

Arena Projects Context Summary

Response to March 3, 2026 Delegation

Prepared by: Recreation Manager Leanne Nichol

I sincerely appreciate the delegate taking the time to research and share ideas with council regarding arena projects in other Saskatchewan communities. Community members taking an interest in our facilities and potential improvements is always welcomed and valued.

Through my role, I regularly connect with facility operators, municipal staff, and community leaders across Saskatchewan. These relationships allow for ongoing conversations about facility upgrades, operational challenges, funding strategies, and sponsorship opportunities, ensuring our planning benefits from the experiences of other communities.

In response to topics raised during the recent delegation, the following provides additional context and verified information for the communities and projects referenced.

Comparative Briefing

Mossbank, SK – Ice Plant Replacement

The Mossbank Centennial Rink undertook replacement work on its aging ice plant in 2025, focused primarily on the skating ice compressor system. Local media reported that community fundraising, including efforts by the Mossbank & District Recreation Board and groups such as *Farm It Forward*, supported the project. According to an article, the estimated total cost for a full replacement could be **well over \$400,000 and perhaps closer to \$600,000** depending on how much of the existing system could be reused. Though no official documentation confirming the final project cost, funding breakdown, contractor details, or exact scope of work is currently available online. Community-led fundraising efforts, such as local lotteries and contests, were part of the overall support for the project.

An inquiry regarding the exact project scope, final costs, and funding structure has been made, and we are currently awaiting a response.

Rockglen, SK – Ice Plant Upgrade

The Town of Rockglen completed a 70-ton ammonia ice plant upgrade on **December 15, 2021**, with a total documented project cost of approximately **\$440,000**.

Funding sources included:

- Federal ICIP grant: ~\$176,000 & Provincial ICIP grant: ~\$146,650
- Municipal contribution: ~\$117,348 (Town of Rockglen – \$50,000, RM #12 Poplar Valley – \$50,000, RM #42 Willow Bunch – \$15,000)

Additional community and corporate fundraising (~\$127,173) included:

- Richardson Pioneer: \$50,000 (naming rights to the Curling Rink Ice Arena), Rockglen/Killdeer Credit Union: \$50,000 (naming rights to the skating arena), Coal Miners Trust – \$3,000, Big Sky Agency – \$5,000, Community raffles and fundraising – \$14,219, Personal donations – \$4,954

Note: The documented project cost does not include additional work completed in the compressor room to bring the facility up to code to support the ammonia plant, nor other materials or work the community may have added. The final report remains a thorough and valuable reference.

Maintaining this level of transparency benefits local accountability and serves as a reference for other communities considering similar projects, and I truly appreciate both Rockglen's detailed documentation and the community members willing to provide information.

Shaunavon, SK – Arena / Facility

The **Veren Wickenheiser Centre** (formerly Crescent Point Wickenheiser Centre) continues to serve as Shaunavon’s multi-purpose recreational facility. In early 2025, the facility’s name was updated following the sponsor’s rebranding to Veren Inc.

The facility was originally constructed with multi-level government support, including approximately **\$1.1 million in combined federal and provincial RInC funding (announced October 2009)**, plus an additional **\$328,259 in provincial support (announced November 13, 2009)** to complete construction phases of the \$5.7 million multi-purpose recreation facility.

There is no public record of a **\$1.15 million grant specifically for arena upgrades** in recent years. The town did receive **\$36,350 in 2024** from the Trans Canada Trail program for walking trail lighting.

Shaunavon has also accessed other funding streams for community infrastructure (e.g., water system upgrades estimated at **\$1.146 million** with federal, provincial, and local shares), but these do not appear to be related to the arena.

North Battleford, SK – Ice Chillers

The City of North Battleford authorized a targeted replacement of an ammonia ice plant chiller for the Access Communications Centre in early 2024 with a **budgeted amount of up to \$125,000**. Council awarded the contract to Canadian Climate Refrigeration and HVAC, and the final equipment cost came in at approximately **\$108,941**. The work was scheduled for completion between May and July 2024 to avoid interference with the ice season. This project is a component replacement within the existing system rather than a full ice plant upgrade, demonstrating how targeted equipment updates can support ongoing operations without replacing the entire plant.

Gull Lake, SK – Ice Plant Improvements

The Gull Lake Recreation Complex completed refrigeration upgrades before the recent ice season, including a **closed-loop compressor system** and brine system improvements.

Funding came from the **Town of Gull Lake, surrounding rural municipalities, and local businesses**. No public cost has been reported. The work appears to have been planned upgrades, and the closed-loop system improves ice quality, efficiency, and reliability compared with older setups.

Moose Jaw, SK – Ice Plant Emergency Repairs

At the Temple Gardens Centre, the ice plant nearly failed in 2023. City Council approved approximately **\$53,000** for emergency repairs.

The managing refrigeration company reported that the main issues were addressed during this emergency visit, with only minor follow-up adjustments required afterward. The cause was attributed partially to human error, where issues were noticed but not addressed promptly.

This example highlights how even small emergencies can have operational and cost impacts, reinforcing the importance of proactive maintenance and planning.

Sponsorship Considerations for Municipal Arenas

Companies can sponsor municipally owned arenas, but arrangements typically require:

- Council approval
- Legal agreements
- Compliance with municipal policies

When it is said that companies “cannot donate,” this usually reflects policy rules or the company’s approach, not a legal prohibition.

Corporate support can significantly offset costs and provide long-term community recognition. The Town of Gravelbourg council and stakeholders welcome corporate involvement, while a few extra steps are needed for town owned facilities, there are no barriers to supporting our community hub.

Even if a facility is run by a volunteer board or non-profit, if the town or RM owns it, sponsorships and donations should follow the same policy structure as town-run facilities to ensure compliance and safe, effective support.

The **Town of Gravelbourg has made significant gains in transparency** and continues to maintain a high level of openness. Reports, documentation and council records are publicly available and residents and stakeholders are encouraged to consult these sources directly to ensure they have accurate, up to date information.

Again, thank you to those who take the time to research, think critically and engage constructively.

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