



IOWA WEST FOUNDATION

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LAKIN, IOWA WEST PARTNER ON LEAD GIFT FOR NEW YMCA

(Council Bluffs, IA) A new YMCA is coming to Council Bluffs and it will be called the Charles E. Lakin YMCA. A joint lead gift of \$7 million, which includes \$3.5 million each from the Lakin Foundation and the Iowa West Foundation, will provide a jump start for the new \$16 million facility to be located on Kanesville Blvd., between Frank and Baugh streets, just west of Alegent Mercy Hospital.

The goal is to open the new “Y” in the early fall of 2015.

“The philanthropic endeavors of my family and me have focused on the well-being of children, youth and families”, said Charles E. Lakin. “A new YMCA for the Council Bluffs area is a perfect fit.”

Lakin, a philanthropist from Emerson (IA) now living in Omaha, has made numerous significant gifts in Council Bluffs, including \$12 million for the Charles E. Lakin Human Services Campus. His family foundation also recently made a \$1.2 million gift to Habitat for Humanity of Council Bluffs for its ReStore facility and the Charles E. Lakin Habitat for Humanity Center.

The Iowa West Foundation, a private foundation which makes grants throughout southwest Iowa and eastern Nebraska, is a familiar partner with the Lakins. Iowa West provided \$8 million for the human services campus as well as a \$500,000 grant for the future \$4 million Habitat complex.

“In today’s world, partnerships are critical for success, especially for non-profit organizations,” said Pete Tulipana, President and CEO of the Iowa West Foundation. “A family-friendly project such as the YMCA helps meet the Iowa West mission for an improved quality of life and it is a project with an opportunity to invite partners to the community table. We are pleased to partner with Charles Lakin.”

The 73,000 foot facility will be two levels and will include a variety of areas such as: sports courts, exercise rooms, wellness classrooms, a teen center, therapy/lap pools, walking track,

preschool, and a playground. According to Len Romano, President and CEO of the YMCA of Greater Omaha, it will be their “largest and most innovative” center.

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“We are ecstatic about these lead gifts as our organization continues to do its best in meeting the needs of those who want a healthier lifestyle,” commented Romano. “The Council Bluffs area is a key part of the Omaha region, and thanks to Mr. Lakin and Iowa West it will have a new, quality YMCA for area residents and families to enjoy.”

Both Tulipana and Romano cited two recent studies that led to the announcement.

- Tulipana explained that a 2011 “Parks, Recreation, and Related Leisure Facilities Needs Assessment” for Pottawattamie County found that many citizens believed there was a lack of available indoor recreation facilities in the area.
- Romano said that “in cooperation with the local Council Bluffs YMCA Board and Executive Director Leo McIntosh,” the YMCA of Greater Omaha engaged a national consultant to research and analyze YMCA opportunities for Council Bluffs, and an “overwhelming finding was for the facility to stay near downtown.”

“This is a tremendous example of organizations working together – whether they are family foundations like the Lakins, non-profits like the YMCA, or private foundations like Iowa West – communities need partnerships like this,” Tulipana concluded.

“We are proud to be a partner on this exciting project, and we look forward to making a positive impact on families in this area,” added Chuck Lakin, son of Charles E. Lakin.

The YMCA of Greater Omaha has 10 metro area locations, including the current Council Bluffs center near Fourth St. and West Broadway. That facility has more than 100,000 visitors annually.

The Iowa West Foundation is one of the largest private foundations in the Midwest. Foundation grants are funded from its investment income, as well as the Iowa West Racing Association, which receives fee income from casino operators – Ameristar and Harrah’s.

For more information about the Iowa West Foundation visit www.iowawestfoundation.org

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