



VANDERBURGH COUNTY

ONE N.W. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. BLVD.
CIVIC CENTER ROOM # 305
EVANSVILLE, INDIANA 47708

OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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Contact: Commissioners' Office

(812) 435-5241

Vanderburgh County Commissioners Announce Groundbreaking Ceremony for Veterans Memorial Coliseum

EVANSVILLE, IN – March 19, 2024 – The Vanderburgh County Board of Commissioners announces a groundbreaking ceremony scheduled for Thursday, March 21, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. Notable guests to attend the ceremony alongside the Commissioners include veterans, County Council representatives, the contractor Harrell-Fish, Inc., and the architect Hafer. This event marks the kick-off of improvements to the Veterans Memorial Coliseum located at 300 Court Street, Evansville, Indiana 47708.

On January 9, 2024, the Vanderburgh County Commissioners entered into a contractual agreement to begin improvements to the Coliseum. This includes the replacement of mechanical, electrical, and HVAC systems and the addition of fire suppression, security, and communication systems. This first phase is funded by \$6 million allocated from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

The Vanderburgh County Commissioners are committed to the preservation of the Coliseum and recognize its historic significance. Additionally, they see a continuing need for a venue that can accommodate a stage, dance floor, an arena for wrestling, and other open-floor events.

Consistent with their commitment to restoration and preservation, the Commissioners have also directed their attention to one of the Coliseum's largest historic assets: the Milton Z. Tinker organ, which has fallen into disrepair. On March 5, 2024, the Commissioners deemed the organ as surplus due to the \$4.8 million cost to restore it back to its operable use. An update regarding the future of the organ will be announced at the Coliseum's groundbreaking ceremony.

About the Veterans Memorial Coliseum: Built between 1916 and 1917, the Coliseum was conceived to address two vital community purposes: commemorating local veterans of the Civil and Spanish-American wars and simultaneously offering a venue for conventions, entertainment, and public gatherings. Its significance expanded in 1971 when it was rededicated as a monument honoring veterans from all wars, leading to its recognition from the National Register of Historic Places in 1979. The Coliseum has played host to numerous iconic entertainment performances, including but not limited to Ray Charles, B.B. King, Gladys Knight, The Sensations, The Drifters, The Supremes, The Beach Boys, Johnny Cash, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Cheap Trick, and Van Halen, leaving an indelible mark on the collective memories and history of our community.

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