

‘UpFront’: Former DOA Secretary Neitzel says Bucks’ arena will net ‘tremendous’ payback for taxpayers

Posted on Monday, May 13, 2019

Fiserv Forum, the new home of the Milwaukee Bucks, will return a tremendous amount of money to state taxpayers who helped fund it, said Scott Neitzel, the former administration secretary for Republican Gov. Scott Walker who helped craft the arena deal.

Neitzel, who as former chairman of the Wisconsin Center District Board co-signed the Bucks’ lease agreement, appeared Sunday on “UpFront,” produced in partnership with WisPolitics.com.

Neitzel said about half of the money needed to build the arena came from public sources, and of that, \$80 million came from the state.

“For that \$80 million, the state — just in income tax revenue from events that go on here, just from the basketball events actually — is estimated to be probably over \$600 million over the life of the lease,” Neitzel said.

>> WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)

“So that payback for state taxpayers is tremendous,” he said.

Neitzel said there’s also “the pride of having a potential championship team here.” The Bucks are in the Eastern Conference finals for the first time since 2001.

Neitzel recalled that during the time the arena deal was being negotiated, it wasn’t a slam dunk. The deal needed legislative approval, which it received in July of 2015. Walker signed it the next month.

“There was a great deal of skepticism, and I think that we had to overcome that. But once you see what’s happened here, we’ve accomplished everything that we had hoped to, and then even more,” he said.

“The development that’s going on around (the arena) is just tremendous,” he said.

Neitzel also said he always wants to thank former Democratic U.S. Sen. Herb Kohl, the Bucks’ former owner, who put up \$100 million to help launch the new arena.

“This team, this arena, is not here, but for Sen. Kohl,” Neitzel said.

Also on the program, WISN 12 News reporter Matt Smith investigated why Foxconn’s plans to build a new, high-tech plant in Harrisburg, Pa., never came to fruition.

In 2013, Foxconn said it would invest millions of dollars and build a facility in Harrisburg that would create hundreds of jobs. But it never happened.

Instead, the company maintains a publicly unknown number of employees working in an older building, and the nature of their work isn’t clear, Smith said.

David Black, Harrisburg Regional Chamber president and CEO, said it isn’t known why Foxconn’s plans in Pennsylvania faded away.

“I don’t think we’ll ever find out exactly what happened,” Black said. “The plant was never built, there was never any follow up.”

Smith said the people involved in Foxconn’s Pennsylvania negotiations didn’t return his phone calls.

Smith said Foxconn did give him a statement that said, in part, “The Pennsylvania state government did not present a joint investment program that would have made the project economically viable.”

See more from the show:

<http://wisn.com/upfront>.