

**2023**


# Centennial Ice Arena

ANNUAL  
DIRECTOR'S

# REPORT

PREPARED BY: ● ●  
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# **Mission:**

*The mission of the Billings Amateur Hockey League is to provide a safe, fun, and educational environment for ice sports in our community.*



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Ice Community,

Centennial Ice Arena and Billings Amateur Hockey League have experienced a great deal of change in the last 12 months. These changes span through multiple programs and user groups that operate in our rink. I have composed an Annual Director's Report to highlight some of the key changes that have occurred along with some plans for the upcoming season. I encourage our users to take the time to read through this report to really understand the progress and workload that occurred last season. These changes have had a positive impact on our organization and leave us feeling confident about where we are headed.

We appreciate the support and trust that you have in us to create a culture of growth, leadership, and collaboration.

Sincerely,

Megan Davis



# Annual Report

- **Learn To Skate**- Our LTS program BOOMED last season. All 4 sessions were full of enthusiastic skaters of all ages. Even the adult LTS class was a major success! Because of the success of last season, we are excited to introduce new opportunities to interested skaters through a weekday LTS class. We will host 2-week LTS sessions (Mon/Tue/Thur 3:15-3:45pm). Our goal in this additional class option is to reach even more skaters in the community and help aid in faster skating development so they can move into our other programs like LTP and the FS Aspire Program. Session dates will be available soon!
- **Learn To Play**- Our LTP program has also continued to grow over the past several seasons. Last year we welcomed Declan Walsh as a new coach. Declan and John Stone proved to be a great duo of dedicated coaches. We were able to introduce an evaluation process to better help families understand where their skater is from a skill perspective and what opportunities are available to them beyond LTP. In the 23-24 season, skaters will be required to meet certain criteria of skating standards before entering the LTP program.
- **House Hockey**- The 22-23 season brought back a much-needed house program for Billings. Both sessions were a success, with a great team of coaches leading that program. Now that we can be sure there is interest in a program like this, we will be making some changes to the structure of the MCYHP. The program will be split into two divisions, 10U house and 12U+. This allows our younger skaters to follow ADM by playing half-ice hockey and allows our older group the opportunity to play at a higher speed and develop better as players. We hope to have continued growth in this program and eventually split the older group into even more divisions.
- **Girls Program**- Girls' Hockey has a national growth rate of 3% (compared to 2% for coed) and MT's girls growth rate is at 7%. That is an exciting thing to see and something that shows the need for us to put more focus and energy into a girl's program here in Billings and around the state. MAHA has developed a Girls Growth Committee and Megan Davis will have a seat on that committee to aid in the efforts locally and statewide. Last year the BAHHL rostered a 12U girls' team in several tournaments. This team was made up of girls 8U-12U and even with a young squad these girls had great success in Idaho Falls, bringing home a first-place banner. Their trip to Bismarck may not have resulted in the same outcome, but the hard work and determination of these young girls was just as apparent. Because of the success and momentum, we had in girls hockey last year, we are pleased to announce we will roster a 14U girls team in the TSL in the upcoming season! Additionally, all girls registered in BAHHL hockey programming will receive 1 hour of dedicated girls practice a week.
- **Travel Hockey**- It is no secret that last season started off a bit rocky for a few of our travel teams, largely in part to us being unprepared and an unfortunate breakdown in communication. While we can't go back and change that now, we did spend a lot of time evaluating how to prevent a situation like this in the future. Our spring evaluation and team formations were a huge help in this. We were able to hold spring meetings and answer questions as well as hear concerns, with plenty of time to address them. All our teams have coaches and managers in place, and many have begun selecting tournaments and holding fundraisers and team events throughout the summer. We plan to continue holding spring evaluations as it really has played a role in our ability to properly plan and organize ahead of time. We have welcomed Derek Waddoups as Coaching Director for the BAHHL and he has done a great job of organizing and leading our coaches. His expectations are high and his attitude positive and we know he will do great things for BAHHL! We have also welcome Renae Scott as our Team Manager Liaison. Renae works in communications and is passionate about being organized, and communicating timely and effectively. She has a desire to see BAHHL reach higher potential and is going to be instrumental in the upcoming seasons.



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- **Curling**- The Billings Curling Club continues to be a great supporter of Centennial Ice Arena. Our staff has been able to develop and strong relationship with their leaders and we continue to find ways to better work together to benefit their program. In September, Centennial Ice Arena will host a regional clinic amid and educated curling organizations and staff as to best practices for ice quality and programing. We are looking forward to this event and many other with them this season!
- **Adult Hockey**- The MCAHA continues to grow and recruit adult hockey players in the Billings area. Our continued partnership with them has benefited the ice community in many ways. In the 22-23 season we took over the adult tournaments. This generated great revenue for Centennial and took the burden of hosting such an event off of the MCAHA board. We plan to continue this in the coming years. CIA leadership and MCAHA continue to work together to find ways to better collaborate and stand united in our efforts to grow the ice community.
- **Rimrock Figure Skating Club**- For decades, Billings has had two figure skating clubs. However, last year these two clubs recognized the need and benefits of merging as one and were able to do so under fantastic leadership. This group of wonderful ladies has not only worked tirelessly to improve their FS organization, but also to collaborate and unite with CIA leadership to improve skating for our entire community. The unity between our two groups is something that we strive for in all areas of our ice community and we are so grateful to them and their willingness and excitement to work together!
- **Ice Schedule**- Our ice schedule is PACKED in the upcoming season, with the only down time being from 12-3pm most days. With increased usage comes challenges, but we have been able to work side by side our user groups to create a schedule that addresses the needs of everyone. We appreciate everyone's willingness to make some sacrifices to give all users the ice time they need and deserve. The schedule for the upcoming season is available on our website.
- **Governance**- The BAHF Board of Directors really deserves a massive amount of applause and gratitude. The work they have done to examine, evaluate, and understand where our organization is, has been, and should be is really something to be proud of. They have successfully changed our By-laws in a way that allows for our organization to reach new heights and better serve our users. They have established necessary committees and charters in a way that aligns with non-profit best practices, and they have supported staff in a way that continues to push the organization forward. While they themselves may be in the background these days, the work they are doing is still the driving force behind all the positive things happening for our ice community!
- **By-laws**- The BAHF By-laws were changed in March of 2023. The most noticeable changes were the way that new board members are appointed as well as who can serve as a board member. In the past our board of directors has been led by passionate and dedicated youth hockey parents, and BAHF would not be where they are now without them. However, the growth our ice community has seen in recent years has shown the need for a more well-rounded, community-oriented board of directors. The by-law changes reflect that need and will open the door for other community leaders to step up and aid our non-profit in becoming the best it can be. The by-law changes also allow for staff to run the operations of CIA and it's programming more effectively. These changes will have a positive impact on communications, efficiency, and long-term growth of the organization.
- **Committees**- While the new by-laws pave the way for members of our community outside of the youth hockey family to lead, our committees are aimed at giving our users a voice and an ability to help us reach our full potential. The BAHF board has established several committees and is looking for individuals with a passion for ice sports, collaborations, and creativity to join those committees in the coming months. We encourage anyone with these attributes to apply through our online committee nomination form.



