

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2008

EDGE

The professional journal for the ice skating industry

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CROSS CUTS

ARID Ice introduces new desiccant dehumidifier

SAVAGE, Minn. – ARID Ice has introduced the new MS 2600 desiccant dehumidifier, designed for smaller recreational, practice and curling rinks. This system is designed to mimic the physical and power consumption profiles of typical mechanical refrigeration dehumidifiers. Designed to deliver 2600 scfm of dry air and run on less than 20 amps of electricity at 480 volts, the system provides increased drying capacity with minimal retrofit cost. Becker Arena Products Inc. is the exclusive distributor for the MS 2600.

NHL contracts CIMCO for outdoor Winter Classic

CONCORD, Ontario — CIMCO Refrigeration Inc. will provide customized portable outdoor rink services for the NHL's 2009 Winter Classic outdoor hockey game featuring the Chicago Blackhawks and Detroit Red Wings at Wrigley Field on Jan. 1. The agreement calls for CIMCO to design and manufacture a refrigeration package, ICEHOUSE 300A, which will be installed in a 53-foot trailer so that it may be used for future events in a variety of venues. The initial term of the agreement includes the next six Winter Classic events. CIMCO is the NHL's Preferred Rink Equipment Supplier.



Tai Babilonia and Bear Hill Sports announce partnership

CHARLOTTE, Vt./LOS ANGELES — Kim Dow, founder of Bear Hill Sports, and U.S. and world gold medalist Tai Babilonia have partnered to create a new line of figure skating apparel for women and girls. The Tai Collection's initial line, which will launch this winter, will include several simple but elegant skirts, a ballet wrap style sweater hand-woven in South America, leggings and two leotard-style tops. The line will be available at bearhillsports.com.

50th Anniversary ISI Conference, Trade Show and Skating Championships set for May '09 in Orlando

PLANO, Texas — The 50th Anniversary ISI Ice Arena Conference & Trade Show is scheduled for May 26-29 in Orlando, Fla. at the Hilton in the Walt Disney World Resort. In celebration of the milestone anniversary, the ISI annual event will be preceded by a recreational ice skating competition May 23-25 at RDV Sportsplex Ice Den, and will feature a gala and other special activities during conference week. Additional highlights will be announced in the coming months. Watch for an e-mail announcing the event prospectus posting on skateisi.org, and look for a special insert in the January/February issue of *ISI EDGE*.



ISI President Jim Hartnett presents a certificate of completion of the ISI Judge Mentoring Program to Crystal Williams, a skating instructor at Harry J. McDonald Memorial Center in Eagle River, Alaska. Williams served as an assistant to the competition director, Randy Winship, and the chief referees during the 2008 World Recreational Team Championships in Denver.

Send announcements and photos to editor@skateisi.org. Watch your e-mail Updates for facility news, including construction and openings.



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Schools Support Arena Professionals in Difficult Times

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There is no question that 2008 has ushered in one of the most difficult financial times our industry has faced in many years. Despite the strains on our budgets and schedules, more arena professionals than ever before have committed the time and resources necessary to achieve iAIM certification this year.

A total of 156 arena managers, operators and programmers earned certification at schools held in Kansas City (in partnership with IAAM), Michigan, Minnesota (in partnership with MIAMA) and Massachusetts. These dedicated professionals understand that the best way to overcome our current challenges is to invest in

head-on with an emphasis on high-quality, affordable introductory and recreational ice sports programming.

Students learned the proven concepts of strategic ice scheduling to maximize revenue as well as linking and blending programs to increase retention and progression into other arena activities. Creative marketing of the facility and programs, sponsorship and ancillary revenue sources were all covered in detail to give graduates the knowledge and tools required to have an immediate impact on growing revenue.

Of special note as we look back on the 2008 schools is the expanding partnerships ISI is developing to bring professional certification within reach of everyone in our industry. ISI has worked jointly with

the International Association of Assembly Managers (IAAM) over the last four years to produce the School of Ice Technology (SIT). This very successful venture has brought the art and science of producing high-quality ice to hundreds of ice technicians and operators from professional and college facilities as well as community ice arenas.

Expanding on that success, ISI entered into a partnership this year with the Minnesota Ice Arena Managers

Association (MIAMA) to provide certification schools for members at their fall meetings. The collaboration got off to a strong start in September with more than 40 graduates earning their iAIM Certified Arena Management (CAM) or Certified Arena Operations (CAO) credentials.

Combining the resources and assets of both organizations proved once again that our industry can achieve so much more when we work together toward our common goals. The Ice Arena Institute of Management was created by ISI to deliver industry education and ongoing support to help arena professionals achieve new levels of proficiency and success. We invite all industry organizations and stakeholders who share that aspiration to join forces with us at this difficult time when, more than ever before, our industry needs us to work together. ▀



Participants in the iAIM Schools of Programming and Management, held in Rockland, Mass.



Participants in the iAIM Schools of Operations and Management, held in Minnesota in partnership with MIAMA

learning the best practices to lower operating costs and increase revenues.

In recognition of the enormous pressures that high energy costs are placing on ice arenas, the management and operations classes were updated to place even greater emphasis on proven methods to reduce energy consumption without sacrificing the quality of our ice or the experience for our patrons. Graduates left the schools with an in-depth understanding of where and how energy is used in an arena, along with practical solutions for controlling it in their own facility.

The current economic conditions we face are also limiting our ability to grow revenues and increase participation. The arena programming and management schools tackled this issue



Participants in the iAIM Schools of Operations and Design, Construction and Renovation, held in Adrian, Mich.



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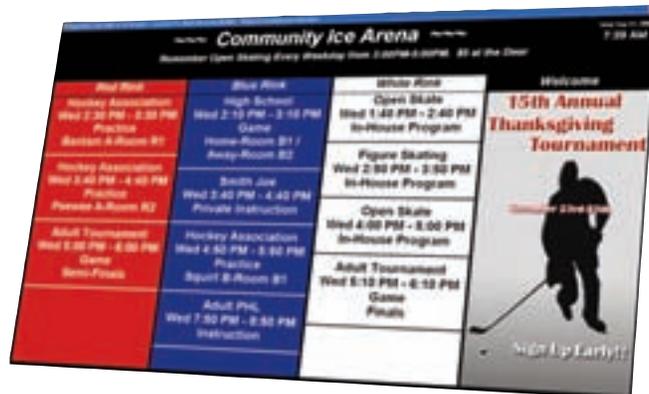
by Pat Walter

Thriving in challenging economic times is no easy task for any organization. Expanding customer demands, tightening budgets and competition from alternative sources of entertainment create a daunting environment for even the best managers.

Ice arenas are continually looking for ways to secure and maintain a competitive advantage, and technology integration offers a terrific opportunity to achieve that goal.

Software solutions have been available for years to assist ice arenas in addressing administrative, financial, marketing and building control functions within their facilities. These solutions are either client-based (installed locally) or Web-hosted (delivered via Internet, using a remote host).

To truly exploit technology and achieve maximum competitive advantage, arenas must explore opportunities to integrate various software applications and technologies into their facilities. The more integrated areas, the greater the benefit to the arena and, ultimately, the greater the customer satisfaction level.



Perhaps the best way to illustrate the advantages is to “walk through” a sample scenario that incorporates multiple levels of technology integration.

SCENARIO: Technology's impact on the creation of an adult men's hockey league from initial setup through the first night of the games

- Using automated scheduling tools, you schedule the ice from 8-10 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays, for an eight-week period. Time may be blocked out for games, practices, etc.
- You set up the parameters for the league and create teams.
- All the pertinent league information is published on the arena's Web site. This creates excitement for the league and marketing potential for attracting new participants. At the same time, you produce a list from your database that contains all of the players who participated in the league during the past three years. A mass e-mail invitation is sent, inviting participants to sign up for the season.
- In an effort to speed up the registration process and reduce staff costs, you allow participants to register for the league online and pay with a credit card. This avoids inconvenient and costly bad-check receipts, and ensures that all funds received are deposited into your bank account in a timely manner — typically, the next day.
- You now assign players to their respective teams and automatically generate their game schedules. Once the games are scheduled, you also assign the game officials. You e-mail the schedule to all participants and post it on your Web site for all to see. Any changes to the schedule are automatically updated to your Web site, ensuring up-to-the-minute accuracy.
- It's opening night. The players enter the arena through an unattended door by swiping their access card, which activates the turnstile.
- The players enter the lobby, where they view a monitor (or monitors) displaying their game location and locker room assignments (by team).
- Before heading into the locker room, a few players go to the pro shop to purchase a stick and some tape. The inventory levels for those items are automatically adjusted and a purchase order is prepared and e-mailed to the vendor to ship replacement items to the arena later that week.
- Thirty minutes prior to the arrival of the players, the following functions were automatically performed:
 - The locker room heat was turned on.
 - The lighting over the ice rink was adjusted to the appropriate level.
 - The ice was set to the correct game temperature.
 - The air-handling equipment was adjusted to increase air flow in the facility.
- During the game, statistics are being entered online, so when the players return to their homes they can see their total number of goals and assists.
- The games conclude and you generate your daily financial reports. This allows you to immediately see your profit/loss.
- You prepare to close the facility for the day when you receive an e-mail from your manager (via mobile communication device, e.g., Blackberry) asking for a quick snapshot of the day's activities. You have an immediate response and can forward the appropriate financial reports — in seconds!

In the previous scenario, three key benefits will be derived from technology integration:

Increased revenue

Revenue will increase; just look at the convenience factor for participants and the endless marketing/communication opportunities. Participants may wander elsewhere when only given the option of walk-in registration. Now they may register from the comfort of their homes. Also, by having a comprehensive history for each participant, you will be better equipped to produce targeted mailings. These mailings may greatly increase the odds of successfully enrolling participants in new offerings.

Decreased costs

Decreased costs are achieved in multiple areas as well. A tremendous amount of marketing can be done through your Web site — much more cost-effective than hiring additional staff/resources. In addition, significant energy savings can be derived from integrating the administrative and building control systems within a facility. Controlling the amount

of energy required for lighting, heating, refrigeration, air handling, etc., based on the actual events taking place in the facility may have a dramatically positive effect on overall operating expenses.

seven days a week? Can customers sign up for events and/or activities at their leisure — from any location?

