

Arizona Veterans Memorial Coliseum

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Arizona Veterans Memorial Coliseum is a 14,870-seat multi-purpose indoor arena in Phoenix, Arizona, located on the grounds of the Arizona State Fair. It hosted the Phoenix Suns of the National Basketball Association from 1968 to 1992, as well as indoor soccer, roller derby and minor league ice hockey teams.

Contents

- 1 History
- 2 Tenants
- 3 See also
- 4 References
- 5 External links

History

Newspaper reports state that The Arizona State Fair Commission began planning for an "Arizona State Fairgrounds Exposition Center" as early as the fall of 1962. The Commission envisioned an indoor facility which could be used during the State Fair as well as year-round. In 1964, Phoenix architect Leslie Mahoney, of the Lescher and Mahoney firm (designers of the Orpheum Theatre in downtown Phoenix among others) presented the commission with the final plans, and construction began that summer. Tucson architect Lew Place (son of University of Arizona chief campus architect Roy Place, and who later took over his father's firm) was also involved in the design. The structural engineering firm was T. Y. Lin International.

The unique saddle-shaped, tension-cable roof, supporting over 1,000 precast concrete panels, was considered innovative architectural engineering at the time. It may have been at least partially influenced by the equally innovative

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The Coliseum



Location	1826 West McDowell Road, <div></div> Phoenix, Arizona 85007
Coordinates	33°28′10″N 112°5′48″W﻿ / ﻿
Owner	Arizona Exposition and State Fair Board
Operator	Arizona Exposition and State Fair Board
Capacity	Basketball: 14,870 <div></div> Ice hockey: 13,730

Construction

Broke ground	August 11, 1964 ^[1]
Opened	November 3, 1965
Construction cost	\$7 million <div>(\$52.6 million in 2015 dollars^[2])</div>
Architect	Lescher & Mahoney <div>Place & Place</div>
Structural engineer	T. Y. Lin International
General contractor	Manhattan–Dickman

Tenants

Phoenix Suns (NBA) (1968–1992)
Phoenix Roadrunners (WHA) (1974–1977)

Dorton Arena at the North Carolina State Fair in Raleigh, completed in 1952. Veterans Memorial Coliseum also contains a series of murals by Phoenix artist Paul Coze. The design influenced later arenas' architecture, including the Capital Centre in Landover, Maryland and the Scotiabank Saddledome in Calgary, Alberta.

Phoenix Inferno (MISL) (1980–1984)
Phoenix Roadrunners (IHL) (1989–1997)
Phoenix Mustangs (WCHL) (1997–2001)
Phoenix Eclipse (ABA) (2001–2002)
Arizona Thunder (WISL) (1998–2000)
Arizona Derby Dames (roller derby) (2009–present)



The Coliseum in 2007

In April 1965, the name was officially changed to honor Arizona's war veterans.

There was an early controversy over whether alcohol would be served at the new facility, but legislation was signed in April 1965 by Governor Sam Goddard providing for limited liquor sales.

The Coliseum opened November 3, 1965, with a production of Ice Follies. The final cost was estimated at \$7 million.

On January 21, 1967, The Monkees performed a concert at AVMC, which was filmed and portions used in episode 4753 *The Monkees on Tour*. The episode first aired on NBC, April 24, 1967. The episode also included some footage of the band's stay at

Mountain Shadows Resort.^[3]

On September 9, 1970 Elvis Presley kicked off his first tour after returning to live performing, here in front of a sell-out crowd of 13,000 as he did his first tour of 1973 on April 22 in front of 15,000.

On October 18, 1993 Nirvana kicked off their In Utero world tour with a sold-out concert at AVMC.

Seating capacity for basketball went as followed:^[4]

- 12,371 (1965-1971)
- 12,534 (1971-1975)
- 13,036 (1975-1976)
- 13,274 (1976-1977)
- 12,660 (1977-1981)
- 14,660 (1981-1985)
- 14,519 (1985-1987)
- 14,471 (1987-1989)
- 14,487 (1989-1991)
- 14,496 (1991-1992)

Tenants

This distinctive arena with its saddle-shaped roof, which sat 13,730 for ice hockey and 14,870 for basketball, was the home of the Phoenix Roadrunners of the Western Hockey League from 1967-'74 and the WHA from 1974–1977 and of the now-defunct International Hockey League from 1989 to 1997, the Phoenix Suns of the NBA from 1968–1992, the Phoenix Racquets of World Team Tennis from 1975 to 1978, the Arizona Thunder of the World

Indoor Soccer League from 1998-2000, and the Phoenix Mustangs of the now-defunct WCHL from 1999-2000. The Coliseum was again home to pro sports starting in 2006, when the IBL's Phoenix Flame played home games there until their move to Grand Canyon University. During the Suns' tenure there, the Coliseum was affectionately referred to as "The Mad House on McDowell

(http://www.nba.com/suns/news/sunderella_anniversary_010314.html) (named for McDowell Road, the street in Phoenix where it is located) by both fans and the local media.

