

West Valley VIEW

The community newspaper of Avondale, Buckeye, Goodyear, Litchfield Park & Tolleson, AZ

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It's official: STA OKs Indians

Cleveland Indians to train in Goodyear in 2009

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Sara Bisker
staff writer

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Cheers pierced the air Wednesday at the University of Phoenix Stadium as the Arizona Sports and Tourism Authority gave its unanimous support to a \$75 million spring training facility for the Cleveland Indians.

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By signing an intergovernmental agreement with Goodyear, the authority agreed to fund 50 percent, or about \$37.4 million, of the one-team training facility, STA Chairman Larry Landry said.

Goodyear, which will own the facility, is responsible for about \$4 million in principal debt services and about \$2 million in maintenance and operation costs per year, Deputy City Manager Brian Dalke said.

In 2004, Goodyear voters passed a \$10 million bond election to supplement funding for a spring training complex. The authority will reimburse Goodyear beginning in 2017.

The STA must renovate existing ballparks around the Valley before money is freed up for Goodyear, Landry said.

Indians franchise owner Larry Dolan spoke on behalf of his family and his team when he said he appreciated the time and effort Goodyear put toward securing the spring training facility.

"I feel compelled to say that we are humbled, humbled. We recognize what you have done - hard work and sacrifice - so we can have this facility," Dolan said as his wife, Eva, watched nearby.

His son, Paul Dolan, president of the franchise, offered T-shirts and ball caps to the City Council members.

"If you're a team, you need to dress appropriately. I have some uniforms for you here," he said earlier that morning at a City Council meeting.

Later, he distributed pennants and T-shirts to members of the STA board.

"So you'll be honest to goodness Cleveland Indians," he joked.

"You've lived up to everything you said you would and we appreciate that," Landry said to

Litchfield Park, AZ

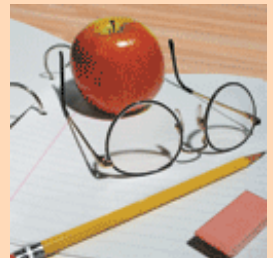
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the Dolans.

Let the work begin

Now that the beginning steps are complete, Goodyear will sign contracts with developers, designers and builders, Dalke said.

Mayor Jim Cavanaugh said the city's tight schedule, which includes completion of practice fields in 2008 and the stadium in 2009, would be met.

"We aren't successful today because we had political power ... or we're big enough to persuade people. We're successful because we're professional," Cavanaugh said. "Today we celebrate. Tomorrow we're back to work."

The ballpark will be built on land owned by the Wood family south of Yuma Road and east of Estrella Parkway in Goodyear.

The Indians will train in Goodyear for five weeks a year for the next 20 years, Dalke said.

The stadium will include suites, 8,000 seats and lawn seating for an additional 2,000 fans, and parking for 3,000 vehicles. The complex also will feature a 38,000-square-foot clubhouse, six full practice fields, two half practice fields and an agility field.

Goodyear-based developer Rose Properties Southwest, LLC, is overseeing the creation of the ballpark village, which is next to the planned Goodyear City Center.

Developer John Ruggieri, managing director of Rose Properties Southwest,

said the ballpark and spring training facilities will be integrated into a mixed-use, urban village that will include office, retail, hotel and possible residential development.

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