This scenario is just one example of how organizations can achieve compe-

***The more integrated areas,
the greater the benefit to the arena
and, ultimately, the greater the
customer satisfaction.***

Improved customer satisfaction

Ultimately, the greatest and most important benefit of technology integration will come in the form of increased customer satisfaction. Customers have many recreational enjoyment options. Thus, it is extremely important to evaluate your business. How would you respond to the following questions: Does your facility offer an enjoyable, comfortable and safe environment? Can customers find complete, accurate and up-to-date information on your facility 24 hours a day,

titive advantage through technology integration. I now challenge you to seek opportunities within your organization to help separate you from your competitors and make your facility the destination of choice in your community.

iAIM instructor Pat Walter is president of Maximum Solutions Inc., a software solution provider to the ice skating industry since 1995. For more information, visit maxsolutions.com or contact Walter at pwalter@maxsolutions.com.

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TAKE CONTROL OF

Reduce Space and Water Heating Energy Consumption

by Rob McBride, CAE

While the expense of natural gas and propane tends to be lower than electricity in most community ice arenas, it still accounts for a significant portion of the energy budget and must be controlled through a comprehensive strategy that eliminates waste and optimizes equipment efficiency.

The cost of natural gas has increased dramatically over the last 10 years — in many areas more than tripling. The American Gas Association (AGA) recently projected a 19 to 20 percent increase this winter due to increases in wholesale natural gas costs.

The good news is that advancements in technology and a national emphasis

on energy conservation are providing arena owners and operators with many options to reduce consumption without negatively affecting customers.

When compared to electricity, natural gas and propane usually cost substantially less per unit of energy (the exception being areas served by hydroelectric generators). Since natural gas is commonly the fuel source used to generate electricity, it stands to reason that it will be less expensive in most cases at the point of metering.

It is critical to know the current and trend cost per unit of energy when evaluating options for equipment upgrades.

This cost, along with the efficiency rating of the equipment under actual operating conditions, will help you determine the best value for your facility. Claims of lower-cost dehumidification or high-efficiency heating with electric equipment should be assessed with that information in hand. For example, an electric resistance heating unit may be rated as 100 percent efficient in converting energy to heat, but a high-efficiency natural gas furnace that is 90 to 96 percent efficient will almost always be a much more economical choice.

Typical Breakdown of Energy – Varies by Arena

Natural Gas / Propane Use by Area	% of Total
Space heating	57%
Hot water (domestic & ice resurfacing)	17%
Dehumidification (desiccant type)	11%
Snowmelt pit	10%
Other uses (concession, ventilation reheat, etc.)	5%

Estimate based on year-round operation, northern climate

Source: IIHF

in technology and a national emphasis on energy conservation are providing arena owners and operators with many options to reduce consumption without negatively affecting customers.

When compared to electricity, natural gas and propane usually cost substantially less per unit of energy (the

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YOUR ENERGY USE

WHERE ARE YOU USING NATURAL GAS OR PROPANE IN YOUR ARENA?

As with electricity, in order to effectively control consumption you must understand where and how this type of energy is used in your facility. The chart on page 10 shows the average breakdown of natural gas or propane consumption for a typical year-round community ice arena in the northern climate. The total usage and percentage breakdown will vary substantially by climate, facility design and equipment, as well as operating practices.

As the chart indicates, the majority of fuel is used for space heating. Domestic and resurfacing hot water comprise the second highest use. Gas-fired regeneration of desiccant dehumidifiers averages 11 percent of use. Interior snowmelt that uses hot water or a combustion-fired heat source consumes 10 percent of fuel. The remaining 5 percent breaks down in miscellaneous areas.

HOW CAN YOU REDUCE CONSUMPTION?

The greatest opportunities to reduce overall consumption would be space heating and hot water, which account for 74 percent of the total use in this typical ice arena. Significant reductions are also possible in dehumidification and snowmelt pits, and should be part of a comprehensive program. We will begin with some general concepts followed by specific measures to reduce consumption in each area.

1. Reduce heat losses and air/moisture infiltration

The transfer of heat and moisture in and out of the ice arena is the source of a significant amount of energy use. Ice arenas create and maintain substantially different conditions between interior spaces of the building, leading to the transfer of heat and moisture loads within the facility as well as with the exterior. This

should be mitigated through proper installation and maintenance of insulation, air barriers and vapor retarders.

2. Upgrade to high-efficiency equipment

The introduction of condensing heat exchangers, modulating burners, variable speed drives and microprocessor controls has led to enormous efficiency improvements in furnace, boiler and water-heating equipment. In low return-temperature designs, it is not uncommon for these types of units to achieve efficiencies in the 92 to 96 percent range, while older standard equipment ranges from 55 to 65 percent efficient.

3. Invest in maintenance

Equipment that is well maintained will use less energy. According to Department of Energy studies, proper maintenance can lead to energy savings of 10 to 20 percent for heating system operation. Traditionally, maintenance is performed to ensure reliability.

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bility and maintain acceptable conditions. To conserve energy we must incorporate efficiency into our maintenance program through periodic retro commissioning, calibration and fine-tuning.

4. Install control systems to optimize efficiency and reduce usage based on occupancy levels

Intelligent control systems can reduce energy consumption by an average of 5 to 15 percent when properly implemented and maintained. These systems should integrate setpoint scheduling, occupancy sensors, monitoring, alarming and dynamic optimization control to achieve efficiencies while ensuring a high-quality environment for the arena patrons.

5. Recover waste heat from your ice rink refrigeration plant

Heat-exchange equipment and integrated controls create the opportunity to efficiently move heat around inside the facility rather than rejecting it to the atmosphere. Ultimately, this is far more efficient than producing the heat with other systems. The refrigeration plant is capable of providing a significant portion of water and space-heating needs when properly designed and implemented.

SPACE HEATING

Space heating typically represents the largest use of natural gas or propane in arena facilities. It can range from 40 to 70 percent of the total, depending on the local climate. Arena heating systems are generally composed of forced-air furnaces, hydronic systems that utilize a boiler or heat pump or infrared radiant heaters.

Slowing heat transfer from the conditioned spaces to the non-conditioned spaces or exterior is essential for reducing heating energy.

The greatest source of heat loss is through infiltration — air passing through the building envelope or between interior spaces. This can be reduced by caulking

or weather-stripping to seal openings around penetrations for electrical and plumbing, doors and windows.

As much as 56 percent of heat loss occurs through the combination of walls, floors and the roof. This can be substantially reduced by increasing or replacing thermal insulation, particularly in the critical roof-wall interface of the building.

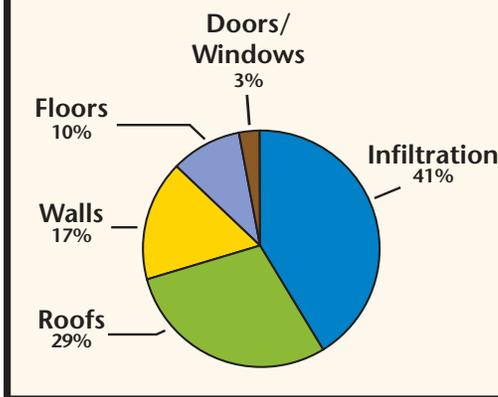
An average of 3 percent of heat is lost through doors and windows. Incorporating entrance vestibules will decrease the amount of airflow in and out of the building. Self-closing doors in openings to non-conditioned spaces will prevent excessive air exchange. Keeping openings (windows, exterior resurfer door, etc.) closed tightly as much as possible will minimize losses.

Upgrading equipment is an indispensable aspect of a conservation strategy. Replacing older heating units having AFUE ratings in the 65 percent range with new condensing equipment capable of achieving 95 percent AFUE will reduce heating energy by almost one-third. Most states or utilities will offer financial incentives to help pay for the upgrade.

Condensing furnaces, water heaters and boilers achieve higher efficiency by extracting heat from the exhaust gases with a more efficient primary or a secondary heat exchanger. The term “condensing” refers to the process of flue gasses giving up thermal energy when changing from vapor to liquid.

A lower air or water return temperature increases the condensing process and raises the efficiency. For this reason, outdoor air temperature resets and unoccupied setbacks are an even more

Typical Building Heat Loss



effective tool for ice arenas to reduce heating energy.

Infrared radiant heaters should be considered for the spectator areas of the ice rink space as they provide localized heat rather than heating the entire air mass. This efficiently places heat where it is needed for spectator comfort, using a fraction of the energy required to heat the air. It also reduces heat loads on the ice sheet, lowering refrigeration energy required to remove it.

Low-intensity tube-type infrared heaters are vented to the exterior while high-intensity luminous heaters require auxiliary ventilation and the open combustion contributes significant moisture load to the ice rink. For these reasons, the low-intensity units tend to be the better choice for ice arenas.

Infrared heaters should be evaluated on their efficiency in converting energy input to infrared radiant heat output. A standard rating for infrared efficiency would be 35 percent; however, higher efficiency units are available.

Preventive and efficiency maintenance are important in the overall strategy to achieve energy savings. An annual tune-up, regular filter changes and a preventive maintenance regimen can reduce energy waste by as much as 15 percent. The maintenance should include a comprehensive inspection at least quarterly during the heating season. Filters should be changed monthly to minimize the buildup dust on the heat exchanger that will reduce heat transfer. Ductwork should be cleaned annually and be properly insulated.

Controlling thermostats is crucial in ice arenas where occupancy rates

Annual Fuel Utilization Efficiency (AFUE)

This official Department of Energy rating identifies the percentage of fuel input that is converted to heat. It factors on/off cycling as well as seasonal operating conditions. A higher rating equates to greater efficiency.

Continued on page 14



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vary significantly. Intelligent controls will lower setpoints when the building or spaces are unoccupied. For every 1 F the space temperature is lowered, heating energy is reduced by approximately 1 percent.

A low-cost approach is to utilize programmable thermostats for each heating zone that integrate motion sensors to automatically reduce the setpoint when the space is unoccupied. This type of dynamic automation is superior to set schedules that require continual updates.

Utilizing the waste heat from the refrigeration plant offers a significant opportunity to reduce heating energy. A standard heat-recovery design utilizes a heat exchanger on the compressor discharge line to recover a majority, if not

A tremendous amount of heat is lost through the piping network in a centralized system, particularly when it is located inside the ice rink space. For this reason it is almost always more efficient to choose a distributed system when possible.

The term “thermal efficiency” is used to rate water-heating equipment. It is similar to AFUE but also includes the thermal losses from the unit enclosure.

For electric water heaters, the thermal efficiency is typically 98 percent. Natural gas and propane-fired units range from 77 to 96 percent. Though electric water heaters may have a higher rating, they are normally twice as expensive to operate as natural gas.

Condensing water heaters significantly reduce energy consumption with the high volume of heated water consumed by an ice arena. Their corrosion-resistant heat exchangers allow for shutdown during unoccupied periods without damage. This reduces standby heat losses in the storage tank and piping.

Demand water

heaters completely eliminate standby losses, reducing energy consumption by 10 to 15 percent in comparison to standard tank systems. These units are installed at the point of use and provide hot water only when needed.

