



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Fairgrounds Coliseum reopens after historic renovation**

*Iconic elements, new amenities make building one-of-a-kind*

INDIANAPOLIS – Indiana State Fair officials, Governor Mike Pence and other dignitaries opened the doors to the newly renovated [Fairgrounds Coliseum](#) today marking the end of the largest capital improvement project in the State Fairgrounds' 123-year history. The \$63 million renovation, financed through bonds payable with commission revenues and funds raised by the [Indiana State Fair Foundation](#), makes the Coliseum complex the only modern, mid-sized multi-purpose facility in Central Indiana.

"This is a glorious day in the long history of this remarkable campus," Indiana State Fair Commission Chairman Andre Lacy said. "Not only have we resurrected an antiquated facility, but we've breathed new life into the entire fairgrounds. This project ensures that it will be here for many more generations of Hoosiers to come make lasting memories."

The [State Fair Commission](#) studied a variety of renovation options over several years before beginning a complete building overhaul on October 29, 2012. [Populous](#) did the architecture and engineering work while [Hunt Construction Group](#) of Indianapolis handled the construction.

In the end, much of the building's 75-year history was preserved by reinstalling 96 original seats; recreating the original terrazzo floor; and leaving original walls and steel support beams exposed. The renovation finished three months ahead of schedule and includes the adjoining Youth Arena, a 30,000 sq. ft. multi-purpose building that opened last August.

"The renovation is simply amazing – better than we ever imagined," Indiana State Fairgrounds Executive Director Cindy Hoyer said. "This is one of the most iconic structures in all of Indiana and we hope visitors appreciate the mix of past and present that went into the design."

"The Coliseum is a special place to me and the First Lady as it was the site of our first date and many Pence family outings since then," Governor Pence said. "Today's reopening is a fitting example of honoring the past while looking to the future and ensures this historic Hoosier building will continue to serve the people of Indiana for decades to come."

The State Fair Commission also honored agriculture with this renovation by keeping multiple animal entry/exit points to the arena floor and by rebuilding the 9 ft. wall that surrounds it. Multiple entry/exit points allow shows to keep a swift pace, and Draft Horse exhibitors around North America laud the wall for its gradual curve that helps guide teams of horses naturally around the arena. In addition, visitors of all Coliseum events will see a special one-minute video message detailing the importance of contemporary agriculture and the key role that Indiana plays in feeding the world.

The renovation did little to change the outside appearance of the Coliseum, but the inside has been completely transformed and now boasts several amenities that include:

- A spacious lobby with elevators to carry guests up to the main concourse
- More than 70 wall-mounted flat-screen TV monitors throughout the building
- Full ADA accessibility
- A double-tiered seating bowl with great sight lines from every seat
- An overhead LED video scoreboard and a video ribbon board that goes around the seating bowl
- A second-floor concessions area that allows visibility into the arena
- A state-of-the-art sound system
- Sound-absorbing walls and ceiling attachments for optimal acoustics
- A curtain system that allows for natural or artificial lighting
- A new, larger Skate Shop serving both the Coliseum and Youth Arena

All these new features, and several others, will enhance the experience for all Coliseum guests, including those of the building's two new anchor tenants, the professional [ECHL](#) hockey league [Indy Fuel](#), and [IUPUI basketball](#), an NCAA Division I program. The Coliseum will have approximately 6,200 seats for hockey games and about 6,500 seats for basketball games.

Visitors will also enjoy the freshly made, upscale concessions offered by [The Savor Society](#), a Carmel-based company that will offer a wide variety of made-to-order foods on customized menus. A special Kids menu with items ranging from \$2 to \$5 and healthier foods, including gluten-free options and vegetarian choices, will also be available. Some of the quality mainstream items will include Vienna beef hot dogs, gourmet burgers, fresh-cut fries, flat breads and pizza.

The new Coliseum's first event takes place this Saturday when the Radio One [Women's Empowerment Series](#) gets underway at 10 a.m. Future events include [Dana Mecum's 27<sup>th</sup> Original Spring Classic Auto Auction](#) in May; the [WZPL Birthday Bash](#) featuring Karmin in June; and the [National Junior Angus Show](#) in July. During the [State Fair](#) Aug. 1 – 17, the Coliseum will host Draft Horse competitions, livestock shows, the Champion Drive, the Celebration of Champions and a full line-up of headline concerts.

“The new Coliseum is a one-of-a-kind, family friendly facility that is ready to bring more memorable experiences to Hoosiers of all ages for many more years,” Executive Director Hoye said. “We couldn’t be prouder of this historical achievement and we couldn’t have done it without a tremendous amount of public support.”

Hundreds of individuals and organizations from all over Indiana have already contributed more than \$8.6 million to the Coliseum Campaign, which is still active. Anyone still interested in supporting the project can do so online at [www.fairgroundscoliseum.com](http://www.fairgroundscoliseum.com).

### **About Indiana State Fairgrounds**

*Established in 1892, the Indiana State Fairgrounds is a modern public event facility that annually hosts more than 300 meetings, shows, sports and agriculture events, including the Indiana State Fair. The Indiana State Fairgrounds is one of Indiana’s top tourist destinations annually attracting 2 million visitors to its 250-acre campus in Indianapolis’ Midtown district and adding \$124 million to the local economy. Agriculture and food production education are part of the fairgrounds’ core values. The nine-member Indiana State Fair Commission, a quasi-governmental agency, oversees year-round management of the fairgrounds, which operates in a safe and fiscally conscious manner for the benefit of all citizens of Indiana. Additional information is available at [www.indianastatefair.com](http://www.indianastatefair.com).*

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