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Anchorage Skates Connection

IS002

FALL 2015



Upgrades to the power system around the oval will accommodate both a seasonal warming facility as well as a future permanent warming facility.

This fall has seen significant improvements to the power system at the Cuddy Park Oval, and installation of a state-of-the-art sound system. New electrical upgrades will allow a seasonal warming facility to have heat and power, and that will make it a lot more comfortable for skaters at the oval. The upgraded power system is sized appropriately for an envisioned permanent warming facility.

“The sound system will add to the holiday cheer”

The new sound system was donated by Tom McGrath of Frigid North. Sixteen speakers are installed high on the light poles around the oval. The sound system will allow music during skating events, as well as the

public address system to be used for skating events. Jim Renkert, founder of the annual Solstice Skate event says, “the sound system will add to the holiday cheer” that the event brings.

Funding for the electrical upgrades and the PA system installation was provided by the Alaska Parks Foundation and the Municipality of Anchorage, with *pro bono* engineering work from Coffman Engineers.



WHO IS ANCHORAGE SKATES?

We're the folks that have championed the development of the outdoor skating and fitness oval at Cuddy Park. Anchorage Skates is focused on the completion, maintenance and sustainability of the oval. Other groups involved with the Cuddy Park oval are the Alaska Speedskating Club, which holds practices and runs races, and the Anchorage Skate Club, which is aiming to provide learn-to-skate programs at the oval this winter.



WWW.ANCHORAGESKATES.ORG



Is this the most beautiful place to skate in North America?

As my friends here in Alaska know, I've been to almost every long track skating venue in North America, and many in Europe. What many Alaskans may not realize is how unique the skating Oval in Cuddy Family Midtown Park is. I'm going to tell you a little about why I think we are so lucky to have this in the middle of our city.

First, skating ovals are a rare bird in the US. There are currently only 6 in the country, and two are former Olympic venues (Salt Lake and Lake Placid). Salt Lake, well – beautiful views outside the Oval, but its architecture is not what many would call beautiful – Eastern European apartment block is what I think of. Lake Placid has lovely views for a track squeezed between a high school and an indoor ice rink. If you prefer non-Olympic venues, then you are headed to the suburbs of Milwaukee or Minneapolis. The Pettit Center in Milwaukee is again an indoor facility, and sports perhaps four windows in the entire building. Roseville near Minneapolis is an outdoor venue, but the last time I was there, the installation of mountains was not yet complete. Canada has a better selection of skating ovals (not a surprise, since they have more winter than the lower 48). With the exception of Calgary and Fort St. John, all of them are outdoors. At some of these ovals, the wind from the North Pole only passed over

polar bears and tundra on its way south. In other words, the wind blows a lot, and it can be amazingly cold. On the plus side, you can play bandy on the infield.

The keys to a facility that serves a community come down to a few things. First, the facility is easily accessible. You can't beat Cuddy Park for that. It is just off two major arteries in the city, and it is readily accessible by public transportation. Second, it is better lit (by a state-of-the-art LED light system) than any other outdoor skating facility in North America. Third, it is readily accessible to the public – again, what other facility is open 6 a.m.-11 p.m., and is essentially free? (Don't forget to buy your Oval Pins!). And finally, did I mention the views? If you skate here, your default view is of snowcapped mountain peaks – all day, every day. Sunsets are painfully pretty here.

Skating began as an outdoor sport, and Alaska is an outdoor state. The work done by Anchorage Skates and many other partners to build and improve this facility deserves to be recognized – and the best recognition anyone can give the visionaries who gave us this facility is to use it every day. And bring your children and grandchildren here to skate, and appreciate how lucky they are, and how much better their future will be because they played outside in Alaska in the winter.

John Monroe – Olympic Coach



Goals: Nice Ice and a Warming Facility

This winter will feature a seasonal warming facility - a heated construction trailer - at the oval for the first time. Cornerstone Construction generously donated the use of a trailer.