Conserving water also reduces the energy required to heat it. Low-flow faucets and shower heads (less than 2.5 GPM) can reduce hot water consumption by 25 to 50 percent. Metering or sensor faucets eliminate hot water being left on or overused.

Excessive water temperature leads to greater standby losses and reduced heater efficiency. Health codes require minimum temperatures of 110 to 120 F at the faucet; however, many arenas needlessly operate at higher temperatures, wasting energy. Each 10 F reduction in water temperature will save 3 to 5 percent in heating costs.

Maintaining insulation on hot-water pipes will reduce losses. Energy is lost in the piping system (particularly in unheated rink spaces) as well as from

waiting for hot water to reach the tap because poor insulation allows water to cool in the lines.

Using refrigeration waste heat to preheat the makeup water supply can significantly reduce energy. Supply water is often between 50 and 60 F; waste heat can raise that temperature by 30 to 40 F, reducing the amount of heating required.

A large portion of hot water is consumed for ice resurfacing. This use is a prime opportunity for efficiency, as it requires energy to heat the water and also refrigeration energy to remove that heat. Even small adjustments in this area can have significant conservation benefits.

Heating resurfacing water is necessary to remove air; the temperature required will vary by water quality, ice temperature and resurfacing techniques. Arenas should experiment with lower water and corresponding higher ice temperatures to find the ultimate balance of energy efficiency and quality ice.

Demineralization of resurfacer water in many situations will allow a lower temperature. When and how the ice resurfacer is filled is also important. Filling the resurfacer too early and allowing the water to cool wastes energy. Auto-fill systems or timers should be used to ensure overflow is minimized. Operators should estimate the amount of water required for each ice resurface and fill only that amount to prevent water from cooling between resurfacings.

CONCLUSION

There are many affordable opportunities to reduce natural gas or propane consumption in your ice arena. The increased cost of these fuels along with the mass production of high-efficiency equipment and controls is reducing the payback period to the point that many initiatives can be implemented through the operating budget or short-term capital budget.

Part three will review general building lighting as well as building automation systems that can fully integrate control of all energy-consuming equipment in the arena to optimize efficiency and reduce peak demand for energy.

Thermal Efficiency

This official rating for water heaters and boilers represents the combustion efficiency of the unit after subtracting the energy lost in the flue and through the jacket of the unit itself.

A higher rating equals greater efficiency.

all of, the waste heat before it reaches the condenser.

This heat can be used for space heating with low-temperature hydronic convectors and fan coil systems and floor radiation, as well as with standard hydronic systems when water source heat-pump technology is used to efficiently raise the temperature of the recovered heat. An integrated control system is required to effectively align the refrigeration and heating needs with arena occupancy.

HOT WATER

Two types of water heating are used in ice arenas, distributed or centralized systems. Distributed systems incorporate multiple smaller water heaters or on-demand units that have no storage requirement. The heaters are located throughout the arena near the point of use. A centralized system heats and stores water in a single location and distributes it throughout with pumps.



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Look for the complete 2009 ISI 50th Anniversary Ice Arena Conference & Trade Show prospectus, coming soon via e-mail and in your January/February *ISI EDGE*.

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The Business of Coaching

by Tiesha Potvin Coale

Coaching is a business, and success requires organization, time management and special “juggling” techniques to build a stellar reputation with your students, fellow coaches and facility. In an ever-changing industry, coaches are on the front line to promote skating through good business practices.

The first step in this process is to define your goals as a coach. Establish a vision statement and a mission for your career. A vision statement involves determining your goals as a coach, and your mission is the plan of action to make it happen. Setting your personal coaching goals is the first step to fulfillment. You need to decide what kind of coach you want to be (competitive, recreational or specialty coach) and where you see yourself in both the short and long term.

Ask yourself what defines success for you. It can be any or all of the following: income, a large student base, respect from other coaches, skater success, praise from skaters/parents/facility, obtaining many referrals or maintaining a balance between personal and professional life. After determining your goals, reassess them often to make sure you are on track.

As a business, coaching goes beyond the scope of the lesson on the ice. Good business practices start in these important areas:

- Being professional
- Hard work — beyond the ice lesson
- Organization
- Self-discipline
- Learning from your errors
- Communication
- Information
- Availability

Professionalism

Professionalism in your career can cover a broad range of topics and can mean many different things to different

people. Professionalism begins with being an ethical coach. Most coaches know the black-and-white issues, but how you handle those ethical “gray areas” will separate you from the crowd and help you gain the respect of other coaches, skaters and the facility where you work.

It is important to always look professional. Your appearance is a reflection of you. Ask yourself this question: If I just walked into the rink for the first time, would I hire myself? Being a coach is a performance, so ... perform! Remember to always smile and be animated so you appeal to potential and

Decide what kind of coach you want to be (competitive, recreational or specialty coach) and where you see yourself in both the short and long term.

returning customers.

Continuing education and acquiring certifications (iAIM, judging and weSKATE) is a must for the coaching professional. By attending conferences, workshops, educational programs and seminars, you can provide a quality service by being able to keep up to date on rule changes and important information and trends in the industry. Always keep memberships and insurance current.

Hard work

Coaching requires hard work, both on and off the ice. Thinking that your job is limited to the time the skater pays to be on the ice with you is an incredible disservice to your career as well as to your student. Coaches are paid for both their on-ice expertise and their management of the skater. Managing your skater includes other components of the sport such as: testing, competition, shows, off-ice training, camps, locating and cutting music, parent/skater meetings, billing and budgeting, and assist-

ing with equipment purchases. Some coaches bill extra for some or all of these services, but be aware that these other components are important parts of the job description.

Organization

Good organizational skills are extremely important, both for your own record-keeping and your outward appearance to your skating clientele. Most coaches are aware of the obvious need for good recordkeeping when it comes to taxes. Organization in other areas can help coaches stand out and jumpstart their careers. It all begins with being prepared

for every lesson!

Have rulebooks, markers and your schedule available on the ice with you for all lessons. Know your scheduled lessons and openings for the week, and always be

on time for every lesson.

Today's coaches also find themselves on the road traveling to multiple rinks. Being able to use that time wisely and being prepared when traveling can make the most of a busy schedule. The traveling coach should keep in mind the following: be sure to always maintain your car properly and fill up the gas tank the night before; use the time in the car to return phone calls with a hands-free headset; keep extra items that you use regularly in the car; plan extra travel time for heavy traffic times; listen to music for potential skating programs; keep extra clothing in your car for cold rinks; and use a digital voice recorder for remembering important business and personal tasks.

Using technology

Technology allows for coaches to be more organized and professional than ever before. There are many ways to use technology as a coach. Here are some of the more popular ways you can integrate technology.

Continued on page 18

It's about time!

New universal term makes renewal tracking a breeze!

ISI Membership Made Simple

- Effective Sept. 1, 2008, ISI changed to a universal membership term for both Professional and Individual members. Memberships will begin on Sept. 1 and expire on Aug. 31 of each year.
- Annual membership fees will remain the same (\$75 for Professional, \$13 for Individual), and will be prorated after March 1 of each year (\$45 for Professional, \$9 for Individual).
- Existing memberships that expire after Sept. 1, 2008 remain in effect through the end of their current membership period, then depending on that date, renew at either the full or pro-rated rate for the remainder of the 2008-09 term.
- By Sept. 1, 2009, all memberships will renew on the same date each year!

FAQs

Why a universal membership term?

We have received considerable feedback from our Administrative members who have told us that our "12 months from inception" membership period was difficult to track and an administrative challenge for many rink managers and skating school directors. This new system will eliminate those issues and streamline the process for all involved – rinks, coaches, skaters, parents and the ISI headquarters. It's an easy date to remember, and coincides with the ISI hockey membership renewal date. It will be especially appreciated by families with multiple ISI members currently renewing on different dates.

In the future, will new members have to join at the beginning of the universal term?

No, new members are welcome to join anytime during the year. The full annual membership rate applies between Sept. 1 and March 1; the pro-rated fee applies March 1 through Aug. 31. After that, their memberships will always renew on Sept. 1.

If I renewed in April 2008, do I still get a full year?

Yes. Your membership will expire in April 2009, and at that time you may renew at the discounted rate of \$9 (Individual) or \$45 (Professional). On Sept. 1, 2009, you will renew at the full rate for 12 months.

When new students enroll in summer classes, they may not want to spend \$9 for just a few months of membership. What is available for these skaters?

As an alternative to Individual membership, ISI offers a 13-week *weSKATE* club registration for \$4, allowing new skaters to test up to the Alpha level. On Sept. 1, they will be ready to register for a full 12-month Individual membership for the normal \$13 rate.

**Questions?
Contact the ISI office.**



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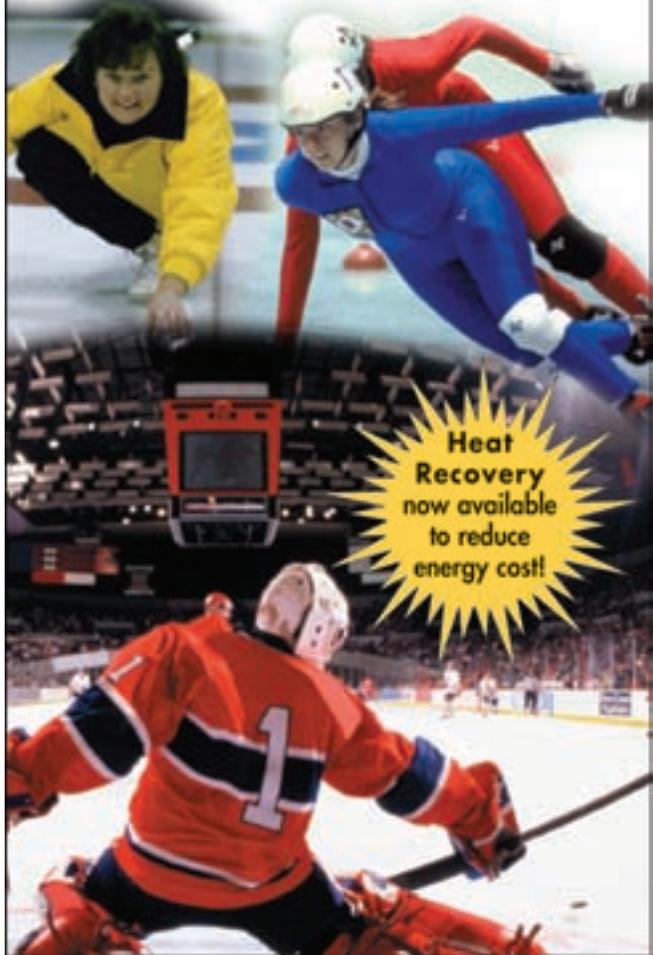
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- **Music-editing and MP3 players:** Being able to edit music is a skill that is becoming more important. A variety of music-editing programs is available, ranging from basic to professional. When selecting a digital music-editing program, consider those that have free trial periods so you can experiment and see which are the easiest to use. Always back up your musical creations and be sure to clearly label all music with the skater name, level, program length, song title and composer. Put your music on your MP3 player to take to the rink. Use an adapter with your sound system to play your MP3 files over your rink speakers, or connect your player to external speakers for easy choreography out on the ice.
- **Slow-motion video and recording:** Many new point-and-shoot cameras offer video recording with slow-motion playback. With high-speed and high-capacity flash memory cards you can record more video and utilize slow-motion playback to supplement your lessons and stand out from the crowd. You can use video to document your skaters' progress and help with goal setting.
- **E-mail:** Use e-mail to get information out quickly, including schedule changes, sending competition applications and sharing photos from events. You can send clients your MP3 and WMA music files for their review.
- **PDA:** A PDA (such as a BlackBerry) can perform many tasks to make your life easier, with such features as phone service, a camera, video, an MP3 player and GPS.

