

Ice Arena to be replaced

By Mike Gors
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Although the "bubble burst" four weeks ago, plans were unveiled Tuesday which will provide the Siouxland Youth Hockey Association with skating facilities and keep the organization in operation.

Association President Dave Maher and former president Richard Keith announced that the Siouxland Youth Hockey Board of Directors has decided to purchase all the existing equipment from the former Siouxland Ice Arena at a cost of \$85,000.

In addition, the youth hockey representatives said Nebraska Innkeepers Inc., the firm which owns the land on which the former ice arena is located, has agreed to build a permanent, dual-purpose structure on the site.

The former ice arena "bubble" collapsed during a windstorm the evening of July 21, sustaining more than \$150,000 in damages. The Arena, located south of the Marina Inn in South Sioux City, had been in operation less than a year when the heavy winds tore the fabric in the structure, causing the air-suspended top to fall to the ground.

Maher said Tuesday's press conference was called to clear up some of the confusion surrounding the collapse of the facility and the status of the youth hockey association.

He said the youth hockey board of directors was faced with several alternatives when the accident occurred. The group could have moved its activities back into the Sioux City Municipal

Auditorium, skated outdoors, put up another bubble, or liquidated its assets and folded, Maher said.

Finding those alternatives unacceptable, the decision was made to purchase the equipment and enter into a lease agreement with Nebraska Innkeepers Inc.

Financing for the purchase of the equipment is presently being obtained through local banks, Maher said. He said the loan will be repaid through contributions and other fund raising activities.

The equipment the hockey association has purchased includes all compressors, ice mats, boards, plexiglass, nets, rental skates and the ice-making Zamboni machine.

Maher said the hockey association will lease the new facility from Nebraska Innkeepers Inc. for five months out of the year. The owners of the building will be free to use the structure for whatever they wish during the remainder of the year, Maher said.

The new facility ensures that the ice users in the area will have adequate facilities this winter, Maher said. In addition to the youth hockey organization, the new facility will be utilized by figure skaters, public skaters, the Siouxland Adult Hockey League, and the Sioux City Musketeers.

Maher said construction of the 120-by-240 metal structure is to begin Labor Day weekend. Maher said the new building should be ready to open by the first week in October. He said volunteer help will be needed during the next two weeks to prepare the area for construction. Volunteer work will begin each evening at 6 p.m.