

Doug Woog Arena HVAC

In October 1962, Doug Woog Arena was built as a one-ice sheet facility and was privately owned by Wakota Arena Incorporated, which consisted of 650 shareholders. The arena was initially named “The Cow Palace”. It was built on ten acres of land for the cost of \$550,000. One year later, the name was changed to “Wakota Arena”, a combination of Washington and Dakota counties. In 1977, the City of South St. Paul purchased the arena for \$375,000. In 2015, the arena was renamed “Doug Woog Arena” to honor native hockey great Doug Woog. Woog played high school hockey for the South St. Paul Packers becoming a first team, All-State player and leading the Packers to four State Tournaments. Woog went on to play for the University of Minnesota, earning team captain, MVP and first team All-American honors his junior year. Woog later became the head coach of the South St. Paul Packers High School Hockey Team from 1977-1985 and progressed to an assistant coaching position with the US Olympic hockey team in 1984. In 1985, Woog was named head coach of the United States World Junior Hockey Team, competing in Helsinki, Finland. Woog went on to coach the University of Minnesota Golden Gophers Men’s Hockey Team from 1985-1999 and was inducted into the United States Hockey Hall of Fame in 2002.

The arena is now almost 60 years old and has undergone three substantial renovations. The first was in 1989, with the addition of a large concession stand and lobby area added to the south end of the building as well as an upstairs viewing room. In 1997, Rink #2 was added on as were two large office spaces and the Community Learning Center (CLC) for the South St. Paul School District. The third renovation occurred in 2014 with the conversion of the refrigeration system from Freon to ammonia and the remodeling of the original rink (Rink #1) creating six new locker rooms, an off-ice training facility, community meeting space, and an elevated, warm viewing area.

The spectator radiant heating system is due for replacement. The estimated cost is \$50,000. The project proposed by this funding request would eliminate the radiant system and replace it with a comprehensive heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system for Rink 1 that would make the space usable on a year-round basis. Without this system, warm weather usage to maintain ice or for dry floor events is virtually impossible due to excessive heat and humidity conditions within the building. The system proposed would eliminate this issue and allow the space to maintain ice through the summer or enable it to be available for indoor, dry-floor events such as community gatherings, trade shows, graduations, and a host of other opportunities.

The additional cost for upgrading the HVAC system in Rink 1 is estimated at \$500,000. The City would contribute the first \$50,000 (as offset for replacing the radiant heating system) to fully fund the estimated \$450,000 project cost. Note: Rink 2 already has this system in place, and it enables an ice surface to be maintained year-round.

Project Rationale:

- Doug Woog Arena in South St. Paul is a regional facility serving the southeast metro area.
- In 2016, the State enacted a new Mighty Ducks program, named after South St. Paul State Senator James Metzen, to help arena facilities eliminate the R-22 refrigerant in ice-making systems. Unfortunately, the City of South St. Paul approached this issue proactively and made those upgrades along with other improvements to the arena, at taxpayer expense, in 2014. The

City spent a total of approximately \$2.4 million at that time. Therefore, South St. Paul was not eligible for this assistance that could have alleviate some taxpayer burden.

- In 2020, the Legislature funded the James Metzen Mighty Ducks Grant Program as part of October's bonding bill. In addition to eliminating R-22 refrigerants, the program would also help improve indoor air quality. However, to qualify for those funds, an arena needed to have gas powered ice maintenance equipment. In South St. Paul, the Zambonis are electric powered thereby making us ineligible for this assistance once again.
- The proposed HVAC system for Rink #1 will make a regional facility more available to area users on a year-round basis for both ice surfaces and dryland uses.
- The City of South St. Paul is classified as an economically depressed area by the United States Department of Commerce. When considered in conjunction with our low tax base and high municipal tax rate, the City's ability to undertake this needed improvement on its own would place additional financial burden on our low-income residents.