The Coliseum currently hosts the Arizona Derby Dames banked track roller derby league.

The arena hosted truck pulling sanctioned by USHRA in the late 1980s. It was frequently featured on USHRA's truck pulling series on ESPN.

The Coliseum also housed the Phoenix Inferno (also known as the Phoenix Pride) of the MISL from 1980 to 1984.

The Coliseum also hosted a Saturday Night's Main Event taping on Feb. 15, 1986 (shown on NBC on March 1, 1986) when King Kong Bundy attacked Hulk Hogan at the end of his title defense versus Magnificent Muraco. Hogan suffered (kayfabe) rib injuries, setting up their steel cage main event match at Wrestlemania 2.

It hosted the 1975 NBA All-Star Game and WCW WrestleWar 1991. The Coliseum was also host to the Phoenix Mustangs hockey team as part of the West Coast Hockey League and the Phoenix Eclipse ABA basketball team. The ABA will return to the Coliseum, as the Phoenix Phantoms have selected that arena as one of their three venues.

The arena remains open for some events, even though the Suns left in 1992 for the America West Arena (now Talking Stick Resort Arena). The Arizona State Fair schedules concerts, comedy shows and other events in the Coliseum during the Fair's annual season (which begins each October). Until recently it hosted portions of Arizona's high school basketball championships, but those have been moved to the newer Jobing.com Arena.

In the fall of 2005, the Coliseum sheltered up to 2,500 evacuees from New Orleans in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. The evacuees were relocated to other housing in time for the opening of the Fair that October.

On January 28, 2008, presidential candidate Barack Obama held a rally at the Coliseum. Arizona governor Janet Napolitano and Caroline Kennedy were both part of the rally.

The AVMC most recently hosted Sam Smith on his In The Lonely Hour Tour in the summer of 2015. The Phoenix Suns would also return to the Veterans Memorial Coliseum for a pre-season scrimmage on October 3, 2015 as a part of their "We Are PHX" movement, as well as unveiled signs commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Coliseum's existence.^{[5][6]}

See also

- Dorton Arena
- Capital Centre
- London Velopark
- Scotiabank Saddledome
- Hyperboloid structure
- Tensile architecture
- Thin-shell structure



Wikimedia Commons has media related to *Arizona Veterans Memorial Coliseum*.

References

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 2. Consumer Price Index (estimate) 1800– (http://www.minneapolisfed.org/community_education/teacher/calc/hist1800.cfm). Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis. Retrieved November 10, 2015.
 3. http://monkeestv2.tripod.com/season1/ontour.html
 4. 2011-2012 Phoenix Suns Media Guide (http://www.nba.com/suns/media/SunsMediaGuide2011-12.pdf)
 5. http://cronkitenews.azpbs.org/2015/09/25/suns-help-ready-madhouse-for-teams-return-to-its-former-home/
 6. http://www.nba.com/suns/gallery/suns-week-service-2015
- The Arizona Republic: May 28, 1964; April 20, 1965
 - The Phoenix Gazette: April 24, 1963; March 27, 1965; October 28, 1966
 - Arizona Journal: November 14, 1962

External links

- Arizona Veterans Memorial Coliseum (https://arizonaexposition.com/facilities/arizona-veterans-memorial-coliseum)
- Arizona State Fair (http://www.azstatefair.com/)

Events and tenants		
Preceded by first arena	Home of the Phoenix Suns 1968 – 1992	Succeeded by Talking Stick Resort Arena
Preceded by Seattle Center Coliseum	Host of the NBA All-Star Game 1975	Succeeded by The Spectrum

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| 1965 establishments in Arizona | Indoor ice hockey venues in the United States
| Indoor soccer venues in the United States | Phoenix Suns venues | Sports venues in Phoenix, Arizona
| World Hockey Association venues | Roller derby venues in the United States

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