

Spring-training site touted as among best

by [Carrie Watters](#) - Jul. 18, 2008 12:00 AM
The Arizona Republic

GLENDALE - Glendale's spring-training facility is expected to be among the best of the Cactus League's nine parks while raising the bar nationwide.

The facility should be the league's biggest with 10,000 stadium seats and 3,000 lawn seats. Mesa's HoHoKam Park Stadium, home to the Chicago Cubs, seats 12,632.

The Glendale ballpark will have a Western ambience. Buildings will carry images of the slope of surrounding mountains and be accented with stone and rustic panels.

"It's by far one of the most outstanding in the Cactus League and country," said Tom Harrison, construction executive with Mortenson Construction, who gave a media tour on Thursday.

The future training home for the Los Angeles Dodgers and Chicago White Sox is the fifth Valley ballpark he has helped build. The others are Surprise, Peoria, Scottsdale and Phoenix Municipal stadiums.

Harrison said improvements not only reflect advances in technology but also the Dodgers' interest in creating some of the ambience and fan loyalty of Dodgertown in Vero Beach, Fla.

After 61 years, the Dodgers last week took the steps to cut the final ties with their longtime Florida home.

The move west is billed as a way to be closer to their home base in Los Angeles. The team

should also attract Arizonans who grew up in a pre-Diamondbacks era, when the most common game on the radio was the Dodgers, Cactus League President J.P. de la Montaigne said.

With assurances the park will be ready for next spring, neither the Dodgers nor Sox exercised a clause in legal agreements with Glendale, which expired this week, that would have allowed them to hold out one more year if they had doubts about the construction timeline.

The ballpark at Camelback Road and 111th Avenue is 35 to 40 percent complete and on target, Harrison said.

Just a few miles southwest, Goodyear also is in the midst of constructing its ballpark, where the Cleveland Indians will play next spring, joined by the Cincinnati Reds in 2010.

Craig Callan, Dodgers vice president of spring training and minor league facilities, said he is confident in Glendale's timeline as he has watched the number of workers ratchet up with double shifts.

Advertisement



Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™

Nearly all buildings are vertical, the 14 playing fields are taking shape, with sod expected to go in on some practice fields Monday.

A 2-acre lake has been filled. It has winding banks and a small waterfall for a parklike feel. Like a smaller version at the Surprise Stadium, the lake also serves a practical purpose - irrigating fields and landscaping.

Eventually, about 5,000 plants and trees will be planted to add lushness to the 152-acre site.

About two-thirds of the \$100 million cost of the stadium is to come from the Arizona Sports and Tourism Authority, which provides financial supports to the Cactus League. The city intends to cover its share from revenue created in an entertainment district around ballpark. Ground has not yet broken on that project, which is being developed by Scottsdale-based Rightpath Limited.

The teams are paying for some amenities, such as practice fields.

"It will be the most state-of-the art, top-of-the-line, fan-friendly spring-training facilities, bar none," Callan said.

The park will have computer-controlled irrigation systems and the latest broadcasting systems.

As in Florida, Dodgers fans will find few fences around practice fields, as the philosophy is to encourage interaction.

And fans can expect the Dodgers side of the facility to have streets named after the team's legends, much as it was at Dodgertown.

Although building on what worked in the past, Callan said fans should not expect a replica.

"We will have to find our own identity," he said.

Advertisement



Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™