More tips for success

- Participate and volunteer; always be willing to chip in and help.
- Be the FUN, but firm, coach.
- Know what your job is, and do it well.
- Have résumé and business cards on hand at all times.
- Utilize technology (Web sites, digital video, music editing) to set yourself apart from the crowd.
- Know the policies, staff and customers at your facility.
- Sit in the coaches' room and be part of the team.
- Admit there is always something to learn and continue to increase your knowledge.
- Always remember: The facility cannot be successful without you, and you cannot be successful without the facility.

Tiesha Potvin Coale is the co-owner and director of Symmetrical Skating Schools in Connecticut, and the learn-to-skate and learn-to-play-hockey co-director at Champions Skating Center in Cromwell, Conn.



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AN EARTH-CHANGING PARTNERSHIP

by Dianne Powell

Photography by Patrick Dixon



RMU Island Sports Center is a prime example of a successful partnership between government agencies and the private sector.

RMU Island Sports Center celebrated its 10-year anniversary last month, but the milestone marked more than just a decade of state-of-the-art recreation services on Neville Island, Pa. It also served as a reminder of the power of progressive partnership.

From the 1930s to the 1960s, this now-thriving island was used as a dumping ground for the Pittsburgh Coke and Chemical Co., earning it the nickname "Poison Park." In the 1990s, the property owner, downtown Pittsburgh-based Hillman Co., in coop-

eration with the EPA and the Department of Environmental Conservation, spent \$20 million and two years cleaning up the site and transforming it into an environmentally safe recreational haven.

"The Island Sports Center is believed to be the only facility of its kind built on a Superfund site," says Dave Hanson, the facility's general manager. "It is often described as a showcase for brown-field development and what can be accomplished through a partnership between government agencies and the private sector."

When the original owners decided to reclaim and reuse the property, Hanson explains, they embarked on a project that was as extensive as it was expensive. "It had to go through lengthy environmental and public scrutiny, legalities and many other exhausting ordeals."

With solid short- and long-term plans developed in conjunction with the environmental agencies and with sincere intentions to clean up and enhance the site, the Neville Land Co. presented their case to the community and answered residents' concerns.



RMU Island Sports Center is believed to be the only facility of its kind built on a Superfund site.

Positive news coverage worked in the company's favor.

"Once that process was complete, millions of dollars were spent to make the site environmentally safe and to construct a healthy, fun and attractive complex that serves the immediate and surrounding communities as well as current owner Robert Morris University," says Hanson.

A recreation destination

Neville Island — a 5-mile-long parcel of land four-tenths of a mile wide in the Ohio River, nine miles from downtown Pittsburgh — forever shed its toxic waste site image in October 1998 with the opening of the Island Sports Center.

Now a premier recreation destination, ISC has attracted thousands of youth and adults to its ice skating, hockey, golf and field sports programs. The 32-acre complex features two year-round ice rinks — an NHL-size rink with seating for 1,000 spectators and an Olympic-size sheet — and two multi-purpose rinks used for ice skating, inline hockey, lacrosse, soccer and other sports. In addition to ice sports, ISC offers an indoor golf range, a miniature golf course, athletic fields, a strength and fitness center and a pro shop.

The facility operated under the ownership of Neville Land Co. until 2003, when it was purchased by Robert Morris University (RMU), a private school with more than 5,000 students.

"Under the university's guidance, ISC continues its commitment to providing the highest-quality facilities,

training and instruction to both the serious athlete and the casual sports enthusiast," Hanson notes. "We're also home to RMU's NCAA Division I men's and women's ice hockey teams and the university's men's and women's outdoor track and field teams."

The 160,000-square-foot main building on the ISC campus houses the four ice rinks. A 330-ton refrigeration unit helps keep the ice at peak condition while a state-of-the-art water purification system enhances the quality of the ice and a Munters desiccant dehumidification system helps maintain optimal skating conditions. A full-building HVAC system provides comfort for skaters and spectators, and a 110-candle

power lighting system and professional Bose system distribute quality light and sound.

Off-ice, visitors to ISC enjoy a strength and conditioning fitness center staffed by certified trainers and equipped with state-of-the-art cardio, Nautilus and free-weight equipment as well as a cardio theater.

ISC's pro shop offers hockey, inline and figure skating equipment plus expert skate sharpening and equipment repair. Among the facility's many other amenities are banquet and meeting rooms; an arcade; a bistro with oven-fired pizza stove and grill; and wireless Internet access.

The climate-controlled indoor golf and sports dome offers golfers unique opportunities to enhance their game, with a 100-yard driving range (one of the longest indoor shots in the U.S.), 42 tees on upper and lower tiers, a sand bunker, a putting green and a multi-purpose field turf surface used for flag football, soccer, lacrosse, Scout group sleepovers, canine agility trials and softball. PGA and LPGA professionals offer golf lessons, and videotaping and golf swing analysis are available.

For a slightly less-intense golf experience, ISC offers a challenging, beautifully landscaped 18-hole mini golf course overlooking the Ohio River.

Outdoor track and field events are held at ISC on its regulation-size soccer and lacrosse fields and its NCAA regulation eight-lane running track with 400-meter rubberized surface. The track



The 32-acre complex features two year-round ice rinks — an NHL-size rink with seating for 1,000 spectators and an Olympic-size sheet.

Continued on page 22

Continued from page 21

and field complex, locker rooms, training rooms and offices have been added since RMU purchased ISC.

All ages and abilities

Led by an outstanding staff of coaches and instructors, RMU-ISC offers a wide array of programs and classes for skaters and hockey players of all ages and abilities. The youth and adult ice hockey program includes a learn-to-play curriculum for beginners ages 4 to 14; Island Colonials in-house league, a developmental hockey program; a 3 on 3 summer hockey league for mites to junior/college levels; adult hockey leagues; and women's learn-to-play for high school age and older.

The RMU Hockey Academy offers power skating camps and clinics throughout the year and hockey skills development in specialized camps. The RMU Skating Academy's figure and synchronized skating programs and classes are structured for all ages and levels. Youth and adult inline hockey programs are also available.

A long list of ice and inline skating organizations are based at ISC, including: the Pittsburgh Hornets, a Tier I-AAA youth hockey program; the Arctic Foxes, a Tier II youth hockey program; three local high school hockey programs; RMU's men's and women's NCAA Division I teams; RMU's DI Club and DIII Club; RMU's Synchronized Skating Club; Steel City Blades Synchronized Skating Club; Pittsburgh Figure Skating Club; and Pittsburgh Curling Club.

The center has been the site of such high-profile events as the Junior Olympic Figure Skating Championship, the National Short Track Speed Skating Championship, the USA Hockey National Championships, the World Street Hockey Championships, the NEC Track & Field Championship, the annual International TropiCurl Curling Tournament and many other regional and local events.

People power

"When RMU purchased ISC, most of the operational, administrative and instructional staff was retained," says Hanson, who has been general manager of ISC since it opened. "RMU complemented ISC by supplying many of its campus services to assist in maintaining the

Dave "Killer" Hanson

Arena manager, actor, former hockey pro

Dave Hanson, general manager of Robert Morris University Island Sports Center, has a résumé that matches his colorful life.

Born in Cumberland, Wis. and raised in St. Paul, Minn., Hanson a star high school athlete in football, baseball and hockey, and played hockey at the University of Minnesota. He later played for 10 seasons (1974-84) with the NHL's Detroit Red Wings and Minnesota North Stars and the World Hockey Association's New England Whalers, Minnesota Fighting Saints and Birmingham Bulls.

He earned his nickname, "Killer," with his thunderous body checks and machine-gun fists.

In 1977, Hanson starred as "Jack Hanson," one of the Hanson Brothers, in the classic hockey film *Slap Shot*. His coach was none other than the late Paul Newman, who said that his work on *Slap Shot* was the most fun he'd ever had making a movie. Movie critic Gene Siskel deemed it one of the greatest American comedies; *Maxim* magazine called it the "Best Guy Movie of All Time"; and *The Hockey News* ranked it the best hockey film ever made.

Hanson reprised his famous role in the 2002 sequel *Slap Shot 2: Breaking the Ice* with Stephen Baldwin and Gary Busey, and the new DVD movie *Slap Shot 3: The Junior League* with Ryan McDonell,

Hunter Elliott and Leslie Nielsen.

Fans frequently recognize Hanson, he says: "After they point and whisper and yell out lines from the movie, they usually come to me asking for an autograph or to take a photo with them. I enjoy it immensely, because people enjoy meeting Jack Hanson.

"The Hanson Brothers are viewed as 'hockey icons' as well as fun and colorful guys," he adds. "Through the popularity of *Slap Shot* and the Hanson Brothers, we've been able to use our 'iconic stature' to help raise millions of dollars for charitable and needy causes around North America."

As far as his career is concerned, Hanson says his movie roles have "mostly added a vehicle to have extra fun and connect with a lot of people."

Hanson, who has 24 years of coaching and sports management experience, has been the general manager of Island Sports Center since the facility opened in 1998. He also coaches AAA travel hockey teams for the Pittsburgh Hornets.

Look for *Slap Shot 3* and Hanson's autobiography *Slap Shot Original: The Man, the Foil and the Legend*, in stores this fall. Hanson will launch a book signing tour from New York in November with stops in Detroit, Minneapolis/St. Paul, Toronto, Pittsburgh and other sites. To track his tour, go to slapshotoriginal.com.



