

## \$4.5M Ice Arena Coming to Cordova

An ownership group called [Memphis Ice Arena LLC](#) plans to bring a \$4.5 million, 65,000-square-foot ice arena to the city in 2009, ending a six-year drought without a public ice rink.

That's good news in a slumping economy and great news for the hockey players and figure skaters who have been without a rink since the Mall of Memphis and its popular Ice Chalet were demolished in 2003.



**UNITED SKATES:** The Memphis Ice Arena is a \$4.5 million, 65,000-square-foot facility to be built by March at Dexter and Appling roads in Cordova, bringing two ice rinks to Memphis hockey players and figure skaters. -- RENDERING COURTESY OF BRAGANZA ASSOCIATES PC ARCHITECTS

Dubbed the Memphis Ice Arena, the one-story facility will be built on about 6 acres at the southwest corner of Dexter and Appling roads in Cordova. It will include two ice rinks plus a host of other amenities, such as a 1,500-square-foot game room, 3,500-square-foot restaurant, skate rental shop and meeting/party space.

The arena will have ice time set aside for local hockey and figure skating clubs, plus ample skating opportunities for the public and times when private groups can rent the facility.

"This is a cultural indoor amusement community center for kids – not just a hockey arena," said [Chris Norton](#), co-owner of Braganza Associates PC Architects, the project's architect.

Norton and Braganza co-owner [Wendy Gross](#) spoke about the project on behalf of [Memphis Ice Arena LLC](#), a four-person ownership group with two partners from the area and two from elsewhere. They said the group's \$4.5 million investment includes land acquisition, site work, construction and equipment such as two Zamboni ice resurfacing machines.

[Memphis Ice Arena LLC](#) received Land Use Control Board approval last week and will now take the project before the Shelby County Board of Commissioners and the City Council. Financing is being finalized, with construction slated to begin in March and completed by the end of the year.

### The ice rink cometh

The Memphis Ice Arena will have two 85-by-200-foot ice rinks, replete with benches, penalty boxes, scoreboards and bleachers that will seat more than 500 fans. The restaurant and game room will overlook the rinks. The building will have 10 locker rooms – eight for teams during league and tournament play, one for referees and one larger room where guests can rent lockers to store their gear long-term.

The Memphis Youth Hockey League (MYHL) and the Figure Skating Club of Memphis (FSCM) are thrilled about the ice arena's arrival. Leaders of both organizations spoke about the need for more sheets of ice in the area, particularly within the city limits.

As they noted, when the Mall of Memphis closed in December 2003, skaters were forced to move into Southaven's DeSoto Civic Center.

MYHL chairman Russ Beatse said he's been thankful for that facility during the hiatus, but he's elated that the Memphis Ice Arena is being built so the club can have more rink time for its youth, high school and adult leagues. The arena will also allow the MYHL to host tournaments.

"We're a little bit handicapped with our sport," Beatse said. "There's plenty of grass to play baseball on, there's plenty of grass to play football on, there's plenty of water to go swimming in, there's plenty of concrete to play basketball or tennis on, but it takes a very specific surface for us to play our sport.

"This arena gives us a home. It gives us a place where we're No. 1 billing, the No. 1 tenant."

FSCM president [Sheila Camp](#) agreed that an arena dedicated solely to recreational and competitive skating will be imperative for growing membership and grooming young talent.

"We're very excited about the possibilities of having a permanent ice arena in the area," Camp said. "I want to be there for the groundbreaking and ribbon-cutting ceremony. That will be a great day for all of our figure skaters and our hockey players in this market. That's the day we're all looking forward to."

It's possible that Memphis Ice Arena won't be the only ice rink opening soon. The owners of Gameday Baseball in Cordova plan to build an ice rink as part of an expanded facility to be called Gameday Sportsplex. A call to Gameday wasn't returned by press time.

## **Lace up those skates**

The land where Memphis Ice Arena will sit is currently owned by [Dancy Investments Inc.](#), but the company is in the process of selling it to [Memphis Ice Arena LLC](#), said Norton and Gross.

The arena will have entrances on Dexter and Appling roads plus parking for nearly 300 cars. An outparcel will remain undeveloped for now, though future plans call for a hotel there.

[Memphis Ice Arena LLC](#) owners were especially pleased with the Cordova locale they chose because it's not far from Interstate 40 and easily accessible from all points in the metro area.

"The location is ideal," said Norton, who added that the group looked at Collierville before deeming the review process there too cumbersome. "This site jumped out at us because of easy access to the interstate."

To fit in with the neighborhood – a mix of industrial, residential and religious buildings – Braganza used a combination of materials for the facility, which is primarily metal but also incorporates brick and masonry.

"We wanted it to be an iconic building," Gross said. "You want to know it's an arena and you want it to have an identity, but it had to fit into the scale of the neighborhood."

The building's footprint is 250 feet by 260 feet and will be 25 feet high, although its footings are depressed into the site and won't appear that tall, the architects said. Also, the owners invested in energy-efficient techniques, including a Glycol-cooled refrigeration system for the ice. Though it's more expensive, it should result in lower operation costs for the arena.

A contractor has been selected for the project, although the owners haven't yet disclosed it.