

# INDIAN WELLS CITY COUNCIL

## March 7, 2024



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**To:** City Council  
**From:** City Manager Department  
**Prepared by:** Micaela Wilkey, Senior Management Analyst  
**Subject:** **Continuation of Sponsorship for City of Indian Wells as an Official Partner City for Acrisure Arena**

### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

Council **APPROVES** continuing as the Official Acrisure Arena City Partner Sponsorship for FY 2024-25; and

**AUTHORIZES** the City Manager to notify Acrisure Arena that the City wishes to remain the Official Partner City for Fiscal Year 2024-2025.

### DISCUSSION:

On October 14, 2022, the Council approved the sponsorship to be the Official Partner City for Acrisure Arena (Arena). Before making any determination, Council had appointed an Ad Hoc Committee consisting of then Mayor Pro Tem Griffith and Councilmember Bernheimer to review the proposal details, discuss the merits with Visit Greater Palm Springs (Visit GPS), and obtain values for the various sponsorship items. In addition, the Ad Hoc Committee met with representatives from the Arena to obtain clarification of sponsorship benefits and to seek added benefits for the City's participation.

Acrisure Arena provided top-tier hospitality in 2022-2023. The arena with 11,000+ capacity hosted some of the biggest acts and provided the community a hockey team that was Pacific Division Champs and Western Conference Champs in the first year, Go Firebirds. The Indian Wells City Council provided the Firebirds with a Key to City. The partnership goals have been to connect world-class sports & entertainment with world-class brands like Indian Wells. The goal is to deepen engagement, build brand affinity and positive sentiment. The city also had the opportunity to highlight city owned Indian Wells Golf Resort and promote experiences like Winterfest, Shots in the Night, and TopTracer.

The Arena is home to the only professional sports team in the Coachella Valley, the Coachella Valley Firebirds, an AHL affiliate of the Seattle Kraken. With the Arena's strategic partnership with Live Nation, it is also home to numerous family and music

industry acts. The venue is owned and operated by Oak View Group who owns and operates four other arenas (Seattle-Climate Pledge Arena; New York-USB Arena; Savannah-Enmarket Arena; and Austin-Moody Center).

The statistics of the arena in a 6-month period sponsorship report from December 14, 2022, to June 21, 2023, are 29 concert/shows and 48 Firebird home games for a total of 77 events with an attendance of 584,011. The Arena had \$3.2 million in merchandise sales, \$10.2 million in food & beverage sales, was top 3 in AHL overall tickets sales, and top 8 in AHL overall attendance.

Highlights of the sponsorship included the IW branding onsite which included marquee signage of I-10 freeway billboards, added value of broadcast, pre-sale opportunities for residents, and information on the LED rings. The City utilized this benefit to promote the Indian Wells Golf Resort (IWGR) and Winterfest. This was beneficial to the City and the IWGR as PGA West is the Official Golf Sponsor for the arena. Contractually, the arena was to provide annual cumulative exposure of 47 hours for I-10 freeway billboards. The city received almost four times the contract hours at 168 hours, for a total monetary value of \$277,252. Due to the increased number of events at the arena, the Indian Wells stage had an increased value of \$16,000. The broadcast value was an added value at \$876,102 to all sponsors with an 25% of that being specific to Indian Wells at an extra \$140,176. Indian Wells first year sponsorship received a value of \$762,175. The original valuation of the sponsorship, provided by Visit GPS' marketing consultant, JNS Next Creative and Media Hub, was \$570,000. This estimated value was approved by the City Council in October 2022. This is an increase of \$192,175 value earned in its first year of sponsorship. There is also a significant value increase for the tickets we receive as pricing for tickets continues to grow year over year. The evaluation of this will be accounted for in year two of the sponsorship. JNS' received valuation of the sponsorship deal points is attached.

The sponsorship also provides a resident benefit of tickets to five (5) games, one of which is promoted as Indian Wells Night. The City receives 200 tickets for Indian Wells Night and 100 tickets for (4) other games. This has a value of \$33,000 and increases as pricing goes up. This has been a very popular resident benefit with positive feedback from residents. Additionally, the sponsorship provides residents with the opportunity to purchase presale tickets for different events, e.g. concerts, at least once per quarter. The presale events included Janet Jackson, the Eagles, Peter Gabriel, Stevie Nicks, and more. Acrisure provided more than one per quarter for residents.

There were items that the City did not fully receive. The Desert 9 artwork in the Iceplex did not occur. The facility switched direction from this initial idea and provided value in other areas. Additionally, outdoor branded Indian Wells stage changed as Toyota became a large sponsor and began utilizing that area. The arena provided a separate benefit with additional broadcasting value as listed above and began a new segment during Firebird's home games. They now have a "Between the Benches" segment proudly sponsored by the City of Indian Wells. This segment is prominently showcased on TV broadcasts,

streaming services, and within the arena itself. Gino LaMont leads interviews with the players pre-game, between intermissions, and occasionally post-game, mirroring the format seen in NHL broadcasts.

The Marketing Committee, Visit GPS, and staff met February 13, 2024, to review the sponsorship evaluation. The Marketing Committee and Visit GPS, who serves as the City's tourism partner and advisor, is supportive of the City of Indian Wells continuing its partnership with the Arena, believes the benefits are of significant value to Indian Wells. Additionally, VGPS and Tripepi Smith have agreed to assist the City in maximizing the sponsorship benefits in the next sponsorship year. The focus will be sending visitors to the IWGR to golf, visit the new restaurant, and go to Shots in the Night/Top Tracer. Both organizations support the partnership with the branding, promotion of Indian Wells as a destination, and resident benefits provided.

### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

Acrisure Arena sponsorship for FY 2024-25 is \$162,240. FY 2025-26 is \$158,730.

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Acrisure Received Media Valuation
2. Marketing Committee Sponsorship Review Memo