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For Immediate Release

INDEPENDENT STUDY INDICATES CENTURYLINK CENTER OMAHA AN ENGINE OF OMAHA'S ECONOMIC PROGRESS

Overall economic impact of Convention Center & Arena estimated at \$4.8 billion to local economy

Omaha, Neb. – A study conducted by Goss & Associates indicates that CenturyLink Center Omaha generated \$4.8 billion of overall economic impact to the local economy between 2002 and 2013. The study also shows the convention center and arena have contributed \$86.4 million in indirect and direct tax collections to the City of Omaha during this same time, including sales tax, parking tax and property taxes paid by new developments near the facility.

John Lund, Chairman of the Metropolitan Entertainment & Convention Authority (MECA) board, said CenturyLink Center Omaha recently concluded its 10th full year of operations and the board felt it was time to fund an independent assessment of the facility's impact to our city and state.

"The taxpayers of Omaha, as well as a number of private donors, had faith that if we built a new convention center and arena it would revitalize our downtown area," Lund said. "The Goss study reinforces the tremendous economic impact CenturyLink Center Omaha has had for Omaha, Douglas County and the State of Nebraska. If you compare photos of the area before the facilities were built to today, it is amazing how the downtown riverfront area has changed. That is a tribute to the people who supported its' construction."

Roger Dixon, President and CEO of MECA, said the study noted that a large number of visitors to CenturyLink Center Omaha come from other states. Dixon shared one example from 2008.

"In 2008 CenturyLink Center Omaha hosted three signature events – the Olympic Swim Trials, NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament and NCAA Women's Volleyball Championships," Dixon said. "The study indicated that of the more than 234,000 people attending these three events, 51 percent came from outside Nebraska and another 12.5 percent from outside the Omaha-Lincoln area. Almost every time an out-of-state visitor attends a CenturyLink Center Omaha event, they stay in our hotels, eat in our restaurants, visit our attractions and shop in our stores benefiting the local and state economy."

Dr. Ernie Goss, principal investigator of Goss & Associates, said his research team looked at MECA financial and attendance information starting in fiscal year 2002-2003 – the last full year of construction, through 2012-2013, as well as analyzed other available data to come up with their findings.

“CenturyLink Center Omaha has contributed to our city and state in so many different ways,” Goss said. “From tax collections and economic impact to quality of life and entertainment, it has transformed our community. It has been a tremendous investment for the taxpayers of this city.”

Goss highlighted several other key study findings:

- The construction of CenturyLink Center Omaha played a role in the opening of new downtown hotels, as well as restaurants and retail outlets.
- Since opening in September 2003, CenturyLink Center Omaha has drawn more than 12.3 million visitors – 8.1 million for arena events and 4.2 million attending convention center events.
- The facility has averaged more than 1 million visitors each year since opening. The top year was 2007-2008 when 1.48 million fans attended convention center and arena events.
- Within three years after opening, average attendance at Creighton men’s basketball games rose 68 percent. Creighton now ranks in the top 10 in attendance for NCAA men’s basketball, averaging more than 17,000 fans a game.
- Attendance in the arena is driven by sporting events (54.6%), followed by concerts (24.7%). Convention Center attendance was led by consumer shows (32.7%), followed closely by citywide conventions (30%).
- CenturyLink Center Omaha has been profitable every year since opening, which resulted in voluntary elimination of the annual government subvention payment from the City of Omaha in 2009, five years ahead of schedule. This resulted in a savings of \$10.7 million to Omaha taxpayers.
- The State of Nebraska has received \$203.2 million in direct and indirect tax revenue during this same time frame. This includes sales tax, individual income tax, corporate tax and miscellaneous taxes.
- During the most recent fiscal year (2012-2013), CenturyLink Center Omaha activity generated more than \$36.4 million in state and local tax collections.
- Turnback Tax legislation allows state taxes collected as a result of CenturyLink Center Omaha operations to be returned to the City of Omaha and other communities. The city has received \$17.1 million as a result of this legislation.
- CenturyLink Center Omaha directly and indirectly supports an average of 4,833 jobs.
- Taxpayer provided funds to build CenturyLink Center Omaha provided an 8.7% annual rate of return.

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