



Anchorage Convention & Visitors Bureau

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May 13, 2009

Design-Build Institute of America
Attn: 2009 Awards Competition
1100 H Street NW, Suite 500
Washington DC 20005

Dear National Design-Build Awards Jury:

In 1998, a feasibility study was conducted that determined Anchorage's need for a larger convention center to continue the community's economic growth. The study concluded that without the facility Anchorage would reach capacity in its ability to generate economic growth from convention trade by 2005.

Encouraged by the conclusions of the 1998 study, the Anchorage visitor industry and Municipality of Anchorage authorized further study. The second study confirmed the need for a larger center, estimated the cost of the proposed center, recommended alternate uses for the current facility, identified potential sites within the boundaries of downtown, and suggested funding sources for the project.

Anchorage Convention & Visitors Bureau (ACVB) began promoting and educating the community on the positive economic impact and benefits to our community. The issue was placed on the Municipal ballots before the voters in April 2002. ACVB and the visitor industry began seeking support in the form of letters, advertising, campaigning, and marketing to ensure approval by voters so the vision could become a reality.

ACVB promoted the vision of an aesthetically transformed city center into a dynamic urban environment with a thriving community. The industry strongly advocated that the plan should link the existing key facilities and amenities while improving them by creating streetscape enhancements and the F Street Connectivity. These developments are the central elements for the local community to create a sense of place and vitality and selling meeting planners on the pedestrian friendly features of heated sidewalks and upgrades.

The \$110-million, 200,000 square foot facility is designed to be the most significant convention facility in the far northern portion of the United States. This project became a reality through the vision and efforts of Jerry Neeser and the entire team of Neeser Construction, Inc. (NCI) with construction of the Dena'ina Center beginning in April 2006. The creation of an aesthetically transformed city center into a dynamic urban environment with new energy can only be described as a positive and better place to live and work. This amazing facility opened



in October 2008 providing significant benefits to the community with the capacity to hold quality trade shows, large-scale social and charitable events with the ability to expand as their capacities increase, and allowing the community sports arena space to develop and host more athletic events.

The facility's design showcases Anchorage's spectacular scenery while taking advantage of maximum light during the winter and the spectacular long summer days. Alaska's seasons are incorporated into the wall finishes and the carpets. One level embraces fall landscapes and the changing colors of the high country, while another takes visitors into the summer landscape. Highly reflective materials and cooler hues are used as visitors move into the winter landscape with an aurora borealis wall depicting the northern lights.

Other features include protected vestibule entrances and a roof designed to prevent snow shedding. Architects also designed upgraded heated sidewalks lined with trees, canopies and lighting. The Dena'ina Center increases Anchorage's civic and convention capacity by 300 percent, and offers visitors an opportunity to learn about the Dena'ina people who have lived in the Cook Inlet Region since just after the last Ice Age. The meeting rooms and other areas of the Dena'ina Center have Athabaskan names, and the artwork within the building tells the story of the Dena'ina people—today and in the past.

The Anchorage Convention District and the F Street Connectivity Piece have already created an economic impact with new trade shows, larger existing shows, and promoters discovering new markets. With only two months operations, it is clear that the potential for Anchorage events is far from capacity. The first year of operations estimated to exceed \$84 million, growing to \$95 million by 2009. We can expect years of growth into our new "home."

The NCI team has been unwavering in their dedication to quality, safety, and timeliness. It was evident through the entire project that the NCI team is the premier design-build team in Alaska, providing excellent customer satisfaction and solid teamwork attitude resulting with on budget and ahead of schedule Opening Celebration for the Dena'ina Civic and Convention Center.

I encourage the DBIA National Convention to visit Anchorage in the near future to experience first-hand the incredible design of this twenty-first century facility. The development and design-build experts at Neeser Construction, Inc. were the foundation for this facility to become a reality.

Sincerely,

Julie Saupe
President & CEO