

# **Wisconsin Economic Development Corp.: \$250,000 state grant to help boost development of new basketball arena in Oshkosh**

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*Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation to help fund public infrastructure for new stadium for minor-league basketball team*

**MADISON, WI. June 12, 2017** - The city of Oshkosh has received a \$250,000 state grant to help finance necessary public infrastructure improvements for the new arena for the Wisconsin Herd, a minor-league basketball team affiliated with the Milwaukee Bucks. The grant from the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) will be used to help fund \$2.3 million in improvements, including street and sidewalk work, installation of traffic lights and street lights, and other infrastructure needs for the \$20 million arena. Construction on the 3,500-seat arena is expected to be completed this fall, which will enable the Herd, the newest franchise in the NBA Development League, to commence play this season.

"The arena will not only provide a new home for the Herd, but will be a true catalyst for downtown Oshkosh that will create jobs and have a significant economic development impact on the entire region," said Mark R. Hogan, secretary and CEO of WEDC, the state's lead economic development organization. "This project is a great example of how WEDC works closely with communities and the private sector to help revitalize downtowns throughout the state."

"We are excited that WEDC has awarded a Community Development Investment Grant to the City of Oshkosh and the developers of the Oshkosh Arena," said City Manager Mark Rohloff. "This grant will facilitate the development of the Oshkosh Arena and serve as a catalyst for growth in Oshkosh's new Sawdust District. The public improvements funded through this grant will improve traffic flow to and from the arena. Over time, the arena and the public improvements will make the Sawdust District a desirable destination for Oshkosh residents and visitors alike."

The new arena is currently under construction on the site of the former Buckstaff Furniture building, an 8-acre parcel on South Main Street. Demolition of buildings on the site has been completed, and infrastructure improvements are necessary for the project to move forward. The arena will be a multi-use facility that will host concerts, youth sporting events, expos and other events, in addition to Herd games. On non-game days, there will be a sports bar and team store that will be open seven days a week. The project is expected to spur future development in the neighborhood.

Once the arena is completed, developer Fox Valley Pro Basketball Inc. is planning to create an entertainment district that will include restaurants, retail stores and possibly residential development.

"Just a few months ago, the former Buckstaff site was home to one of the most blighted eyesores in northeastern Wisconsin," said Jason White, CEO of the Greater Oshkosh Economic Development Corporation. "Thanks to WEDC supporting the city's redevelopment efforts, this site will become a place of pride in our region and state. The process of transforming the Sawdust District has begun."

WEDC's Community Development Investment Grant Program supports community development and redevelopment efforts, primarily in downtown areas. Awards are based on the ability of applicants to demonstrate the impact of the proposed project, including public and private partnership development, financial need, and use of sustainable downtown development practices.

Since the program's inception in 2013, WEDC has awarded \$12.5 million in Community Development Investment Grants for projects expected to generate more than \$248 million in capital investments statewide.