Dave Hanson, left, starred as "Jack Hanson" in the classic hockey film *Slap Shot*, as well as its two sequels. His "day job" is managing RMU Island Sports Center.

Continued on page 24



One Size Fits All??

When it comes to outfitting skaters, is it one size fits all?? Of course not! The wrong fit will make even the easiest moves difficult. In fact, it could be dangerous.

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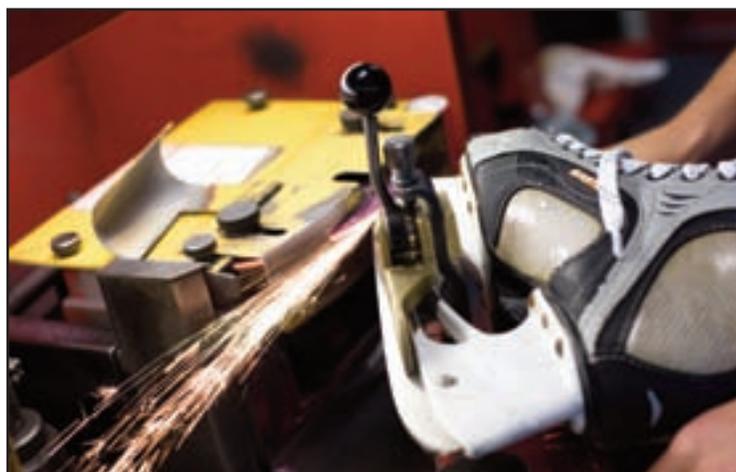
grounds and the buildings." RMU also provides security, accounting and human resources services.

"The combination of the two entities helped strengthen the operation of ISC, while having ISC as a family member of RMU helped increase the school's athletic programs as well as the appeal to prospective students along with existing students and faculty," Hanson adds.

In addition to serving the interests of the RMU student body, faculty and athletic programs, ISC continues to serve the general public as it did prior to university ownership.

As many as 50 full- and part-time employees keep ISC humming and its diverse customer base satisfied. With 10 years of experience in managing ISC, Hanson knows what it takes to run a successful program.

"Our figure skating and synchronized skating program has been at an all-time high for us," he notes. "The biggest downturn in growth that we experienced was when the NHL went on strike and Pittsburgh didn't have the Penguins playing for a season. The devel-



RMU-ISC's pro shop offers expert skate sharpening and equipment repair.

opmental ice hockey programs experienced a dip in new enrollments, but as soon as Sidney Crosby got selected first in the NHL draft by the Pens and they were back playing, coupled with the exciting team they have produced, our learn-to-skate and learn-to-play hockey programs, along with our skating camps, clinics and leagues, have seen a tremendous growth."

Hanson credits his staff — led by skating director Beth Sutton, figure skating coach Elena Valova, power skating coach Marianne



The center is home to a long list of ice and inline organizations.

Watkins, hockey director Bob Arturo and golf director Jim Cichra — with the strength of ISC’s programs. Sutton is a national and junior Olympic coach, former Ice Capades skater and member of ISI, USFSA and PSA. Valova is a 1984 Olympic gold medalist and 1988 silver medalist in pairs, a three-time world pairs champion and a three-time world pairs silver medalist. Watkins is an internationally recognized power skating coach with more than 20 years of experience in working with European players and coaches, the NHL, the NCAA and major junior organizations. Watkins has served as the skating coach for the NHL Anaheim Ducks, the Columbus Blue

Jackets, and RMU’s men and women’s hockey teams.

Arturo has an degree in child development and has taught more than 100,000 youngsters the basics of skating and hockey during more than 20 years of coaching. Cichra is a PGA professional, 2001 and 2004 Tri-State Teacher of the Year, 1995 West Penn Open champion and 1991 Tri-State Player of the Year.

ISC and ISI

ISC has been an ISI member since the facility opened. “ISI is a great overall program for all levels of recreational skating and an outstanding base for those who wish to advance into higher ranks of skating,” says Hanson, adding that the ISI skating program enables skaters

to find their niche and to explore other areas of skating while continuing to develop their skills.

“The structure of the ISI *weSKATE* program offers cohesiveness in developing skills, incentives and goal recognition through the patches, which is a great boost to our beginner skater,” he says.

“ISI also provides concise coaching and instructional materials to our member coaches. ISI membership is excellent for our facility, our coaches and skaters because of the insurance benefits, in addition to the continuing education for ice arena managers and coaches.”




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COACHES' CORNER

Endorsements Made Easy!

by Randy Winship

ISI National Skating Program & Events Coordinator

Some people call and ask, "So why do I need an ISI endorsement anyway?"

For a competition, the answer is: to add credibility to your event by letting all participants know that you are following the ISI policies and procedures for testing and competition standards. It's not a "rinky-dink" competition — it's been approved and endorsed by a national association.

Also, a competition, show or exhibition endorsement protects the eligibility status of your skaters, both now and in the future.

ISI gives endorsements to current administrative members for:

- Intra-rink competitions (skaters from only your rink)
- Inter-rink competitions (skaters from more than one rink)
- District championship competitions
- Ice shows
- Ice skating exhibitions

The competition and show endorsement forms can be printed off the ISI Web site in the arena section under "Forms" (select Competition Endorsement Form or Show/Exhibition Endorsement Form). Please use these new forms; some information has changed and it will slow down the endorsement process if old forms are submitted.

For an ice show or exhibition event, only the completed application form must be submitted to the ISI office *at least 21 days prior to the show/exhibition event*. Endorsement fees are doubled if received closer to the event dates.

The ISI office must be notified in writing *at least 15 days before the event* if any participants are active USFSA members who have competed at or above the Novice level at the USFSA National Championships within the last two years. The ISI office will then request approval from USFSA for those skaters to participate in your event.

For all competition events, a copy of all your competition entry information materials must accompany the application form. Competition endorsements must be submitted to the ISI office *at least 60 days prior to the competition event*. Endorsement fees are doubled if received closer to the event dates.

For inter-rink and district championship events, your district director must sign the application *before sending it to ISI*. For intra-rink (or in-house) events, your district director's signature is not required.

Also, a copy of your skater event schedule is due in the ISI office at least two weeks prior to the competition for membership and test verification. We will check, verify and confirm that all participants are current members and are competing at their current registered test level.

If you are organized and on time, endorsements are not difficult to process.

Helpful hints

As stated on the application forms, all competition directors must follow the rules and regulations in the most current edition of the *ISI Skaters and Coaches Handbook* and *ISI Judge Manual*. Any deviation from these manuals will void your approved endorsement.

The more pages you send in, the more details we will need to check. While it's necessary to send some information with your application (see list, right), you don't have to include all the information that is readily available in the current manuals and on the ISI Web site. However, many competition directors would rather be "more safe than sorry," so make sure your information and event descriptions match the latest rule changes and current ISI publications.

Most endorsements are received and processed the same day, and the endorsement certificate is mailed within one to two days.

Occasionally, it's necessary for us to ask for clarification, corrections or changes to the information that was submitted. When the corrections are received, your endorsement will be processed — and you're on your way to another successful event!

Required information

Your competition endorsement request must include the following:

- Current rink membership and current professional membership status for your competition director and/or chief referee. If the competition director has not passed the Gold level of the ISI judge certification exams, then the administrative member must employ a Gold-certified judge to serve as chief referee for the competition. All judges and competition directors must take and pass the 2008 update test.
- Event details, including: event date(s), entry deadline, list of events offered and performance rules (only if those events are not listed in the current *ISI Skaters and Coaches Handbook*), entry fee prices, individual/partner events entry form and team events entry form.

Plan ahead so your event can be listed *free of charge* on our ISI Web site and in upcoming ISI magazines. Try to avoid the busy "rush" periods in September and January.

Endorsements are an important — and EASY — step required from ISI administrative members to correctly administer the ISI recreational skating program. With additional skating school and private lesson revenues, practice ice and public session admissions — along with concession and pro shop sales prior to and during the events — both the financial and continued participation benefits of regularly hosting an ISI-endorsed event will be evident in your facility for months and years to come! ▀



ISI Judge Certification Tests



Congratulations to the following instructors who have recently passed ISI judge certification tests:

GOLD

Lily Altshuler
Michelle Beauchesne
Stephanie Cresci
Melissa Dodge
Jessica Hurless
Jenna Leyba
Jodie Maier
Robyn Marlinski
Staci Miron
Caroline O'Connor
Lauren Page
Erin Taute
Lesley Wasserman
Gretchen Wolf

SILVER

Lily Altshuler
Anna Baram
Amy Briggs
Caitlin Bronzna
Kelly Crumpton

Megan Cutaia
Laurianne DeMarco
Kristina Feste-Hanson
Julianne Follett
Jessica Hurless
Amy Larrobino
Jenna Leyba
Alisha Lukin
Jesse MacDonald
Katie McGee
Lauren Page
Jan Perkins
Erin Taute
Lesley Wasserman
Sally Jeanne Watkins
Gretchen Wolf

BRONZE

Sarah Allen
Dawn Ambrogio
Kera Bernard
Kristen Chapman

Kerry Colleran
Kelly Crumpton
Megan Cutaia
Breanne Donilla
Kristina Feste-Hanson
Barbara Garrett
Aubrey Gavron
Courtney Gragg
Marie Grieshaber
Katy Griffiths Hewitt
Jessica Hurless
Keiko Johnson
Cassandra Jones
Bonnie Kirchoff
Katie Klingelhoets
Jamie Lane
Julie Leonard
Jenna Leyba
Justine Lopez
Jesse MacDonald
Sarah Miller
Lisa Moreno

Hailey Mulder
Victoria Nelson
Amy Niewiadomski
Teri O'Day
Rae Porter-Blackwell
Heather Robinson
Amy Schneider
William Schneider
Michele Seneca
Susan Sondej
Jill Thomas
William Thomas
Jhona Tong
Denise Turfitt
Lesley Wasserman
Sally Jeanne Watkins
Kimberly Williams
Ashley Zdunich
Andrei Zharkov

SYNCHRONIZED

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The 3 Most Important Rules of Business

by Denny Durbin

Both small and large business owners must pay close attention to their modus operandi, especially in these times of inflation, recession and consumer cutbacks. The key to coming out on top is paying close attention to your customers and making them priority one.

The first thing managers must do in a slow economy is get their priorities straight: Do they choose to keep growing the business or just make sure they survive the downtime? Many wise decisions are not based on net profits alone, but on the future of the business. Even in times of slow spending, people still need recreation. Sometimes the first thing business owners cut back on is marketing; however, many successful managers know how to focus on creative marketing strategies to get the biggest bang for their buck.

