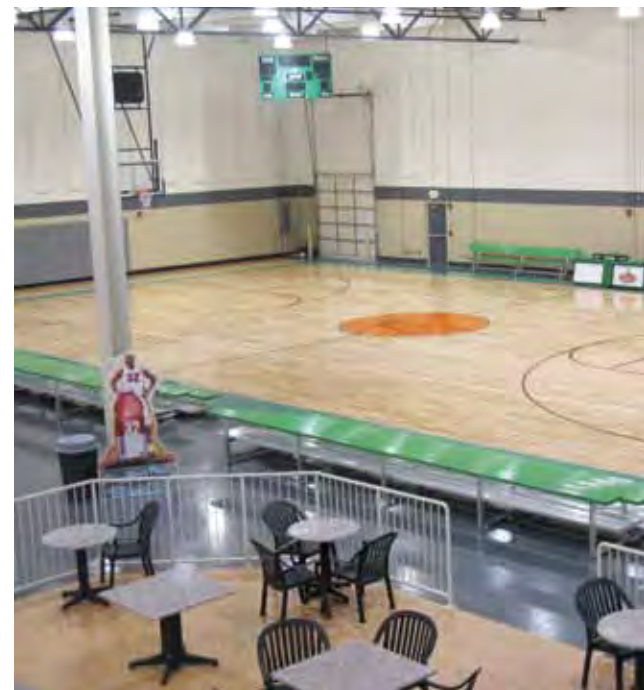
American amateur sports are big business. While the youth participating in amateur athletics are unpaid, those entities that support and advance the cause of youth sports in the United States find it to be a lucrative industry. More than 400 amateur sporting events in Indiana have generated more than \$3 billion in direct economic spending since 1979, according to John Dedman, Indiana Sports Corporation Director of Communications. Just the NCAA Men's Final Four held in Indianapolis in 2006 garnered an economic impact of \$40 million.

While northern Indiana won't be hosting an amateur sporting event of that magnitude, sporting facilities are able to infuse considerable money into a community by holding tournaments, leagues and club programs. A facility that opened in Merrillville in November 2008, The Fieldhouse is a basketball complex that has the makings of being a successful youth sports facility.

With existing Fieldhouse facilities in Fishers and Fort Wayne, Merrillville marks the third Fieldhouse complex in Indiana. The Fort Wayne/Allen County Convention & Visitors Bureau and Fort Wayne Sports Corporation commissioned a study to examine the economic impact of two, youth national tournaments held at the basketball complex in 2005. The eight days of tournament play at the Fort Wayne facility yielded a direct and indirect economic impact total of \$6 million.

"The Spiece Fieldhouse has been a gem here and I'm sure The Fieldhouse in Merrillville will be a gem as well," said Betsy Perry Patton, Communications Manager at the Fort Wayne/Allen County Convention & Visitors Bureau.

The Fieldhouse Founder and Chief Executive Officer Scott Burton created the concept of The Fieldhouse in 2003. According to Burton, The Fieldhouse is the first franchised business model to offer those with a passion for basketball the advantages of an established brand recognized by players, coaches and parents. The Fieldhouse operates through a franchise program that allows franchisee operators to adhere to a tested business model. The franchise also offers a cost-efficient, building design that enables the facilities to serve as des-



tinuation attractions, operational cost savings and access to a nationwide network of more than 10,000 basketball teams.

Separating The Fieldhouse concept from other facilities is its focus on being a learning environment for the game of basketball and helping young people to return to the concepts of fundamental skill training, player development and teamwork. "We're all about basketball at The Fieldhouse," Burton said. "Avoiding the idea of being a jack-of-all-trades-master-of-none facility, we have developed a niche and reputation around youth basketball."

Following in his footsteps was Munster native Mark Leyden, who believed northwest Indiana would benefit from such a facility. Now a resident of Indianapolis who operates an insurance agency, Leyden had watched his children play basketball at The Fieldhouse in Fishers for several years. He thought the facility would be a slam dunk because northwest Indiana is heavily populated and its central geographic location would allow for teams from all over Chicago to play at the facility.

"Part of why I did this here was to make an investment back in northwest Indiana. I believe in the area and I think this facility will be an asset," Leyden said.

Burton was excited when Leyden approached him about the idea of becoming a franchisee operator with plans to open a facility in Merrillville.

