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**MCCA PUTS SPRINGFIELD CIVIC CENTER PROJECT OUT TO BID**  
*Project Receives Preliminary Approval from Redevelopment Authority*

The Massachusetts Convention Center Authority (MCCA) today announced that plans to renovate the Springfield Civic Center have received preliminary approval from the Springfield Redevelopment Authority and as of today and through June 18, 2003, contract documents will be available for contractors interested in working on construction of the project.

“This is a major project for the Pioneer Valley and the MCCA is pleased to be moving forward in the construction process by putting the project out to bid,” said James E. Rooney, MCCA Interim Executive Director and Director of Development and Construction. “We are on target to break ground this summer and will be working side-by-side with the city to ensure that the project stays on schedule and that users of the civic center, especially the Falcons and their fans, have minimal disruptions during construction.”

The \$71 million project, which is slated to begin mid-July 2003 and be completed in the summer of 2005, will completely renovate the existing Springfield Civic Center for use as a multi-purpose arena and convention center. Construction will include approximately 147,000 square feet of new building for convention, exhibition and meeting space and the renovation of approximately 215,000 square feet of the existing facility.

“The expanded and improved civic center will provide a boost to other community development initiatives and existing area businesses,” said Gloria C. Larson, Chairman of the MCCA. “The MCCA is excited to be working with the city of Springfield on this project and we know that the new civic center will enhance the Springfield area’s reputation as a convention, trade show and tourism destination.”

The new facility will include an exhibit hall, meeting rooms, a ballroom, pre-function space, a kitchen and support spaces. The exhibit hall will be located on the ground level with the capacity to be divided into two smaller exhibit halls and the meeting space will allow for five separate meeting rooms. The ballroom will provide great opportunities for functions and will have the added feature of opening out into the pre-function space with views to Court Square.

As part of the project, the facilities for the AHL Springfield Falcons will be totally upgraded. The former ice system has been replaced with a state-of-the-art system and spectator seating, concessions, home and visiting team locker rooms and administration and support spaces will all be replaced with new facilities. Additionally, club seating and a new, modern center-hung scoreboard will be installed.

The civic center will be open throughout the renovation and Falcons games as well as other scheduled events will continue to be held. The Falcons administrative offices will be relocated temporarily to 155 State Street in Springfield and tickets to Falcons games will be sold out of this location as well as at the civic center.

“The civic center project is an important economic project for Western Mass and we have worked hard to make it happen,” said Senate Minority Leader Brian Lees. “I am excited that the construction process is moving forward and look forward to the groundbreaking.”

“I am very happy the convention center project is moving forward. This is an important step in revitalizing the economic climate in Western Massachusetts,” said State Senator Linda J. Melconian.

The city of Springfield received bids for the demolition of the bank building at 1243 Main Street in March 2003 and the contract is expected to be awarded this June. Demolition work is set to begin upon award of the contract and is scheduled to be completed by late summer 2003. Additionally, the city will be removing a pedestrian bridge over East Court Street that connects the existing civic center to the parking garage.

“I am very excited that the project is moving forward,” said State Representative Cheryl Rivera. “And I know that Western Mass residents are equally happy to see new construction and new jobs that will benefit the entire Western Mass region.”

The site immediately surrounding the arena and civic center will be redesigned in response to the new arena entry and convention center. New brick sidewalks will be created along with trees, pedestrian lighting and views into the convention center lobby and pre-function space.

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