Consider the three most important rules in any business:

1. Bring them in the door.

You have to bring customers in the door to generate revenue. The key here is to be innovative. Never try to blend in — you want to stand up and be noticed. It's the edgy, innovative things that make people point and start talking about you and your business. If it's a Web site that you're trying to promote, offer something to every friend you have in exchange for using their e-mail database to send out a couple of e-mail blasts inviting people to check out your site. If you want to promote your physical location, you should focus on the curb appeal, signage, landscaping, building façade and entrance. Don't try to look like the guy next door; try a brighter sign with giant letters that are easily legible at 45 mph. If an empty parking lot is projecting a negative image for your facility, have your employees park their cars out front. If you're selling something that can be promoted on the front sidewalk, carry signage or props in and

out all day and keep trying new things to look busy and fun.

2. Make sure they leave happy, and they can't wait to return and bring friends.

Your goal should be to turn satisfied customers into loyal customers. You can be happy with satisfied customers, but don't be surprised if they also spend their hard-earned dollars with your competitors, especially when price is involved. Loyal customers, on the other hand, are far more focused on quality and service when deciding where to do business. Loyal customers will literally jumpstart your grassroots campaign by becoming mavens for your business and telling everyone they know of the pleasurable experience of doing business with your facility. Essentially, loyal customers become a major part of your marketing and sales team — and the best part about it is that you don't have to pay them; you just have to create and nurture them.

3. The most important rule in any business: Know what business you're in.

You'd better know what business you're in. You may be surprised, but it's rarely what you think it is. If someone asks you what business you're in, your automatic response might be, "I'm in the ice arena (or ice skating) business." The real answer to that question should be, "I'm in the entertainment business." If you answer that you're in the ice arena business, there's a good chance you'll have a lot of empty ice. But if you're in the entertainment business, your facility, sessions and classes are likely to thrive.

Everyone in business should be in the business of marketing. Once you know the three most important rules of any business, the next step is to implement them. It's one thing to know what you need to do, it's another to actually do

it, and that alone can put you ahead of the competition.

First, it's important that you know the difference between marketing and paid advertising. A quick and simple definition of marketing is anything and everything — nothing too small and nothing too big — that you do to bring customers in the door. These are everyday, common things that you're probably already doing, but now you're going to look at these daily tasks in a whole new light.

In today's fast-paced world, marketing is an ongoing education that every business owner should be enrolled in. New tricks of the trade pop up every day; the difference between a marketer and those who choose to do the same thing every day is that the marketer is a risk-taker who believes in being innovative and testing new strategies, at the risk of making a mistake. Mistakes are considered necessary steps to success, and truly successful entrepreneurs learn from their mistakes. If you're not learning something every day, you're simply not paying attention.

A good marketing strategy encompasses a wide variety of daily exercises. Some are paid for; some simply involve the investment of time and cost nothing. A good example is grassroots marketing. These community driven, word-of-mouth testimonials have proven since the beginning of time to be the most valuable form of publicity and marketing. They have great capacity to jumpstart a worthwhile product, topic or cause.

A good mention of your business from satisfied customers goes a long way toward sending you new customers. When you take a step further and convert your satisfied customers into loyal customers, it's a guaranteed home run for your business.

*Denny Durbin is an entrepreneur and author of **Lazy Enchiladas, Redefining Success, which explains firsthand the values of taking risks, assessing success and adding creativity to a career. For more information, go to lazyenchiladas.com.***

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How do we stop double booking ice?
How is our facility being utilized?
Who owes us money?*

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"Maximum Solutions has been great to work with the past 5 1/2 years. Whenever we needed any assistance their tech support staff has been right there to help. All their staff is extremely friendly and always willing to go that extra step. We look forward to many more years with Maximum Solutions!"

- Jackie Edwards, RACC Manager

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Five-Year Capital Fund Drive Continues

Make a difference for as little as 27 tax-deductible cents a day!

by Lisa Fedick

The intended author of this report was Mr. Boyd Wietecter. It is with a heavy heart that I fill in for him. Since its inception in 1989, Boyd has been the lifeblood of the ISIA Education Foundation. The lasting memories of Boyd's calm demeanor, insight and infectious smile will continue to inspire us to provide great opportunities for higher education to our high school graduating members.

The ISIA Five-Year Capital Fund Drive is the crown jewel of Boyd's devotion to our industry and to our youth. This program is his legacy, one of his final accomplishments and certainly one of his proudest achievements. Through it, he will continue to live with us.

The format of the ISIA Education Foundation Five-Year Capital Fund Drive was modeled after a successful initiative of the St. Louis Zoological Society, whose goal was to make giving affordable for everyone.

The program allows you to customize your contribution based on a

five-year pledge amount and payment terms that best suit you. For example, a five-year pledge of \$500 can be paid in quarterly installments of \$25. That works out to about \$2 per week, which is less than the cost of one cup of coffee a week. What a small sacrifice to be able to contribute to something that makes a difference to the young people our industry serves!

Contributions to the Five-Year Capital Fund Drive can be made to accommodate your personal schedule. They can be billed annually, semi-annually or quarterly and can be paid by check or even by major credit card.

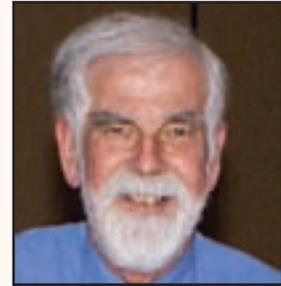
Because the Foundation is a 501(c)(3) corporation (IRS #36-3638131), all donations are fully tax-deductible. What better time than the end of the year to make a difference and get a last-minute tax deduction?

This is your opportunity to join some of our industry's leaders who have already made their commitment.

Boyd's golden voice, which resonated at many ISIA

local and national events, will forever be part of our memories. His boundless dedication to our sport manifested itself through the ISIA Education Foundation. Barbara Wietecter, Boyd's wife of 39 years, requested that memorials to Boyd be sent to the Education Foundation. The Five-Year Capital Fund Drive gives each and every one of us the opportunity to keep Boyd's memory close to our hearts, while supporting the skaters he loved so much. And the cost? As little as 27 tax-deductible cents a day! Who could say no? For more information, click on the ISIA Education Foundation tab at skateISI.org.

In Memory



Boyd Wietecter

Longtime ISI supporter and leader Boyd Wietecter died at the age of 68 on Sept. 9 in St. Louis, Mo. following a battle with leukemia. He was a former ISIA Education Foundation president (1989-95) and ISI president (1993-97) as well as the voice of numerous ISI national skating competitions. He received ISI's Lifetime Achievement, Great Skate and Man of the Year awards, and was elected to the ISI Skating Hall of Fame in 2002.

Wietecter was a graduate of Washington University in St. Louis and a member of the U.S. Army Signal Corps serving in Vietnam in 1966-67. He worked for 35 years for the St. Louis County Parks and Recreation Department, including 26 years as director of the Wayne C. Kennedy Complex in South County. He served on the Kirkwood YMCA board, the St. Joseph Hospital "Friends of St. Joe" and on the Kirkwood park board.

Wietecter is survived by his mother, Virginia Wietecter; wife Barbara Hassall Wietecter; daughter Trisha Wietecter Hill; son-in-law Douglas P. Hill; and grandchildren Ethan, Elliot and Meredith Hill.

A celebration of Wietecter's life was held Oct. 4 at St. Luke's United Methodist Church followed by private burial at the Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery with full military honors.

The family requests that donations in honor of Boyd Wietecter be made to the ISIA Education Foundation, a cause that motivated and inspired his love and devotion. ISI members around the world feel the loss, share fond remembrances and mourn the death of an ISI great, a true gentleman, leader and dear friend.



5-Year Fund Drive Pledge

I hereby pledge a total of \$_____ toward the ISIA Education Foundation Fund Drive. I understand all pledges may be paid over a period of 5 years.

- \$500
- \$1,000
- \$2,000
- \$5,000
- \$10,000

I wish to be invoiced:
 Annually
 Semi-annually
 Quarterly

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

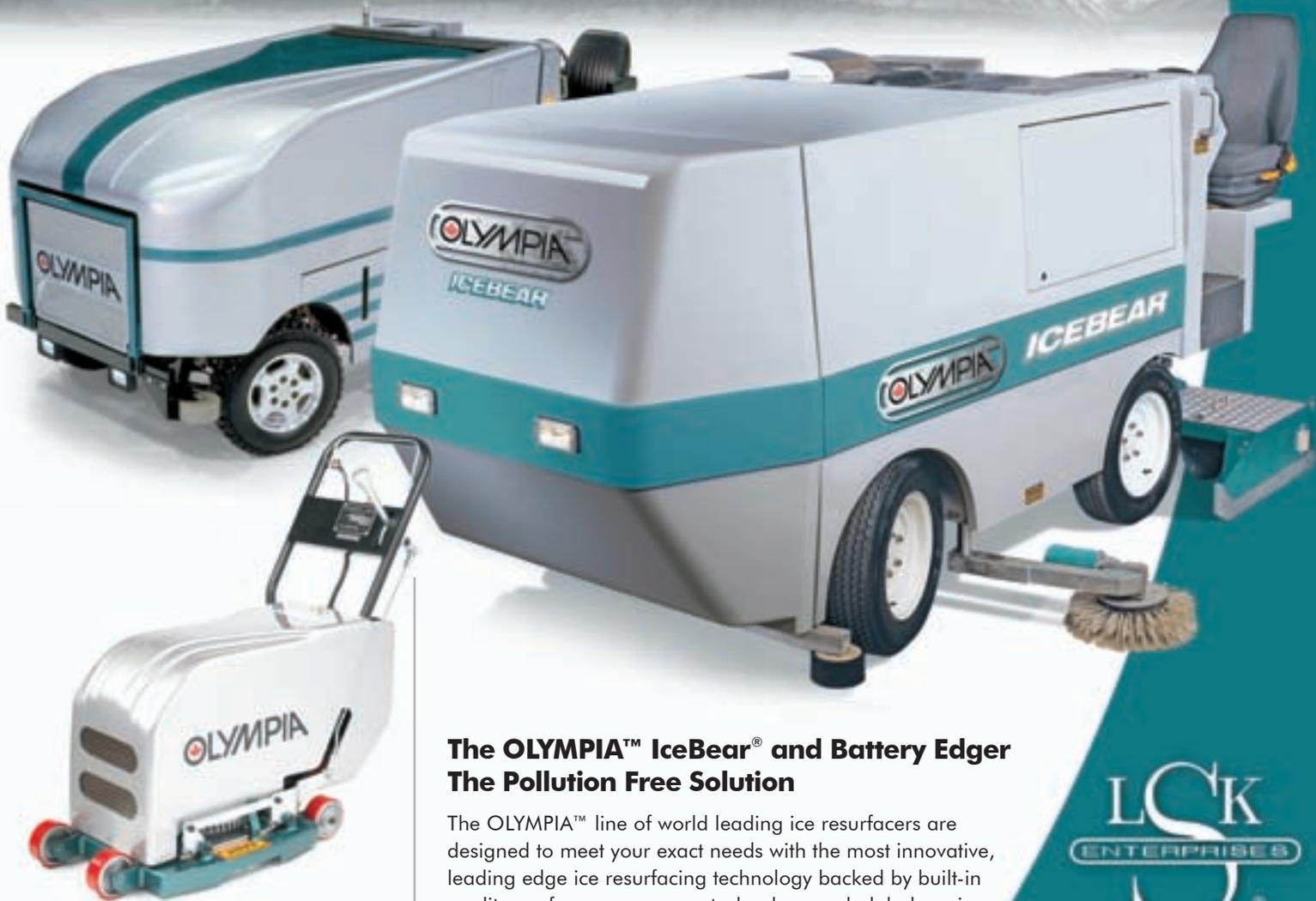
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Ice Rink Owners of California (IROC)

by Bert Blanchette, President

It was a long, hot summer in California. Public sessions

in the district survived in spite of gasoline prices. Skating schools and learn-to-skate programs slowed a bit, with families more closely watching expenses. Long-term weekly enrollments in all activities were down slightly. Lately, any activity requiring multiple driving trips has suffered a decrease in enrollment, with the exception of gymnastics.

