

# Changing the Game



*The \$300 million Indiana Convention Center expansion moves Indianapolis up from 32nd to 16th largest convention facility in the U.S.*

One year ago, *Indianapolis Region* magazine reported that our 10-county region was “raising the game” and racing ahead of its competition with more than \$3 billion in new community construction projects coming on-line by the time Indianapolis hosts the Super Bowl in 2012.

Today, more than half of the planned infrastructure improvements are complete and construction has begun on the remaining projects.

Already open is the multi-purpose Lucas Oil Stadium with its retractable roof and capacity to seat 70,000 fans — as seen on TV in January 2010 during the National Football League’s AFC Championship game between the Indianapolis Colts and New York Jets, and the NCAA 2010 Final Four championship featuring Indy’s own Butler Bulldogs. Also open for business is the \$1.1 billion Indianapolis International Airport Weir Cook Terminal. The Indianapolis International Airport is a gorgeous gateway to the region, the eighth largest cargo center in the U.S., anchored

by the second-largest FedEx operation in the world.

As seen on the cover, the JW Marriott Indianapolis has already dramatically changed the western skyline of Indianapolis. The \$450 million, privately financed 34-story tower will feature 1,005 guest rooms and 104,000 square feet of meeting, banquet and exhibit space when it officially opens in early 2011. This premier downtown venue looks out over White River State Park to the west, a 220-acre cultural district featuring the Indianapolis Zoo, Indiana State Museum, Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art, Victory Field baseball complex, NCAA headquarters, NCAA Hall of Champions, and “The Lawn,” an award-winning outdoor concert space.

To the east, the JW Marriott is connected via climate-controlled walkway to the Indiana Convention Center, which is currently undergoing a \$300 million expansion. By itself, the expanded Indiana Convention Center will have 566,000 sq. ft. of exhibition space, 83 meeting rooms, and three ballrooms. The expanded



*The convention center connects to the new \$450 JW Marriott, seen here under construction in early 2010, via climate-controlled walkways.*

Indiana Convention Center will also be connected by climate-controlled walkways to Lucas Oil Stadium and 4,700 hotel rooms — the most hotel rooms connected to a convention center in the U.S.

“Our center’s expansion will catapult Indianapolis from the 32nd to the 16th largest convention facility in the U.S.,” said Don Welsh, president & CEO for the Indianapolis Convention & Visitors Association (ICVA). “We’re doing more in a compressed period than most cities will do in one or two decades,” Welsh says. “No other city is doing what we’re doing. We now have a product that can compete with anybody.”

The idea that Indianapolis competes at the highest levels of economic development — attracting major conventions and major employers — is now the norm among community leaders throughout the 10-county Indianapolis region.

“Around the world, Indianapolis’ name is synonymous with the spirit of competition. With every structure we build, every event we stage and every attraction we display, we set new national standards,” said Warren Wilkinson, ICVA senior vice president of marketing and communications.

Indeed, Indianapolis and its surrounding communities routinely appear at the top of lists in national rankings for “Best Places to Live,” and “Best Business Climate.”

According to Indy Partnership President and CEO Ron Gifford “the environment in Indianapolis has shifted from ‘raising the game’ and competing at a higher level, to ‘changing the game’ altogether and watching as our competition follows in our footsteps.”