



PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Ashley Whittaker

Email: awhittaker@sportadvisory.com

Rocky Mount Event Center Moving Forward

Event Center poised for 2020

(Rocky Mount, NC) December 18, 2019: The Sports Facilities Management (SFM) recently completed the first twelve months of operating and managing the Rocky Mount Event Center on behalf of the City of Rocky Mount. SFM reports the Event Center has outpaced its forecasted performance in several key areas. During the first twelve months, this unique facility has attracted nearly 70,000 visitors and brought 185 jobs to the community. When compared to the original forecast published by the City during the planning process, the Event Center is contributing more visitors and visitor spending than originally expected.

Travel Sports. The Event Center was projected to host 11 travel sport competitions in the Year 1 pro forma. Through the first 12 months of operation, the Event Center doubled expectations by hosting 23 sports travel events. [Sports Facilities Management \(SFM\)](#) reports having scheduled 39 events in 2020, which is well above original expectations.

Banquets. The Event Center has hosted 102 banquet events through the first 12 months exceeding the projection of 97 from the original forecast by SFA. SFM now reports the 2020 banquet calendar is filling rapidly with over 100 events already scheduled.

Economic Impact and Visitor Spending. The Event Center nearly doubled the first year's projection by producing \$7.1 million in new spending against a year 1 objective of \$4.2 million. The Event Center is projected to bring an economic impact of \$264 million in new spending to Rocky Mount over the first 10 years.

In its first year the Event Center hosted visitors playing basketball, volleyball, cheer, dance, and gymnastics. The Event Center is hosting the Harlem Globetrotters and a Monster Truck event in January. This coming year, SFM is projecting \$11 million in visitor spending into Rocky Mount, Edgecombe and Nash Counties.

Financial Projections. During the planning process, the projections demonstrated a ramp-up would be necessary to grow and stabilize the business. The stabilization period projected the need for a subsidy for the first three years of operation with an operational surplus in years 4 through 10. When combining the pre-opening operational costs with the fiscal year ending

June 2019, the cumulative operating cost for the Event Center was \$2.2 million, which beat budget by \$108,000.

Game Day Entertainment Center. In the first 12 months, the Game Day Entertainment Center has hosted 273 group, social, non-profit and corporate events.

When asked about the experience of opening the Event Center, SFM COO Dave Pritchett commented, “We have opened some of the most successful complexes in the country and opening any new venue of this magnitude is a challenge. While we strive to provide excellent customer service, we realize every experience has not been superior. We are putting additional processes in place that will better serve all stakeholders.” Pritchett continued, “While we experienced and learned from some unique challenges in Rocky Mount, we are very optimistic by the current, positive trajectory of the Event Center.”

SFM reports a number of important strategies will be implemented in early 2020 to continue the growing performance and service of the Event Center. A continued focus on event bookings including sports tourism, entertainment, and group events consisting of banquets, birthday parties and social gatherings will be a primary priority. Additional food offerings and entertainment packages in the Game Day Entertainment Center will be available early in the year. SFM reports a focus on cost control and expense management as important. Continued staff development, personnel additions and changes will continue the growth in performance and service experience for guests.

One of these staff changes will be a transition in the SFM General Manager. Art Thomason will be stepping down as GM and positively supporting the transition of a new, permanent General Manager. During this transition, the city has approved SFM in bringing on David Joyner as interim GM.

“I am proud of the progress we have made at the Event Center this year, and I am grateful to have worked with a dedicated team,” Thomason commented. “I am committed to the new GM, Event Center team, and the city of Rocky Mount for a positive transition with great service to the community into the new year. We have a lot in the pipeline, and I look forward to seeing it fulfilled for Rocky Mount.”

Councilman Reuben Blackwell added, “We are grateful for the passion and focus to a quality guest experience this team brings to work every day. Art has been critical in getting us to this stage, we thank him for the service, and wish him the best in his next endeavor.”

Rocky Mount Chamber President and CEO David Farris added, “We are thrilled to hear the Event Center is generating positive momentum. As a start-up, we expected a period to stabilization and have confidence the SFM team is focused on the right priorities to accelerate growth. Our Chamber is also excited to announce that we will be hosting our third annual Women’s Forum at the Rocky Mount Event Center and we are expecting our largest attendance so far. I am delighted and grateful that David Joyner is coming in as the interim General Manager, this is a great win for our community, and he has our full support.

About Sports Facilities Advisory and Management: Sports Facilities Advisory, LLC (SFA) and Sports Facilities Management, LLC (SFM) are both headquartered in Clearwater, FL. Founded in 2003, SFA has served more than 2,000 communities, produced more than \$10 billion in institutional-grade financial forecasts, and provided funding strategies and solutions for more than 70+ youth and amateur sports and recreation complexes worldwide. SFM provides industry-leading, results-driven management solutions for sports, fitness, recreation, and event venues nationwide. Since 2014, SFM-affiliated venues have hosted more than 100 million visitors and generated hundreds of millions of dollars in economic impact. For more information, visit: sportadvisory.com and sfmnetwork.com.



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