A big thank-you to Don Bartelson at Ontario Ice Skating Center for hosting the district's well-attended *weSKATE* seminar. Randy Winship from the ISI office served as the presenter, and, as always, he did a great job.

ISI District 15 is hosting the annual ISI Artistic Challenge competition in December at Pickwick Ice Skating Center in Burbank, Calif. We are anticipating a good turnout for the event. Burbank is the home of NBC and just a stone's throw from Universal Studios and Hollywood, so attendance at the Artistic event can double as a mini vacation. We hope to see you there, having fun.

Minnesota Ice Arena Managers Association (MIAMA)

by Joseph M. Balzer, President

This just in: ISI/MIAMA educational partnership is a hit!

I have just returned from the MIAMA fall conference, and in addition finding it a great time to catch up with old friends, I was also reminded that you can teach a bunch of old arena "dogs" some new tricks. As many of you know, ISI was selected to be our educational partner for the next three to five years, starting in September 2008. Well, we have just concluded year one, and it was a smashing success!

Forty-five MIAMA members (20 in the iAIM Maintenance track and 25 in the iAIM Operations track), or nearly half of conference attendees, were students at the IAIM School. The MIAMA board of directors was hoping for 30 participants the first year of the partnership, so we more than met our projections. Based on a show of hands at the conclusion of the graduation ceremony, most of this year's grads plan to enroll in another iAIM track in the future.

Initial school and curriculum feedback was largely positive, with members finding the courses challenging, informative, and, in the case of a certain president, quite "eye-opening" in terms of the volume of information that can be acquired based on a rigorous and demanding syllabus. Some of the membership feedback addressed a lack of free time or



Bert Blanchette

study time in a four-day week. These concerns will be discussed at the next MIAMA board of directors meeting.

I want to thank MIAMA board members Mike Sheggeby and Dean Mulso, and MIAMA member Eric Edlund as well as the iAIM instructors, including Dr. Jack Vivian, Peter Martell, Rob McBride and Scott McCoy, for the excellent instruction and guidance during our week of school. We look forward to tweaking our school week for next year and continuing to use this effective and cost-efficient method of continuing education for MIAMA members.

Metropolitan Ice Rink Managers Association (MIRMA)

by Lisa Fedick, Secretary

MIRMA's fall managers' meeting and mini trade show was hosted by the New Jersey Devils at their new showcase facility, the Prudential Center, in Newark, N.J. Attendees were impressed with the physical plant during the building tours. Special thanks go out to the Devils' community relations director, Mike Merolla, and event and food service coordinator, Dana Fabrican, and also to our own Kevin McCormack, for making this event possible.

Meeting presentations included two iAIM classes, presented by Kevin McCormack and myself. Both the customer service and promotions/special events classes were well received and demonstrated to attendees the value of the iAIM educational program.

The following 2006-07 MIRMA ISI District 3 Skate for Knowledge scholarship winners were announced at the managers' meeting: Molly Glynn from the Wonderland of Ice, Kathryn Salerno from Montclair Inside Edge, Jacqueline Sullivan from the Yonkers FSC and Elizabeth Veillette from the Danbury Ice Arena. Each skater will receive a \$1,000 donation to their 529 college account.

The sixth annual Skate for Knowledge Championships will be held April 4-5 at the Floyd Hall Arena in Little Falls, N.J. MIRMA has once again opened the scholarship competition to all ISI members. Although only events held or endorsed in District 3 will be tracked for skaters' participation, skaters from all districts are eligible to compete for the scholarships.

In 2009, MIRMA will also be awarding a full week's tuition for one of the iAIM classroom schools. Application criteria for this award, as well as the competition announcement, will be available at skateMIRMA.org.

After being named the New York Rangers' director of fan development, Rick Nadeau wasted no time in inviting MIRMA to a pre-season game on Sept. 25. The highlight of the evening was seeing the MIRMA logo flashing on the MSG Jumbotron.

If your facility would like to host an educational or *weSKATE* Instructor Training seminar, or if you have any questions — technical or otherwise — or any inquiries about our scholarship programs, contact me at LAFMIRMA@aol.com.



Lisa Fedick



Joseph M. Balzer

I would like to wish everyone a wonderful holiday season and take this opportunity to send out the heartfelt sympathies of the MIRMA organization to the family of Boyd Wietector, who passed away in September. Our entire industry has lost a loyal supporter and trusted friend.

North East Ice Skating Managers Association

by Tom Morton, President

Due to the efforts of Director John Zullo, the NEISMA Web site has been substantially improved and expanded. Everyone is invited to visit neisma.com.

NEISMA has also augmented its long-range planning committee. Under the chairmanship of Director Jeff Doucette, the committee has assumed responsibility for recommending sites for holding the NEISMA Annual Spring Conference through 2011.

The NEISMA scholarship committee, chaired by Director Ed Peduto, continues to make plans for offering annual scholarship awards to members and their children who qualify and who make presentations encompassing subjects involving their respective facilities as well as the ice arena industry.

The NEISMA and ISI boards have begun discussions to explore ways the organizations might work together on matters of mutual interest. A three-person committee has been appointed by NEISMA and ISI to address the matter and to make recommendations to their respective boards. An agreement of understanding for this purpose is being drafted. ▀



Tom Morton



Fact or Fiction?

ISI is the ice arena industry's only independent trade association.

Fact! Founded in 1959, the Ice Skating Institute is not only the original trade association representing the ice arena industry — it is also today's only independent organization whose primary focus is on the interests of ice arenas and the professionals employed in and serving these facilities. Because ISI is not dependent on nor encumbered by obligations to other organizations, everything we do is solely for the benefit of our members. That's why ISI is the nonprofit association that ice arenas and ice skating professionals rely on to help them increase participation, drive revenues, improve operations and deliver an exceptional customer experience.

Watch for "ISI Fact or Fiction?" in future issues. If you have a suggestion for a topic, please send it to editor@skateisi.org.

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ISI-endorsed competitions & shows/exhibitions

COMPETITIONS

NOVEMBER

- 1 Boardman, Ohio**
The Ice Zone
Autumn Fest
- 1-2 Yorktown, Va.**
Hampton Roads IcePlex
7th Annual Fall Classic
- 6-9 San Francisco**
Yerba Buena Ice
Skating Center
Skate San Francisco
- 7-9 Northbrook, Ill.**
Northbrook Sports Center
Northbrook Park
District Falling
Leaf Open
- 7-10 Portland, Ore.**
Lloyd Center Ice Rink
21st Annual Ice
Crystal Classic
- 8-9 Tampa, Fla.**
Ice Sports Forum
ISI 2008 Fall Challenge
- 9 Anaheim, Calif.**
Anaheim ICE
8th Annual
Synchronized Team
Competition
- 9 Dallas**
Galleria Ice Skating
Center
2008 Holiday Audition
Competition
- 16 San Jose, Calif.**
Sharks Ice at San Jose
Ice Arts
- 16 Yonkers, N.Y.**
Yonkers FSC 22nd
Annual Holiday Classic
- 22 Marlboro, Mass.**
Navin Skating Arena
Thanksgiving on Ice
- 22-23 New Ulm, Minn.**
New Ulm Figure
Skating Club
New Ulm Fall Festival
- 22-23 Joliet, Ill.**
Joliet Park District/
Inwood Ice Arena
Harvest Gold
- 22-23 Kansas City, Mo.**
Line Creek Ice Arena
City of Fountains
Fall Fling

- 23 Vacaville, Calif.**
Vacaville Ice Sports
Ice Sports Champs
- 29-30 Skokie, Ill.**
Skatium All American
Team Competition

DECEMBER



- 5-7 Burbank, Calif.**
Pickwick Ice Center
ISI Artistic Challenge
- 5-7 White Bear Lake, Minn.**
White Bear Lake
Sports Center
Holiday Open 2008
- 5-7 Taylor, Mich.**
Taylor Sportsplex
TSX Winter
Extravaganza 2008
- 6-7 Centennial, Colo.**
South Suburban Ice Arena
21st Annual Winterfest
ISI Competition
- 6-7 Pleasant Prairie, Wis.**
Pleasant Prairie IcePlex
2008 Winter
Wonderland Open
- 7 Franklin, Mass.**
Franklin Blades Skating
School
18th Annual ISI Team
Competition
- 12-14 Wayne, Mich.**
Wayne Community Center
Arctic Adventure
- 13 Walla Walla, Wash.**
YWCA Ice Chalet
District 13 Hockey
Skills Championships
- 30 Rolling Meadows, Ill.**
Rolling Meadows Park
District
Frost Fest

2009

JANUARY

- 15-18 Lake Placid, N.Y.**
Olympic Center
Lake Placid ISI
Championship
- 16-18 El Paso, Texas**
Sierra Providence
Event Center
Sun City Ice Fest 2009
- 16-18 St. Peters, Mo.**
St. Peters Rec-Plex
District 9 Championships
- 17-18 Centennial, Colo.**
South Suburban
Family Sports Center
7th Annual ISI
Competition
- 23-25 York, Pa.**
York City Ice Arena
Keystone State Games
- 24-25 Plymouth, Minn.**
Plymouth Ice Center
Blizzard Blast

