

Goodyear OKs deal to host Reds spring training

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The Arizona Republic
Apr. 7, 2008 09:10 PM

Goodyear closed a deal Monday that will bring the Cincinnati Reds' spring training to Arizona in 2010.

The City Council agreed, 6-0, to pay \$33 million to build the team's clubhouse and practice fields.

Despite a sour economy, the southwest Valley city officials are confident the city can finance the project - and hopeful the state eventually will reimburse two-thirds of the cost.

Monday's decision means the Cactus League will have 15 teams in 2010, up from the 12 that played this spring.

By snagging the Reds from Florida, Goodyear will have both Ohio professional baseball teams training in its city. The Cleveland Indians will play in Goodyear next spring in a ballpark that is now under construction.

"The Reds complete the picture," Goodyear Mayor Jim Cavanaugh said. "We wanted two teams from the beginning."

Reds CEO Bob Castellini also has signed the agreement, which commits the ballclub to Goodyear for at least 20 years.

Councilwoman Joanne Osborne, who voted for the project Monday, previously said the city should prioritize other projects, including expanding a wastewater-treatment plant and building a new city hall and library.

However, she said she changed her mind after city administrators unveiled a financial plan last week that shows the city can finance all of the projects.

Goodyear officials' vision for the city is what initially attracted the Reds, said John Allen, the team executive who has been leading the search for a spring home. In addition to expanding spring training, Goodyear recently recruited three private universities, pushed for the widening of Interstate 10 and annexed 67 square miles.

"You all have such a plan. It's not just talk," Allen told the City Council. "You know where you are going."

The Reds never intended to leave Florida, Allen said, but negotiations to renovate the team's stadium in Sarasota broke down. That's when the Indians introduced the Reds to Goodyear.

"They dragged us, kicking and screaming," Allen said. But what they found impressed them.

Goodyear agreed to pay for the Reds knowing the Arizona Sports and Tourism Authority, which has helped pay for spring-training projects in Maricopa County, is out of money and can not commit funds for

the Reds.

However, the sports authority on Monday approved a financial plan that shows how it intends to split up any money it gets its hands on in the future.

Under the plan, Goodyear would be reimbursed for two-thirds of the Reds' facilities, ballpark and Indians facilities.

In addition to the Reds and Indians, the Cactus League will expand with the Los Angeles Dodgers, who will train in Glendale next spring.