

JOINT ACTION

# 'Second chance' for VenuWorks approved

By Christopher Guinn  
Dodge City Daily Globe

VenuWorks received its expected, and final, approval to continue managing United Wireless Arena by a joint action by the Dodge City and Ford County commissions, Monday.

"We appreciate the second chance — we see it as that — the challenge has been getting the right man in the right spot, and I think we have that now," VenuWorks founder and president Steve Peters told the eight commissioners, referring to the hiring of Chris Ragland to run the facility. "We are confident some good things are happening."

Peters said the community should be proud of the tax funded venue and that it has been getting solid reviews from artists and managers that have performed in the building.

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— Steve Peters, president and founder of VenuWorks

map... It's a building to be proud of," he said.

The new contract with VenuWorks reduces the base management fee from \$132,000 per year to \$60,000, but adds performance incentives based on food and beverage sales and for net income exceeding annual budget expectations.

"It's basically the same contract we've been under," City Manager Cherise Tieben said, aside from the payment to VenuWorks.

The management fee will increase by 1.5 percent each year for the five-year contract with a performance-based 1.5 percent that can be added at the request of a new performance review committee.

The last item will need

to be reviewed by a bond auditor as the facility was built with tax-exempt bonds, Tieben said, but if it's struck from the contract it would be a benefit for the city and county.

The contract also prevents VenuWorks from requiring its local employees from signing non-compete agreements in case a decision is made to exit the agreement with the company but the city and county want to retain certain employees.

The contract term has increased from three years to five, but Tieben said she was comfortable with the arrangement as the exit clause requires 90 days, down from 120, of notice without cause to end the arrangement.

WIND ENERGY

# Missouri hearing evidence on proposed power line

By David A. Lieb,  
The Associated Press

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. — Staff for state regulators joined rural landowners Monday in urging Missouri's utility oversight panel to reject a proposed high-voltage power line that has been touted as a way to carry wind energy eastward from the plains of Kansas.

The \$2.2 billion Grain Belt Express would transmit electricity from Dodge City, Kansas, across northern Missouri and Illinois to a substation in Sullivan, Indiana. Some of the electricity also would be available for Missouri utilities.

Because Missouri sits in the middle of the path, approval from the state Public Service Commission is vital for the project to go forward.

But commission staff — who make recommendations to the five-person regulatory board — expressed opposition Monday, which could prove to be a significant hurdle for Clean Line Energy Partners, the Houston-based company seeking to build the power line. Commission staff said the company has neither shown the need for the power line in Missouri, nor that it's economically feasible and in the public interest — three of the five factors the commission considers in its analysis.

Attorneys for landowners opposed to the project also pointed out the company does not yet have contracts to build it, generators lined up to supply power or customers to purchase that power. They called the request for Missouri regulatory approval speculative and premature.

But Clean Line officials said all of those things are likely to follow if it gets approval from Missouri and Illinois, as it already has in Kansas and Indiana. An attorney for the company compared the high-voltage power line to other historic infrastructure developments that have transformed the economy, such as major bridges over bodies of water, the national highway system and the Panama Canal.

The power line is "a bridge to our energy future" that "provides a wonderful opportunity for the state of Missouri and the region," said Karl Zobrist, an attorney for Clean Line who is a former executive for Indiana-based regional power transmission entity Midcontinent Independent System Operator Inc.

The Grain Belt Express is promoted as a means of transmitting wind-powered electricity to utilities that need to comply with federal or state guidelines for obtaining a certain percentage of power from renewable energy sources. But federal rules require open access, meaning a

coal-fired power plant also could use the line to transmit its energy.

Supporters of the project include the Sierra Club, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and wind energy developers.

The line would carry a direct current of electricity, which Clean Line says is more efficient, more affordable and requires less of an easement from property owners than the more common alternating current.

About 530 Missouri landowners are in the path of the proposed power line, which would cross the Missouri River south of St. Joseph and cut east across eight mostly rural counties before crossing the Mississippi River south of Hannibal. The project would include a converter station in Ralls County that would allow the delivery of up to 500 megawatts of electricity to the state's power grid.

Some landowners fear the high-voltage wires could reduce property values and impede farming.

"Grain Belt's proposed route goes through some of the most rich and productive farm land in the country," said Terry Jarrett, an attorney who used to serve on the PSC and now represents the group Show Me Concerned Landowners.

The regulatory hearings are to continue over the next couple of weeks.

MEDICAL



Western Plains breaks ground for a new women's center. SUBMITTED PHOTO

# Western Plains Complex expands women's center

Special to the Dodge City Daily Globe

Western Plains Medical Complex broke ground Monday for a new women's center, which will become part of the main hospital.

The new center will feature 10 labor, delivery, recovery and post-partum rooms and will promote the childbirth experience for not only the mother-to-be, but for the entire family. According to Edna Dunn, interim chief nursing officer at Western Plains, these specialized suites will be used for all phases of labor, delivery and recovery, and their self-containment will allow patients to stay in one location throughout the entire childbirth experience.

The new 13,000-square-foot addition will contain a newborn nursery and a

neonatal intensive care unit, featuring a large glass window for viewing. It will also include a separate lactation area. Western Plains delivers approximately 725 babies annually. All of the nurses at the womens center are certified in advanced fetal monitoring, and have received special training in newborn resuscitation.

Construction is projected to begin in mid-November. Sections of the building will be pre-constructed and moved to Western Plains from an offsite location. Off-site pre-fabrication should speed up the construction process since foundation and site work can be progressing at the same time as building construction.

Lee Harlan, director of plant operations, said the building will be virtually indistinguishable from a

conventionally constructed building and have hospital grade construction."

Harlan said that construction cranes will be on site for only a few days, to pick up pre-constructed exterior wall sections and set them on to their foundation.

After this occurs," he said, "the project will take approximately eight weeks to complete.

CEO Mike Burroughs said this new project is the result of hard work and determination.

I want to thank our board of trustees, members of our medical staff and LifePoint, who have had the vision to work toward this goal," Burroughs said. "The new womens center will certainly allow us to enhance the quality health care we already provide to our community.

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