Anchorage Skates envisions a permanent warming facility at the oval, and we undertook a site evaluation process this last year. We considered various sites around, or inside, the oval and favor a location at the northeastern corner of the oval. This would allow the

building to be used year round, and would it could be used for events both at the oval and in the central part of the park. We are working on concept drawings for the facility now.

Another goal in fundraising is for the ice maintenance at the oval. We have raised \$10,000 each year, for the last 6 years, and we need your help to maintain the nice ice. Tax deductible donations can be made to Anchorage Skates through the Alaska Community Foundation: <http://alaskacf.org/>

PROGRAMS UPDATE

ANCHORAGE SKATE CLUB TO TEACH KIDS TO SKATE

John Monroe, former Dutch Olympic speedskating coach, will teach three learn to speedskate programs for kids at the Cuddy Park oval this winter. Each session is 1 month long and will meet two nights per week, like the junior nordic model. There will be skates for kids available in all sizes. See: www.anchorageskateclub.com for more information.

ALASKA SPEEDSKATING TRAINING AND RACING

The Alaska Speedskating Club will offer practices at the oval two days per week, and races several times per month throughout the winter. The club practices are open to people of all ages and abilities, and the oval is not exclusive use during these times. Check the club website for up-to-date schedule and information. The club does not have long track speedskates available for use, but they can be rented from Alaska Mountaineering and Hiking. see: www.alaskaspeedskating.com for more information



Selected Oval Events

SOLSTICE SKATE

This event will be held on Monday, December 21, from 6-8 PM. Torchlights, burn barrels, hot chocolate, sleigh rides, festive music, and the shortest day of the year are all reasons to come out and skate.

DUATHLON

Skating and skate skiing have a lot in common - why not combine the two? For this fundraiser to support the ice maintenance at the oval, participants skate 8-10 laps around the oval, switch to skis and then ski 3 times around the park trail. There are kids distances and relays as well.

<http://www.alaskaspeedskating.com/duathlon.html>

FUR RONDY

There are all-comers skating races, speedskating races, and this coming year, the second annual Swimsuit Skate. Enjoy the craziness of the end of winter and embrace your inner Alaskan. Feb. 28, 2016.



Join us: Get a pin, show your pride



Please help us pay for the ice you enjoy. Let's work together to maintain it. Thank you!

www.alaskacf.org - donate to "Anchorage Skates" fund.

Vision, Mission, and Core Values:

VISION:

A year-round facility where all visitors have a safe and well maintained place to learn to skate, learn to bike ride, socialize, exercise, enjoy competition and engage in healthy lifetime activities. A facility that is used for ice skating in the winter and in-line skating, bike riding and special needs recreation in the summer

MISSION:

The mission of Anchorage Skates is to complete and develop a sustainable Cuddy Family Midtown Park Skating Oval.

Completion includes the oval's physical characteristics:

- A. Lights
- B. Kiosk with informational signs, an iron ranger, skating information, sponsor information
- C. Benches
- D. Outdoor pavilion with a firepit
- E. Warming hut
- F. PA System for music and announcements
- G. Appropriate use for oval inner



Sustainable means:

1. Excellent annual maintenance
2. Broad based community support as evidenced by regular individual and business donors
3. Making the oval and the park more of a social place for people to meet and recreate.

Evidenced by:

- 1) Numerous year-round events,
- 2) individuals using the oval
- 3) Diverse groups using the oval
- 4) An overall Sponsor
- 5) A robust and sustainable local speedskating club
- 6) A maintenance endowment

CORE VALUES:

Lifetime Skills – Every child that grows up in Anchorage should have the opportunity to learn to ice skate.

Healthy Park – A safe, friendly and well maintained facility.

Healthy People – A place where people of all ages and abilities gather to exercise and socialize. forms.

NEXT ISSUE:

PROGRESS TOWARDS A WARMING FACILITY

We will show concept drawings of a permanent warming facility

YOUTH SKATING AT THE OVAL

We will have a focus on youth skating at the oval: recreational, speedskating, hockey, and learning to skate.

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