

Facility Manager/Events Coordinator

6-month update 4/5/2016

We did our start up for the Ice Rink on Monday September 21st. As I mentioned in my last update it has been a real learning process here at the rink for me. The whole process started with making ice on the indoor rink then included learning about concessions, revenue management, staff scheduling, rink schedules then all the way to the end of the season when I learned how the ice is removed from the rink. I learned enough this winter to where I could do a large portion of the setup and ice preparation going forward. There are many things about ice production and maintenance that are learned from years of practice but, I feel that I have a solid foundation on how it all happens.

Staffing / scheduling – I learned a great deal about staffing and scheduling these last six months. One of the greater difficulties was finding employees that could cover the shifts necessary for daily rink operations. With over 70% of our employees being WSCU students I found that most of our employees wanted evening shifts. This works well for the most part since we are busiest in the evenings but, we did have some difficulty finding coverage from 11:00am – 4:00pm. This winter I also dealt with employees surprising me with last minute travel plans, so having extra employees that could fill in was super important. I tried to schedule overlaps of around one hour between shifts which seemed to help especially since most of the shift switches occurred during high levels of business here at the rink. We did have some issues with certain employees not taking the time to fill out their time cards on a daily basis with the exact hours they worked. Finding and training Zamboni drivers was a difficult process. The time necessary to train an employee to be a proficient Zamboni driver is considerable. Also, finding the correct person with the necessary aptitude to be a good Zamboni driver was difficult. **Some important notes for next year include; be careful when hiring siblings, be careful when hiring workers that also participate in other activities such as club sports/hockey, their ability to cover can be limited. Make sure that we have extra staffing during college games and on busy tournament weekends. Going forward, tracking exact hours whether over or under will be the expectation here at the rink.**

Ice Maintenance - There is a lot to be learned here, especially when factoring in the outdoor/covered rink. The outdoor rink is a real beast to keep in good maintenance. With the dramatic swings in temperature between night and day we found ourselves dealing with a great deal of cracking on the ice. Having a more efficient way of repairing cracks would be helpful for next year. Learning all of what it takes to keep a high quality sheet of ice in skating condition will take me several years to learn. It is difficult enough learning basic maintenance and equipment operation leaving aside more difficult things like flooding, edging, and cross shaving. Knowing when to dry shave, light shave, and water only resurfacing comes with more experience. A lot of this type of maintenance is common sense but, actually using it effectively takes practice. I am confident that with more experience I will learn all that is necessary to maintain excellent indoor and outdoor ice. **Some important notes for next year include; make sure Zamboni drivers have the correct aptitude, edge both of the rinks twice per week, stay on top of compressor logs, watch for thinness of ice on indoor rink / opposite on the outdoor rink.**

Concessions – Things went well in concessions this past 6 months, we stayed busy, we were well stocked, and we increased our sales significantly over the previous year. The trickiest part of concessions is preparing the correct quantity of food at the right time to maximize sell through. If you do not prepare enough or any food it will not sell, too much food being prepared turns into excessive waste. Continuing to find the right products with a high margin and quick turnover needs to be our goal, the clear winners this year were the “Hot Pockets & Little Debbie” products. Purchasing the food was time consuming, many trips to the grocery store and many credit card transactions required lots of tracking receipts. Another difficulty at the rink is getting all employees to pay for their food purchases. Certain employees were not as good as others regarding paying for their product. When I instigated the employee sales category on the register it helped bring some of this to light. The register process at the Ice Rink could be simplified, one POS system for both credit card and cash sales would be awesome. **Some important notes for next year include; Be very careful starting in March on all concessions reorders we ended up a little over stocked on “Little Debbie” product, one POS system for both cash and credit cards, and find a wholesaler to simplify product purchases.**

Revenue Management – I feel that the cash handling was greatly improved over the previous year mainly through timely cash deposits. We actually balanced with the finance department to the penny during the month of February. Taking Friday and Saturday night deposits to dispatch seemed to work well and kept the security risk low. We did have some troubles with invoicing, a simpler more streamlined system would be better. Knowing who received the money, where it came from, and then getting it posted correctly is extremely important. Having a simple seasonal budget comparison that could be looked at daily would be very helpful. **For next year; Continue taking weekend deposits to dispatch but, purchase higher quality locking deposit bags, work out a better, more streamlined invoicing system, and continue with daily depositing.**

Rink Scheduling- Rink scheduling went well this last winter. Most every weekend the schedules came out at least two days in advance and we were able to post them at the rink. If I did not get the schedule by e-mail, we were always able to check the WEHA site and print the schedules from there. My only comment regarding the schedule is when there are alternating slots on the agenda – “public skate – resurface – open hockey – resurface – public skate”. It might make more sense to lump like sessions creating a longer skating shifts for the like-minded skaters. Also, we could possibly save on some labor by not scheduling open skate as the last session on the schedule, (we could cut the concessions worker sooner).

Facility Maintenance – There are plenty of items here at the rink that could use maintenance, here is a small list as follows; Outdoor scorekeeper room heater replacement, replace 6 – 9 dasher boards on outdoor rink, Rinnai tank-less hot water heaters need to be cleaned/serviced, and light fixture ballast replacement in indoor rink, and locker room “A” needs a light switch. A few items we should consider purchasing include; large square trash cans for all locker rooms, 50 – 100’ of new 2” hose for flooding the outdoor rink, and some new horse mats for the concrete.

In general, I feel like it was a very successful rink season. I heard many compliments on how great our ice surface was this past winter. I also heard plenty of comments on how friendly and helpful the staff was and how good the facility looked. Along with those comments our revenue was up for the winter and the rink ran smoothly. It was nerve wracking stepping into this position the first year but, now with a full season of experience I am confident that I will continue learn and run a better operation here at the rink. With the

experience I gained last winter I will be able to direct the staff more effectively and offer a better finished product going forward.

I also look forward to the upcoming event season, after gaining a great deal of experience from last summer I am confident that the event season will be a success. Meeting many folks and creating a long list of contacts will only make the job easier and more fun.

Andy Eflin