

Insider
For 10/21/09
By Kim Burger

The UNI-Dome is undoubtedly one of the most highly recognized buildings in the Cedar Valley cityscape. The multi-purpose venue was built in 1976, and is home to the UNI Panther's Football and Men's and Women's Indoor Track teams. It can seat up to 24,000 and contains 78,000 sq. ft. of event space. The facility is nestled between the newer Wellness and McLeod Centers, both added to the Dome's north and south sides, and serves as the anchor to the university's entertainment complex. Several improvements have been made to the Dome itself over the years including a redesign of its roof, renovation of the concession stands, expansion of the garage door entrances, and most recently, a beautiful new, lush-looking blanket of turf that has been installed onto the floor for football. As I look through my calendar of upcoming events, it's going to get a good workout over the next several weeks!

After just having hosted football games for Family Weekend and Homecoming, this multipurpose venue will be transformed into a showplace of arts and crafts of all description as it hosts Tom Callahan Production's Craft Sale, the largest show of its kind in Eastern Iowa. The sale takes place October 24th and 25th between the hours of 9am and 5pm on Saturday and 9am and 4pm on Sunday.

During the weekend of October 30-31st, the floor will be covered with mats as the facility welcomes a brand new event for our area, a USA Pre-Season Wrestling Tournament. Hotel rooms have been set aside and area restaurants and retailers are standing by ready to accommodate the expected 1,000 athletes, coaches, officials and spectators.

Looking into November, the Dome will be converted back into a perfectly, dry, 75 degree football field where 80,000 to 90,000 people will attend 22 post-season games as the Iowa High School Football Playoffs take place between October 28th and November 21st. In addition to all of this, our own Panthers will take on Youngstown State on November 7th and Western Illinois on the 14th; and a few Cedar Falls high school games, Jaycee's Run, Punt, Pass and Kick; and Pop Warner event will also be squeezed in for good measure. Whew! We better buy Heather and her staff some pizza or something!

Seriously, Heather Costello and her staff at the Dome handle all of these events with precision and professionalism. Organizers and guests routinely offer rave reviews of their experience at the Dome and we are extremely grateful to the university for helping to fuel our local economy by hosting such events. We are also fortunate to have several dozen dedicated volunteers who will staff hospitality tables, offering maps, restaurant suggestions, and a warm welcome to the visitors attending these events.

Hold on to your hats! It's going to be an exciting couple of months!