



The Alliant Energy Center — A Strong Economic Driver **Mark Clarke**

The Alliant Energy Center hosts roughly 500 events on its 164-acre campus each year. It receives no taxpayer support, is 100 percent self-sufficient and has been generating a profit for years. That is unique to most similar venues across the country. The Alliant Energy Center prides itself on its flexible design, diverse facilities and unique programming which allow it to attract and host a unique blend of events.

“We can have monster trucks, a bridal expo and a horse show all going on the same day,” explains Mark Clarke, executive director of the Alliant Energy Center.

“When we bring in large numbers of people for multiple days, that’s when the economic impact really sets in,” Clarke says. “You look at how we’re supporting hotel rooms in Madison and restaurants and bars and our own airport.”

To illustrate the point; last summer’s inaugural hosting of the Reebok Crossfit Games brought in an estimated \$7.2 million in direct spending to the Dane County area. In addition to the obvious spending at hospitality-related businesses, consider the indirect impact. For example, visits to grocery stores, convenience stores and malls and sales of items like sunscreen, hats, energy drinks and sportswear likely jumped when the Crossfit Games were in town. Now consider other events throughout the year. It stands to reason that truck repair and tire sales might jump during events like World Dairy Expo and the Midwest Horse Fair, for example, when hundreds of trucks and trailers are in town. The ancillary impact goes on and on.

But the last day of an event doesn’t mean the end of the economic impact.

“There’s also a multiplier residual we might not see within 48 hours or a week of the event,” Clarke explains. “It might be six months down the road when there’s a large purchase made because of an event [at an Alliant Energy Center event] that results in helping jobs and other economic impact in Madison. That’s really what we’re about. Bringing people together and supplying an avenue for this economic engine to happen.”

As sizable as Alliant Energy Center’s economic impact is, it could be even more substantial with the implementation of a strategic master plan that includes expanded facilities and program options. Integrating the campus into the local area and providing visitors with the chance to fully experience Madison will help organizers bring even more events to Dane County. And that will keep the Alliant Energy Center sustainable and profitable.

“There are a lot of events that would like to come here, but we’re not big enough or we don’t have enough space for them or we don’t have enough amenities,” Clarke explains. “Those are some of the things we need to look at going forward.”

To see full video please visit the following link: [AEC – Strong Economic Driver](#)