



Project Data

Key Scope Items:

- Event Conference Center/Arena Feasibility and Market Analysis
- Operating and Financial Projections
- Economic Impact Analysis

Development Budget: \$20,000,000

HSP Professionals Involved in Project: Rob Hunden

Time of Service: 2004

Heartland Events Center Feasibility Study

Grand Island, Nebraska

In 2004, the City of Grand Island and Fonner Park Exposition & Events Center, Inc. – a private developer and owner of an entertainment and recreation complex known as Fonner Park – perceived the need for a multi-purpose meeting and event center. Mr. Hunden co-managed the study to determine the need for a facility to host events as diverse as sporting events, concerts, community events, meetings and family entertainment events. The study continued by developing financial projections for the operation of the facility as well as the economic and fiscal impacts of such a public assembly venue.

The study concluded there was ample market demand for a facility with 6,000 to 7,500 seats for sporting events, concerts and other events together with additional meeting space and design features to permit the arena portion to be used for a variety of events, such as expositions, conventions, consumer and trade shows.

In November, 2006, the public/private partnership between the City and Fonner Park came to fruition with the opening of the Heartland Events Center. The 180,000-square foot multipurpose center combines Eihusen Arena (with seating for up to 7,500 and over 30,000 square feet of floor space) and Bosselman Conference Center (an 8,000-square foot meeting facility with breakout rooms and catering facilities). This style of venue is an excellent model for smaller communities that wish to combine the elements of an arena with a convention and conference center for the most efficient use of funds and largest impact on the community.