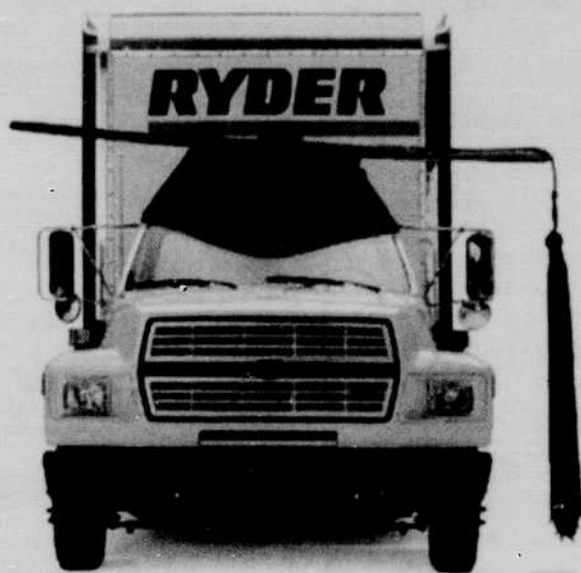


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Rose Garden taking shape in Portland

PORTLAND (AP) — The huge building with the smooth curved roof just across the Willamette River from downtown Portland is already a prominent feature on the city's skyline.

Inside, workers in a maze of gray concrete make steady progress toward completion of the \$262 million Rose Garden. When it's finished, its owners say, it will be the finest arena of its kind in the country.

Bordered by Dribble Drive on one side and Winning Way on the other, the new home of the Portland Trail Blazers is 80 percent completed and is slightly ahead of schedule for its Oct. 9 opening date.

Nearly the entire cost is being privately financed by Blazers owner Paul Allen, co-founder of Microsoft and one of the wealthiest figures in sports.

"We spent a lot of money on this place," Marshall Glickman, president of Trail Blazers Inc., said as he enthusiastically detailed the amenities during a tour of the structure.

At the entrance will be "Paul's fountain feature," a \$2 million computerized fountain in which flames and water will shoot 120 feet into the air.

Panasonic has reached an agreement to provide 750 television sets for the building, including a giant state-of-the-art screen above the arena.

Reader boards will tell of traffic problems and deliver other information. Loud speakers will greet visitors as far away as the transit mall.

There are rest rooms every few feet.

"Our percentage of patrons per rest room is the highest of any arena in the country," Glickman said.

The building will seat 21,500 for basketball and 18,000 for hockey. When there is seating on the floor, such as for a boxing match, capacity reaches 23,000.

Hovering above will be an "acoustic cloud," a ceiling that features rotating acoustic panels. On one side will be a hard surface to make the place seem as noisy as possible for sporting

events. The other side is covered with fiber to make the arena as acoustically pleasing as possible for concerts.

It can be lowered to just above the preferred seating level, leaving a more intimate 6,000-seat setting for concerts.

On this day, crews were installing the refrigeration pipes beneath the court. The building is being constructed to National Hockey League standards with the belief that someday the NHL will come to Portland.

There are four locker rooms, two for hockey and two for basketball. The Blazers' locker room features a steam room and a giant whirlpool bath.

There are star dressing rooms for performers and a big dressing room for ensembles.

Each spectator level has outdoor terraces, including one where cigar, not cigarette, smoking will be allowed. Seventy percent of the concession stands have ventilation and the food will be cooked there, Glickman said.

Outside is a 3,000-seat plaza that will be finished by late July. The rock group "Widespread Panic" is to be the first to play there.

Across the street, the Blazers' new office building is nearly finished. It will include a 14,000-square-foot sports bar, a brew pub and restaurant.

About halfway up the arena are 70 luxury suites, featuring stereo system, catered food, leather chairs and television monitors. The suites range in cost from \$65,000 to \$130,000, depending on their location, and all have been sold.

And this is just the beginning. The Blazers want to negotiate to purchase and demolish a grain elevator that blocks the view of the river and there are tentative plans for a new hotel and office complex.

There are only 2,500 parking spots on site. Most people will have to come by mass transit or shuttle.

By spending all that money, the Blazers are hoping it's worth the trip.

Winnipeg City Council backs local bid for Jets

WINNIPEG, Manitoba (AP) — The city council voted today to back a local bid to keep the ailing Jets of the National Hockey League in Winnipeg.

The 13-3 vote means the city is willing to split an \$111-million tab for a new arena with the province and Ottawa, although the federal government had not yet made a decision on its role. The province has already committed money.

About 200 people sitting in the gallery at city hall erupted into wild cheers when the result of the vote was announced.

Mayor Susan Thompson said she was ecstatic.

"The sun is shining today," she beamed.

But Glen Murray, who voted against the plan, said he "would rather lose an election and do the right thing."

Time is ticking away in Winnipeg's delirious bid to keep its beloved Jets.

The NHL franchise is scheduled to move to Minneapolis if a

deal to keep the team in Winnipeg isn't reached by noon Thursday.

But fans, friends, city councilors and business people were still trying to do their best Tuesday to keep the Jets parked on the Winnipeg tarmac.

An estimated 35,000 fans — some pushing strollers and some wearing Jets jerseys and painted faces — turned out for an evening rally to show their love for the team.

"This is about [the] future of our city and the future for our kids," said lawyer Sheldon Pinx.

The gathering at a city riverside park was held as another troubled Canadian franchise, the Quebec Nordiques, faced elimination from the playoffs and relocation out of the country.

The Jets, like the Nordiques, need political support to finance new buildings and offset losses.

At the rally, cheering fans were joined by several entertainers, including children's singer Fred Penner.