



News Release

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Hospital awarded a \$12.6 million grant for fieldhouse construction

For Immediate Release

(COLUMBUS, Neb.)- Columbus Community Hospital recently received \$12.6 million from the Nebraska Department of Economic Development's (DED) Shovel-Ready Capital Recovery and Investment Act Grant.

The grant helps qualified non-profit organizations fund projects that have a positive economic impact on the state of Nebraska. Of the 125 grant recipients, CCH was the only health care facility that received funds for the Columbus Fieldhouse Sports Complex.

"We are very grateful for the funding we received from the DED's Shovel-Ready Grant," said Mike Hansen, president and CEO of Columbus Community Hospital. "This grant would not be possible without the matching funds gifted by the Columbus Community Hospital Foundation. Through the financial support of the grant and our foundation, we are well on our way to funding our new fieldhouse — a project which has been our board's goal for many years."

Jeff Gokie, chairman of the hospital board of directors, shared Hansen's sentiment regarding the grant's positive impact on the construction project.

"Receiving this grant is great news for the hospital and Columbus community," Gokie said. "These funds will go a long way in making critical decisions in building a top-quality, one-of-a-kind sports complex. The board of directors is proud of the hospital's leadership team and state representatives for securing the grant money. The project will benefit everyone in Columbus and surrounding communities for many years to come."

The hospital board began discussions about adding a community fieldhouse in September 2019. After touring similar facilities, it approved the project in December 2019 at a cost of \$35 million, with the goal of starting it in 2020. However, in May 2020, the board immediately stopped the project so it could allow the hospital to focus on fighting the COVID-19 pandemic and caring for its staff, patients and community.

Leaders attempted to resume progress on the project in summer 2021, but the pandemic's second wave further delayed progress.



“We simply didn’t have the manpower to focus on this project when we needed to be focusing on our patients and staff,” said Chad Van Cleave, vice president of finance at Columbus Community Hospital.

After two pauses in construction, the hospital approved the final design in April 2022. This delay resulted in the project’s total cost escalating from \$35 million to \$54 million. The hospital will use the conditional funds issued through the grant to make up for the difference in price.

The 240,00-square foot Columbus Fieldhouse Sports Complex will open in 2024 and include a full-sized soccer field, basketball and volleyball courts, golf simulators, batting cages and additional areas for an array of competitive sports.

“Our goal is to improve the health of the communities we serve,” Hansen said. “The Columbus Fieldhouse Sports Complex will help enhance the work we’re currently doing at the Wellness Center by getting more people physically active and engaged in competitive sports.”

The hospital has also received support from the Columbus Area Chamber of Commerce as one of the area’s top economic and workforce development projects. It will offer endless benefits for the community, including increased physical activity, full-time employment positions and additional tourism and tax revenue.

"The fieldhouse is a game changer for our community's quality of life," said Dawson Brunswick, president of the Columbus Area Chamber of Commerce. "This project will bolster our local employers' recruitment and retention efforts and help us attract new tournaments and competitive sporting events to our community."

For more information on the Columbus Fieldhouse, visit columbushosp.org.

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