• In 2007, there were **24.1 million** basketball participants across the United States, 49 percent of which were ages 7 to 17.

• In 2007, **15.8 million** pairs of basketball shoes were sold in the U.S. totaling \$892 million. Kids ages 7 to 17 made up 53 percent of the \$892 million in basketball shoe sales.

Source: National Sporting Goods Association

Merrillville Fieldhouse Contractor List

| | |
|---|--|
| ➔ | General Contractor Holladay Construction Group, LLC |
| ➔ | Sitework & Utilities Delta III |
| ➔ | Concrete Concrete Constructors, Inc. |
| ➔ | Masonry Hawk Masonry |
| ➔ | Pre-Cast Panels ATMI |
| ➔ | Roofing & Sheetmetal All American Exterior Solutions |
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| ➔ | Plumbing Keough Mechanical Corp. |
| ➔ | HVAC Bloomfield Mechanical |
| ➔ | Aluminum Storefront & Windows Trout Glass & Mirror |
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| ➔ | EIFS B & K Plastering, LLC |
| ➔ | Fire Protection Ryan Fire Protection |
| ➔ | Painting Stan's Painting & Decorating |
| ➔ | Floor Finishes Lakeshore Flooring |
| ➔ | Asphalt Paving/Concrete Curbs Rieth-Riley Construction Co., Inc. |



"Northwest Indiana is an underserved market in terms of a facility for competitive travel basketball teams," Burton said. "I think the facility will bring a lot to the area. The basketball players and their families will stay the night at hotels, eat at local restaurants and shop at area stores."

Before the first basketball was ever shot into the air, the building had to be constructed. Work started on the

53,000-square-foot facility in May 2008, said Scott Trueblood, Holladay Construction Group Senior Project Manager, Northwest Indiana. Rather than a masonry design, The Fieldhouse design utilized pre-fabricated, load-bearing concrete panels, 12 feet wide and 30 feet long, each weighing more than 30,000 pounds. This process saved 45 days over conventional masonry construction and the project essentially went from building pad to a totally enclosed building in 60 days. The trickiest part of construction was ensuring the concrete slab met the flatness tolerances of the gym floor manufacturer of no more than 1/8 of an inch in 10 feet, Trueblood said.

This marked the first time Holladay Construction Group has constructed a Fieldhouse facility. However, this kind of structure was nothing new for Holladay, which has built more than 2 million square feet of similar buildings (warehousing) around Indiana.

Leyden was extremely pleased with the final product.

"Construction is flawless. Holladay Construction Group has exceeded my expectations," he said.

In addition to six basket-

ball courts at the facility, there is a science-based athletic training area within the gym designed to help with muscle development and skill enhancement. Former Division 1 basketball players are team coaches at The Fieldhouse, and college coaches will be brought in to help with basketball training camps.

"This facility has been received really well. Based on the feedback we have been receiving, we are excited," Leyden said.

The excitement surrounding Fieldhouse's economic impact is especially growing.

Between 3,000 and 6,000 hotel rooms will be booked annually as a result of basketball tournaments at The Fieldhouse, according to South Shore Convention and Visitors Authority Director of Sports Development Jason Sands. The Fieldhouse will be particularly helpful to the tourism industry because it can host basketball events year-round.

Merrillville Town Manager Howard Fink is thrilled with the basketball complex.

"The Fieldhouse will produce tourism business, including hotel accommodations and retail business," he said.

The Fieldhouse is positioned in a location and at a time that can provide a major economic development boost to the area. ♦



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- Willis Shepherd, NWIBRT Executive Director


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- Sisters of St. Francis Health Services, Northern Indiana Region
- U.S. Steel, Gary Works
- Valparaiso University

The Northwest Indiana Business Roundtable (NWIBRT) is an independent, non-profit council of local firms committed to the improvement of construction and maintenance projects in Northwest Indiana.

Our purpose is to promote safety, quality and cost effectiveness by all parties associated with the local area construction/ maintenance industry.

If you're interested in becoming a member or subscriber and you have access to e-mail, please send an e-mail note expressing your intentions to Tim Ross, Treasurer, at tim.ross@ssfhs.org, with a copy to Willis Shepherd, Executive Director, at nwibr@comcast.net, and we will get back to you to get the membership process going without delay.



Northwest Indiana Business Roundtable
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