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- **Strategic Planning-** The BAHL Board established a Strategic Planning Committee earlier this year. Committee Members include Monica Anderson, Megan Davis, Desarae Detling, Kenzie Reiners, Waverly Hutson, Dan Stetler, and Todd Porter. Each of these members represents a different user group in our community. This group has worked to identify 5 key areas of importance and build a long-term vision and plan to get there. Those 5 priorities are:
  1. Foster one thriving ice community
  2. Improve organizational effectiveness by reimagining the governance structure of BAHL
  3. Create a safe, welcoming facility to support all ice sport activities
  4. Increase brand awareness and integration into the community
  5. Create a long term plan for new facility
- **Staff-** Centennial Ice Arena will start the season with 10 staff members. 2 full time, and 8 part-time. 8 of the 10 are returning staff members. This is HUGE for CIA and will allow for a strong start to the season with almost everyone already having the necessary training to jump right into things. We are also excited about this group of individuals and their willingness to contribute in ways that our part-time staff has not in the past. Many of our staff members have taken on roles outside of driving the olympia and will be participating on committees and projects that have been run by volunteers with limited time in the past. Much of this group might be young, but they are passionate, driven, and committed to CIA. We are truly a team that has become family and want to extend that feeling to the entire organization.
- **Facility Improvements-** Over the summer our staff along with a wonderful group of volunteers has been able to complete a long list of projects that have improved the appearance and efficiency of our facility and equipment. The entire interior of the building has been painted, locker rooms have been rebuilt, the whole building received a massive deep cleaning, both of our compressors have been rebuilt, our water-cooling system has been cleaned and maintenance conducted, and additional safety measures installed to better protect our staff and users. We have a few projects to complete including the player bench area, and the mens bathrooms, the parking lot, and security cameras. We will spend the next year working towards funding to make other major improvements and upgrades to our refrigeration system that will allow for better efficiencies and long term cost savings.
- **Summer Facility Usage-** This summer we introduced weekly off-ice skills sessions, roller hockey, goalie specific training, and a weeklong off-ice camp. All of these things were more successful than expected. We had participants of all ages and skill levels and received positive feedback. We plan to continue to offer these opportunities and others next summer!
- **New Ice-** Thanks to the great work of many, new ice continues to be a possibility for Billings. In November, voters will determine whether they would like to fund the \$143 million parks and trails bond. Director, Megan Davis and youth hockey parent, DJ Clark, along with Council Member Shaw, have been asked to co-chair the endorsement committee and look forward to the opportunity to gain community support before November's vote!
- **Community Support-** As community interest in our programs grows, so does support from area businesses. We are finding great success in new community partnerships with businesses small and large. While last season did bring us more success in this area than we have had in recent years, there is still a need for us to put more focus into this. Educating the community has to who and what we are and why we need their support is of top priority in the upcoming season and we feel confident in our abilities to gain more partnerships and we continue to grow and improve. We currently have partnerships and support from Best Western Clock Tower Inn, Ava Law Group, Rosie's Tools, Signal Peaks Energy, and Coca-Cola to name a few. If you are interest or know of a business interested in sponsoring CIA, please reach out to Megan Davis.



# Annual Report

- **Annual Events-** We are really starting to gain some traction with our annual events such as, Spooky Skate, Skate with Santa, Glow Skate, Alumni Game, BSSG, and Magic City Meltdown. Because of this success we plan to begin adding additional events to our calendar annually. The first one will be the Ice Fest, September 15-17. Followed by a long list of tournaments that we hope will bring many individuals to our community throughout the season. Please keep an eye on our website, social media, and monthly newsletters for information about upcoming events.
- **Communication-** Centennial Ice Arena has a new and more user friendly website. We thank Yellowstone Digital Media for all of their assistance with this project! Our youth hockey program also has it's own social media pages. This will allow us to share hockey specific content on a more frequent basis, while our Centennial pages can focus on community based information and updates. We also began sharing a monthly Newsletter in January of this year and have received positive feedback on the consistent and more frequent communications. We revised our Player Handbook for the 23-24 season with the intent to keep that document consistent even as our programs grow. We hope that you have found it easier to access information with these changes, and welcome recommendations and additional communication tools going forward.

**“Community is about much more than belonging to something; it's about doing something together that makes belonging matter.”**

**-Brian Solis**



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