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ROMNEY BREAKS GROUND ON SPRINGFIELD CIVIC CENTER

\$71 Million Facility Officially Named MassMutual Center

SPRINGFIELD – Governor Mitt Romney today joined state and local officials to break ground on the \$71 million renovation and expansion of the Springfield Civic Center. Romney said the improved facility will be renamed the MassMutual Center when it is completed.

“This is an important economic development project for the city of Springfield and the entire Pioneer Valley,” said Romney. “The region has worked hard to establish its reputation as a premier tourist destination and the new MassMutual Center will build on those successes and provide a boost to area businesses and other community development initiatives.”

Home to the Springfield Falcons hockey team, the civic center will undergo a complete renovation for use as a multi-purpose arena and convention center. The project, scheduled to be complete in 2005, will expand and improve the existing civic center, which is currently a top Central New England venue for children and family shows, like Sesame Street Live and Disney on Ice, sporting events, local college graduations and concerts, in addition to Falcons events.

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. When completed, the facility will include an exhibit hall, meeting rooms, a ballroom, pre-function space, a kitchen and corporate hospitality and support spaces.

“The new MassMutual Center will expand Springfield’s ability to attract top-notch events, business meetings and conventions,” said James Rooney, MCCA Interim Executive Director and Director of Development and Construction. “We are committed to working with the City of Springfield and to keeping this project on schedule so that users of the facility and Springfield residents and employees will have minimal disruptions during construction.”

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“Tourism is one of the top industries in Massachusetts and this project helps ensure Springfield continues to share a piece of that industry,” 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 MassMutual Center will build the region’s reputation as a convention trade show and tourism destination.”

The Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company (MassMutual) has signed a \$5 million naming rights agreement with the Massachusetts Convention Center Authority (MCCA). Those funds will be directed toward the renovation.

“This center is the premier facility for entertainment and sporting events in the central New England region, and we are pleased that MassMutual – the largest corporation in Massachusetts – is playing a vital role in the creation of a new and better facility for our employees and Springfield citizens to enjoy,” said Robert O’Connell, Chairman, CEO and President of MassMutual.

As part of the project, the facilities for the AHL Springfield Falcons – also partly owned by MassMutual – will be upgraded. The former ice system is being replaced with a state-of-the-art system and spectator seating, concessions, home and visiting team locker rooms as well as 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 facility 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 Center.

The site immediately surrounding the arena and civic center will be redesigned as part of 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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