FEBRUARY

- 6-8 Glenview, Ill.**
Glenview Ice Center
February Freeze
- 6-8 Williamstown, Mass.**
Lansing Chapman Rink
Bay State Games
- 7 Franklin, Mass.**
Franklin Blades Skating
School
18th Annual ISI Team
Competition



- 13-15 Dallas**
Dr Pepper StarCenter
ISI Winter Classic
- 13-15 Oxford, Ohio**
Goggin Ice Center
2009 ISI Miami Open
Team Competition

- 13-15 Anaheim, Calif.**
Anaheim ICE
12th Annual ISI Open
Competition
- 13-15 Blaine, Minn.**
Schwan Super Rink
Frosty Blades 2009
- 20-22 Bensenville, Ill.**
The Edge Ice Arena
Mardi Gras
- 21-22 Nashville, Tenn.**
Centennial Sportsplex
24th Annual ISI
Invitational
- 28 Oak Lawn, Ill.**
Oak Lawn Ice Arena
Reach for the Stars

MARCH

- 6-8 Park Ridge, Ill.**
Oakton Ice Arena
Ice Breaker Classic
- 7-8 Minneapolis**
Parade Figure Skating
Club
2009 Blades of March
ISI Open Competition
- 7-8 San Diego**
San Diego Ice Arena
California State Games
- 13-15 Livonia, Mich.**
Livonia Eddie Edgar
Livonia ISI Open
Competition
- 14 Pittsburgh**
RMU Island Sports Center
2009 - 9th Annual
Shamrock Skate
- 14-15 Lewis Center, Ohio**
Chiller North
Chiller Spring Classic
- 14-15 Natick, Mass.**
Bay State Blades-Natick
38th Annual ISI
Competition
- 29 Franklin Park, Ill.**
Franklin Park Ice Arena
KICKLine Synchronized
Skating Competition

APRIL

- 3-5 Knoxville, Tenn.**
Ice Chalet
40th Annual Robert
Unger ISI Competition

- 24-26 El Segundo, Calif.**
Toyota Sports Center
Spring Fling 2009
- 25-26 Anaheim, Calif.**
KHS Ice Arena
Jump Into Spring
Annual ISI Open Competition
- 25-26 Franklin Park, Ill.**
Franklin Park Ice Arena
Spring Fever

MAY



- 23-25 Orlando, Fla.**
RDV Sportsplex Ice Den
ISI 50th Anniversary
Skating Championships
- 23-24 San Diego**
San Diego Ice Arena
ISI Open Competition

JULY



- 27-Aug. 1**
San Jose, Calif.
Sharks Ice at San Jose
ISI World Recreational
Team Championships

SHOWS & EXHIBITIONS

NOVEMBER

- Thru 4/15 Kittanning, Pa.**
Belmont Complex
Belmont Blaze
Exhibitions
- 1 Oldsmar, Fla.**
Tampa Bay Skating Academy
Fall Recital

- 12-13 Eugene, Ore.**
Lane Events Center-ICE
Seussical the Musical on
Ice
- 14 Montgomery, Ala.**
K Lynn Skating School
Santa Arrival on Ice
- 24 Brentwood, Mo.**
Brentwood Ice Arena
Holiday Ictravaganza
- 28-12/20 Dallas**
Galleria Ice Skating
Center
Annual Tree Lighting
Ceremonies

DECEMBER

- 3-4 Honolulu**
Ice Palace
Nutcracker
- 6 Oak Lawn, Ill.**
Oak Lawn Ice Arena
Holly Day on Ice
- 6 Anaheim, Calif.**
Anaheim ICE
14th Annual Holiday
Spectacular
- 6-7 Franklin Park, Ill.**
Franklin Park Ice Arena
2008 Holiday Recital
- 6-7 Little Rock, Ark.**
Arkansas Skatium
Winter Ice Show 2008
- 7 Roseville, Calif.**
Skatetown
Holiday Spectacular
on Ice
- 7 Nashville, Tenn.**
Centennial Sportsplex
Holiday Show
- 7 Newark, Ohio**
Lou & Gib Reese Ice
Arena
Holiday Exhibition
- 9-13 Knoxville, Tenn.**
Ice Chalet
21st Annual
Nutcracker on Ice
- 12 Plano, Texas**
Dr Pepper StarCenter
The Christmas Wish
- 12 Dublin, Calif.**
Dublin Iceland
2008 Holiday Show
- 12 Glenview, Ill.**
Glenview Ice Center
Holiday Exhibition

- 12-14 Evanston, Ill.**
Robert Crown Center
34th Annual
Nutcracker on Ice
- 13 Duncanville, Texas**
Dr Pepper StarCenter
Holly Jolly Holiday
- 13 Panorama City, Calif.**
Valley Ice Center
Holiday Music Around
the World
- 14 Pittsburgh**
BladeRunners Ice
Complex
Holiday Skate
- 14 St. Louis**
Wayne C. Kennedy
Recreation Complex
Holiday Celebration
- 20 Marlboro, Mass.**
Bay State Blades-
Marlboro Winterfest
- 20 Euless, Texas**
Dr Pepper StarCenter
Ice Fest 2008
- 21 Bensenville, Ill.**
The Edge Ice Arena
Annual Holiday
Exhibition
- 21 Arlington, Texas**
ICE at The Parks
Holiday in The Parks
- 29 Glenview, Ill.**
Glenview Ice Center
Winter Carnival

2009

MARCH

- 14-15 St. Louis**
Wayne C. Kennedy
Recreation Complex
Annual Ice Recital
- 21 Springfield, Mass.**
Bay State Blades-Forest
Park (Cyr Arena)
Anything Goes

APRIL

- 3-5 Jefferson City, Mo.**
Washington Park Ice
Arena
Continental Tours
- 5 Brentwood, Mo.**
Brentwood Ice Arena
Once Upon the
Ice...Dreams Come True

- 17-18 Carol Stream, Ill.**
Carol Stream Ice Rink
Stars and Stripes
- 24-25 Newark, Ohio**
Lou & Gib Reese Ice Arena
Skate in High Definition
- 24-26 Park Ridge, Ill.**
Oakton Ice Arena
Still Rockin' After 40 Years!

MAY

- 1-2 Downers Grove, Ill.**
Downers Grove Ice Arena
Stars and Stripes
- 1-3 Glenview, Ill.**
Glenview Ice Center
36th Annual Ice Show
- 2 Marlboro, Mass.**
Bay State Blades-Marlboro
Summer Dance Party
- 8-10 Northbrook, Ill.**
Northbrook Sports Center
Northbrook-On-Ice 2009
- 15-17 Franklin Park, Ill.**
Franklin Park Ice Arena
2009 Spring Show
- 17 Nashville, Tenn.**
Centennial Sportsplex
Spring Show
- 15-17 Niles, Ill.**
Niles Park District Iceland
Blades on Broadway



Ice Arena Conference & Trade Show

- 26-27 Orlando, Fla.**
Hilton in the Walt Disney
World® Resort
ISI Ice Arena Conference
& Trade Show

Deadline

for the next
EDGE calendar:

Nov. 15

For regular calendar
updates, see
www.skateisi.org,
event info

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FULL-TIME ICE SPORTS PROGRAMMING — National Sports Center-Schwan Super Rink in Blaine, Minn. seeks highly motivated and creative sports-minded person aspiring to continue in sports market. Responsibilities include but not limited to: marketing, recruiting, staff coordination, budgets, leagues, tournaments, camps, clinics and more. Qualifications: college degree, emphasis in sports management. Compensation commensurate with experience and education. Interested applicants may contact Pete Carlson at pcarlson@superrink.org.

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ISI facility and professional members are entitled to FREE classified listings (excluding retail products and services) up to 50 words. Call Carol Jackson at (972) 735-8800, fax to (972) 735-8815 or send e-mail to cjackson@skateisi.org. Deadline for next issue of the *EDGE*: Nov. 10.

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Entry Deadline: March 1



July 27-Aug. 1
Sharks Ice at San Jose • San Jose, Calif.
Entry Deadline: May 1



April 17-19
Arctic Ice Arena • Chicago, Ill.
Entry Deadline: Feb. 1



Oct. 2-4
Olympic Center • Lake Placid, N.Y.
Entry Deadline: Aug. 15



Feb. 13-15
Dr Pepper StarCenter • Plano, Texas
Entry Deadline: Dec. 1, 2008

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Fort Myers Skatium • Fort Myers, Fla.
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Ice Skating Institute

Go to www.skateisi.org for entry forms and additional event details.



AND ANOTHER THING...

by Peter Martell
ISI Executive Director

Look for the Silver Lining under the Ice

As we read the daily reports of increasing unemployment and interest rates coupled with declining stock values and consumer confidence, many of us are wondering what impact the country's economic crisis will have on our business. But have you considered that this dark cloud may have a silver lining for the recreational ice skating industry?

History has shown that during previous recessions or depressions, some businesses have not only survived but have actually prospered. One area that traditionally has held its own is entertainment. During tough times, more than ever, people need diversion or

recreation. Movie theaters and bowling alleys have consistently fared well during recessions, and that bodes well for our industry.

That does not mean that we will not see declines in some areas of our business. However, while many will not be able to afford the financial commitment necessary for elite competitive or travel team sports, they will want their families to continue to participate in athletic activities. It may simply mean that they will have to choose less expensive, perhaps less frequent, activities that are closer to home — in other words, more recreational in nature.

So what does that mean for you? You may have to adjust your business model to provide more recreational and affordable programs and services. For the arena, it could mean more ice time devoted to local activities like public skating and group classes. It might be an opportunity to start or expand your youth house league where the teams skate out of their home rink and only travel for occasional tournaments. For coaches, it could mean more time spent teaching group classes and expanding your base of private-lesson students so you have more students taking fewer lessons

each. It may also be the ideal opportunity to encourage parents to consider taking semi-private lessons. Rather than teaching one student for 20 minutes at \$20, why not teach two students (of similar ability) for \$15 each? Your students save money, and you make more! We need to be open-minded and creative during these difficult times.

With many families being forced to forego the annual ski trip or beach vacation, a new word has evolved — “stay-cations.” Stay at home vacations are becoming increasingly popular and therein lies a host of opportunities to attract families looking for new, fun and exciting things to do close to home. Remember, however, that these “impulse” customers are not looking (at first) to be hockey players or figure skaters. They are looking to be entertained and have fun. If they do, they will be back for more. So, let's make the best of the current economic situation by looking for the silver lining hidden among all those reports of doom and gloom. This too will pass, but our success may be determined by our ability to react, adjust and adapt — and not just continue doing things “the way we've always done them.”

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