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City of Duluth Communications Office

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SUBJECT: Mayor Emily Larson and Duluth Entertainment Convention Center announce partnership regarding DECC Arena ice plant

BY: Kelli Latuska, Public Information Officer

**Mayor Emily Larson and Duluth Entertainment Convention Center
announce partnership regarding DECC Arena ice plant**

[Duluth, MN] Mayor Emily Larson and DECC Executive Director Dan Hartman announced today a partnership granting up to \$200,000 to the DECC for a temporary ice chiller to maintain the ice sheet at the DECC Arena.

A resolution will go before the Duluth City Council to enter into an agreement between the City and the DECC. The City Council previously approved an ARPA investment goal of \$200,000 for aid to previous tourism tax recipients. This resolution, if passed, would satisfy that ARPA investment goal.

The modified revenue loss calculation included in the updated ARPA guidance expanded the City's capacity and flexibility to fund ARPA projects out of the general fund. The ARPA guidance allows for the City to fund provisions for government services included in the annual budget, thereby freeing up budgeted resources to fund the DECC's ice chiller.

"Ice sheets are in high demand across Duluth," said Mayor Larson. "It's clear that maintaining the DECC's ice sheet is critical not only to the families that love these sports, but also our local economy. The DECC Arena is part of the network of rinks in Duluth that support tournaments and competitions, which drive the economic impact through hotels, restaurants, retail, and related spending. The DECC has always been an incredible partner with the City and with the community. Supporting a temporary ice chiller here is an easy decision and truly a win-win-win for the City, the DECC, and most importantly the community."

"This is a good example of collaboration to ensure that families in the region are able to continue the activities that they're passionate about. We are pleased and want to thank the City of Duluth, City Council, and Mayor Larson for making this temporary ice possible in DECC Arena," said Daniel Hartman, Executive Director of Duluth Entertainment

Convention Center.

“Obviously this is a huge deal for thousands of hockey players and figure skaters, coaches, volunteers and family members because it means we get to host so many more events in our wonderful city,” said Bob Nygaard, Executive Director of the Duluth Amateur Hockey Association. “Our hotel and restaurant partners are also extremely excited to see our nearly six-decade relationship with the DECC Arena continue, knowing the economic boost we provide to them and the rest of the Duluth community during the dark days of winter. Not having the DECC available would have meant a drastic reduction in the number of teams we could allow to play in our tournaments and that would have meant a drastic reduction in tourism revenue for Duluth. It’s that simple.”

This spring, the Duluth Entertainment Convention Center’s DECC Arena ice plant, which creates that arena’s rink ice, was shuttered. This decision came after a scheduled third-party safety assessment advised that the ice plant be retired for safety reasons. This plant was installed in 1966 and is well beyond its mechanical lifespan.

A study conducted by The University of Minnesota Duluth’s Labovitz School estimated that the Duluth Amateur Hockey Association’s (DAHA) youth hockey operations provide approximately \$10.3 million in local economic impact annually when adjusting for inflation. The two dozen tournaments and swing games with out-of-area teams account for about \$5 million of that spending through the local economy. In addition to all of the practices held at the DECC last season, approximately 95 youth hockey games were held at the DECC alone. These contests involved about 70 out-of-town teams or about 37% of the total participating teams. Similarly, the Duluth Figure Skating Club annually hosts the second-largest figure skating competition in the country. It is important to note that all thirteen indoor hockey tournaments and all indoor figure skating competitions are three-day events that require multiple nights of hotel stays and tourism. The infusion of these dollars comes in the dead of winter when tourism would typically be a much lower proportion of the economy.

Note: This ice plant does not affect AMSOIL Arena or the Duluth Curling Club, serviced by different ice plants at the Duluth Entertainment Convention Center (DECC).

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