

https://www.beloitdailynews.com/opinion/editorials/stand-and-cheer-big-win-for-beloit/article_4e4a4dcd-83df-5ec2-8da0-15067f7e1a98.html

Stand and cheer big win for Beloit

Dec 16, 2020

Baseball poised to bring more success to the city center.

“Play ball,” may be the familiar sound of spring for baseball fans, but for years around these parts it was just as likely to be: “Snappers still here?”

Answer: Yes, and apparently the team will be in Beloit for a long time.

The Miami Marlins want Beloit to host their Advanced-A affiliate—a higher level of competition—marking the culmination of years of local effort and millions of dollars of investment.

While aspects of the deal remain to be finalized, it’s not too early to cheer Beloit’s winning effort to preserve professional baseball. Despite some dark days over the years, true believers like Dennis Conerton never gave up on dreams for a new stadium and firmer footing for the team. Such perseverance deserves credit and praise.



New faces came into the process more recently, like current owner Quint Studer, a big-time promoter and already leading the ownership of the Marlins' Pensacola, Florida, affiliate.

Diane Hendricks stepped up with financing for the new stadium now taking shape along the banks of the Rock River in downtown Beloit, a crucial element of the pitch to keep baseball here. The beautiful facility is one more in a long series of improvements spurred by the Hendricks organization, yet more evidence of the entrepreneur's transformational role in Beloit. She is the community's indispensable woman.

Meanwhile, multiple key players in the business community got behind the stadium authority. The full support of government leadership helped cement the deals. And doubt changed to optimism, to use a baseball cliché, that, "If you build it they will come."

The end result is bigger than baseball, a beautiful amenity in the heart of the downtown that stands as testimony to what can happen when a community believes in itself. Each new developmental piece encourages the next, creating powerful momentum.

Baseball fans can look forward to countless hours in a lovely setting along the riverfront. No doubt, stadium facilities over the years will host plenty of non-baseball events as well. Businesses downtown will see more people walking through the doors when baseball fans and the simply curious return post-pandemic. Even for folks who aren't interested in baseball, the stadium and the Marlins affiliation raise Beloit's bragging rights.

To all involved, well done. We can't wait for opening day.