



OKOTOKS OILERS JUNIOR 'A' HOCKEY CLUB

Box 171
OKOTOKS, ALBERTA T1S 1A5
(403) 995-2255
www.okotoksoilers.ca

Town of Okotoks
5 Elizabeth St.
Okotoks, AB
VIA EMAIL

December 9, 2022

RE: 2024 / 2025 National Junior A Championship & 2023 AJHL Showcase Bid Support

Dear Mayor Thorn, and members of Council:

We are pleased to inform you that our organization has commenced the work of formulating a bid for the Town of Okotoks to host the 2024 or 2025 National Junior A Hockey Championship (NJAC), as well as the 2023 Alberta Junior Hockey League (AJHL) Showcase.

2024 / 2025 National Junior A Championship

This Hockey Canada national event brings 9 champions of the Junior A hockey leagues of Canada to a central location, to battle each other as well as the host team to determine the national champion of the Junior A level of hockey, with the final game broadcast nationally on TSN.

In 2019, the Oilers, with the endorsement and support of the Town, bid for the 2021 edition of the event, but were unsuccessful in this process, as it was awarded to Estevan, Sasaktchewan and eventually held in May of 2022 after pandemic delays.

Since that time, the event has doubled in size from 5 teams to 10 teams. With this increase comes further opportunity for economic impact of the event, but also the need for greater local support. With that in mind, we humbly request your consideration of the following support for the event, for inclusion in our bid proposal to Hockey Canada:

- The waiver of setup, ice rental, staffing, and meeting room rental fees for the 11 days of the event at the Centennial Arenas
- A sponsorship partnership of up to \$25,000 in total value over up to 3 years in the leadup to the event, to provide seed money for the initial costs of the event

While this is a larger request than was made by the Oilers in 2019, we believe such an agreement will significantly improve the chances of the event being awarded to Okotoks. Specifically, Estevan was successful in that 2019 process due in no small part to the significant municipal support they brought; a full waiver of facility fees as well as a \$50,000 grant from their City government, which was increased to \$200,000 after pandemic delays (<https://www.estevanbruins.com/2022-centennial-cup-receives-additional-150000-from-city-of-estevan>). Its City government also pledged to cover any loss incurred by the event, but the Oilers will not make this request as we intend to make that pledge ourselves. In addition, the prior event in Brooks in 2019 received \$50,000 in municipal funding from its local City and County governments combined.

This event brings the potential for significant local economic impact as well as a massive opportunity to promote our growing community.

In the case of the former, economic impact of the 2018 edition of the event in Chilliwack, B.C. was estimated to contribute \$2.5 million to the local economy (<https://chilliwackchiefs.net/rbc-cup-tournament-economic-impact->





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[revealed/](#)), while the 2022 event in Estevan was projected by their Economic Development team to have an impact of approximately \$2 million (<https://estevaneconomicdevelopment.ca/2021/06/2022-centennial-cup-event-economic-impact/>). For a town like Okotoks, the sheer size of this event means that hotels across the Town and the wider region will be completely sold out, while local restaurants will see a significant surge in business, both from Tournament catering needs as well as fans visiting from abroad.

The nationwide appeal of the event (the 9 champions will span Alberta to the Maritimes) also provides a massive opportunity to promote the brand and profile of the Town as it moves into the new phase of population growth enabled by the recently announced water solution. To that end, we are not simply requesting a monetary gift from the Town, but rather one that will allow us to transform the event into a major marketing piece for the Town, promoting it as a terrific place to visit, as well as to live and work. This campaign, in concert with Town staff and goals, can include visual advertisements at the facility (inside and at ancillary events) and on the TSN broadcast, in-game announcements and digital media exposure as part of game day operations, and significant advertising on the online video streams of games, which also attract a nationwide audience.

Finally, it is important to note that any profits from this event are not held by the Oilers or the host committee, but rather must flow into an event Legacy Fund whose expenses must be approved by the Hockey Canada steering committee for the event. These legacy expenses must have a local impact, and have in recent events included investing in arena improvements, minor hockey association funding, and scholarships. You can be assured that the benefits of this event will be focused on the Town of Okotoks exclusively.

It is vital to highlight that the Town's recent partnership with Hockey Canada in hosting the 2022 Telus and Esso Cups on short notice has earned us an excellent reputation for event hosting, due in no small part to the incredible, professional, and top-notch efforts of your Recreation Services staff. We believe that a bid for the 2024 or 2025 NJAC will be strongly considered, and will present a marvelous chance for us to showcase our community on the national stage, with the added benefit of a home team being able to compete this time.

This event holds the potential to be a transformative, memorable and history-making event in the lengthy sports and community history of this Town. We would be delighted to partner with the Town to help set new heights for this event and firmly establish our ability to be a top sports tourism destination.

2023 AJHL Showcase

Although this is a smaller scale event, it is equally important to us in helping to further expand the resumé of the Town as a mecca for high-level sports events.

This annual event brings together all 16 teams that comprise the Alberta Junior Hockey League, with each team playing two games each over the course of the four-day event that will be held from September 27th – 30th.

Due to many northern teams requiring overnight stays, as well as the tendency for teams with larger fanbases to bring their supporters to the Showcase location each year, we also predict this event to lead to a major surge in hotel and restaurant usage in the Town over the course of the week.

To that end, to make the event more fiscally secure, we are requesting:

- The waiver of ice rental and meeting room rental fees for the 4 days of the event
 - This event will only require use of the Green arena, ensuring that the Gold arena remains available and reducing the impact on local groups





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If granted, we would also reflect the support of the Town in the advertising and marketing of the Showcase in similar fashion to our proposal for the NJAC, ensuring that this is also used as an opportunity to promote tourism and the local economy of the Town. We can also commit that any profits realized from this event will have a local impact, as we intend to utilize any such benefits to pursue continued improvement of the Centennial Arenas, similar to the cost-sharing arrangement the team and Town successfully pursued in the installation of new glass this past summer.

We are deeply appreciative of your consideration and would be happy to answer any questions you may have. We intend to submit our bids for both of these events by the end of January, with news on the Showcase expected at the end of February, and the NJAC decision expected in March.

We look forward to continuing to explore new opportunities to bring high-level hockey events to our wonderful Town and facility.

Sincerely,

Tyler King
Assistant General Manager, Business Operations

Wayne Lauinger
Chairman of the Board

