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SPORTS TOURISM TO RECOVER FASTER THAN OTHER INDUSTRIES

DuPage Convention & Visitors Bureau plans for future recovery efforts with virtual site tour for FMC Natatorium at Ty Warner Park, Westmont

OAK BROOK, IL — The DuPage Convention & Visitors Bureau (DCVB) made a big splash today when it brought more than 200 people in the midst of COVID-19 to the newest and largest water sports facility in the state of Illinois, FMC Natatorium at Ty Warner Park. The showcase of the new facility was done safely as a live, virtual event, and is the first of many to be hosted by DCVB. It is part of the organization's plans to support the hard-hit hospitality industry, using its platform of research and collaboration to address how business will change and ultimately return to DuPage.

"The need for destination relevance and awareness does not stop simply because of the pandemic. Planners are still planning and they can't reach vendors. Nobody knows our communities like we do and today that is more important than ever," said DCVB Executive Director Beth Marchetti. "Supporting people, jobs and our communities requires a long-term strategy focused on the sales pipeline. We are working on contracts for 2022 and beyond, and elevating key assets such as the FMC Natatorium."

With the launch of the DuPage Sports Commission in 2019, DCVB gained momentum in the growing sports tourism market, landing major championship events for DuPage including USA Weightlifting and USA Cycling. "The FMC Natatorium will add to the rich legacy of sport in DuPage and will enhance Illinois' capability of hosting Olympic-qualifying events," said Marchetti. "Industry data is showing that sports tourism is one of the areas that will recover faster than others, and DCVB is focused on harnessing that opportunity to help with DuPage's recovery."

The invitation-only event took place via Zoom, with a welcome from Westmont Mayor Ron Gunter. VIP attendees included national rights holders for USA Swimming and USA Artistic Swimming from Colorado Springs and USA Water Polo from California; U.S. swimming Olympian, FINA Masters world record holder and Downers Grove resident, David Sims; 3-time Olympic gold medalist, International Swimming Hall of Fame member, ESPN and NBC Sports swimming analyst, Rowdy Gaines; IHSA Assistant Executive Director, Kraig Garber; and regional swim teams and coaches. Also, in attendance were Westmont officials, state and local leaders, and DuPage County park districts.

The FMC Natatorium has been in the works since 2015 and is scheduled to open summer 2020. Highlights include:

- 71,000 sq. ft. facility
- 50-meter Olympic-size competition pool with spectator seating for 1,200
- 25-yard development pool for community programs and competition warm-up
- Four locker rooms with 1,000 lockers
- Offices and hospitality rooms all accessible from pool deck
- Parent lounge with charging stations and viewing window

ABOUT THE DUPAGE CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

The DuPage Convention & Visitors Bureau (DCVB) is the official destination marketing organization for DuPage County, Illinois' second largest County comprised of 38 communities. The DCVB works in partnership with community business and civic leaders to maximize travel and tourism opportunities which ultimately contribute to the economic vitality of the County and its residents. For more information, visit www.DiscoverDuPage.com.

- Concessions
- Weight room
- Swim shop

The FMC Natatorium will host ILSMA state meets and is also capable of hosting the Illinois High School Association (IHSA) State Finals. Illinois Office of Tourism Deputy Director Karla Flannery noted the facility's importance beyond DuPage: "Swim meets in Illinois have to go to Indiana or Wisconsin. This is a game changer for Illinois."

For more information about FMC Natatorium at Ty Warner Park in Westmont, visit <https://www.facebook.com/FMCNatatorium/>. DCVB continues to add to its virtual programming. Other virtual experiences are available at www.discoverdupage.com/events.

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