



Nathan Christensen
South Dakota State University
Senior Associate AD - Development

Since 2010, South Dakota State University (SDSU) has invested over \$200 million in athletics facilities. Buildings such as the beautiful Dana J. Dykhouse Stadium, Sanford-Jackrabbit Athletics Complex, Dykhouse Student-Athlete Center, Basketball Practice Facility, and in the fall of 2024 the opening of First Bank & Trust Arena. The vision of Justin Sell, current director of athletics, has changed the landscape of SDSU forever. Thanks to many donors and staff members, our campus has been elevated to a new level.

Frost Arena opened almost 50 years ago and in September 2021, we received a lead gift of \$20 million from First Bank & Trust to help us kick start one of the most successful fundraising projects in the history of SDSU. The project has raised over \$54 million to this point, which includes seven, seven-figure gifts, and 12

six-figure gifts. The renovation project is expected to take two years and will be done in phases to avoid relocation and interruption of SDSU events.

The fan experience and gameday atmosphere will be first class thanks to the new features of the renovated facility. These include new premium seating areas and suites, state-of-the-art video board and display systems, an enhanced sound system, a more spacious concourse, and improved restrooms. New and improved locker rooms and offices are also a part of the design for the renovated arena for our basketball and volleyball programs.

The success of this project is due in large part to our very generous donor base, but also the collaboration between the SDSU Foundation and the athletics department. The lead gift process was years in the making, as the relationship between university leadership and First Bank & Trust has been extremely strong. Both parties were able to collaborate on setting SDSU athletics up for the next 50 years with the arena upgrades.

Once the lead gift was announced it was all hands on deck to get in front of as many donors as possible to talk through the renovation process and the different naming opportunities within the facility. Even prior to announcing the

lead gift, there was a ton of work completed with renderings, timetables, and initial conversation with donors to discuss the potential reality of this project. But also important to this project was creating a list of naming opportunities that would fit a variety of different levels of gifts, ranging from \$10,000 to a million-plus. Frost Arena has a lot of history and memories for our donors, and we wanted to be able to provide as many naming opportunities as possible for our supporters to have their legacy be recognized and remembered.

There was a lot of work by many people years prior to the successful fundraising campaign for First Bank & Trust Arena. As we all know, it is about timing, collaboration, hard work and relationships that make campaigns transformative. Jackrabbit fans and donors along with our future student-athletes will benefit for years because of the generous support to our arena renovation project.



Elisia Falcon
University of Notre Dame
Associate Director, Ticketing

There have been multiple announcements of new facility proposals or renovations of an existing facility. I happened to be a part of one when I was at UAB and Protective Stadium was being built. However, another previous stop of mine, Mississippi State, is currently renovating Humphrey Coliseum and is a great example of newer concepts for stadium and arena renovations. Concepts that have an impact on ticketing in a few different areas, but one in particular.

Renderings for the renovations of "The Hump" (phase one is scheduled to be completed in November 2023), show an open concept concourse and brand-new premium areas. These

premium areas include a glass wall enclosed club immediately once you walk in on one side that will sit around 600 people and also includes loge seating. The second premium area, which will be part of phase two, is in the end court and is a smaller premium area that is similar to a couple of premium areas in other athletics venues on campus.

If you've been in Humphrey Coliseum before, you'll know that there is currently no premium seating aside from courtside, so this is one of the primary upgrades of the renovation. The capacity prior to starting renovations (which started before the 2022-23 season) was almost 10,300 seats. After the renovation is complete, the capacity will decrease by a little over 800.

This has been the trend - more premium areas and reduced general seating. This ties into ticketing in a few ways. Less seating means re-seating season ticket holders or specific areas like student sections, player guest, recruits etc. or even a full re-seat all together. Less general seating giving way to premium areas also means season ticket holder upgrades from what they've had in past seasons. Lastly, raising the total revenue whether by season ticket prices or required seating donations in order to gain

access to that premium area. Mississippi State has not released a pricing structure yet for the renovated Humphrey Coliseum however, I'd expect there to be some changes with the addition of premium seating.

When it comes to planning before and during a renovation or a completely new facility build, pricing is definitely one part in which ticket offices (along with development) generate a pricing structure to reflect the upgrades. There also are decisions being made on whether or not the pricing structure will increase revenue projections. In most cases, athletics departments along with ticketing look into the revenue impact a facility will bring. Everything is looked at when going through this process.

Although I am a former employee of Mississippi State athletics, I still visit Starkville often and look forward to seeing Humphrey Coliseum when complete, as well as hear about other facility renovations or new builds throughout the industry.

When the time comes for renovations or new facilities here at Notre Dame, I welcome the opportunity to be a part of the planning, building and forecasting processes and the growth of our campus and athletics department.