



*Lucas Oil Stadium, Conseco Fieldhouse and the Indianapolis Motor Speedway are just three of Indy's world-class sports facilities.*

# RAISING THE GAME

Indianapolis will host Super Bowl XLVI in Lucas Oil Stadium on Feb. 5, 2012. It's the crowning achievement of the city's quest to use sports as an economic and community development tool, a strategy formed in the mid-1970s that has paid off handsomely.

It speaks to visionary leadership, unparalleled public/private cooperation and unwavering commitment to creating an infrastructure of world-class facilities, organizations and people prepared to host sporting events on any scale.

The Indianapolis bid committee did something extraordinary, according to Allison Melangton, president and CEO of the 2012 Indianapolis Super Bowl Host Committee. "We walked into the bid presentation, laid the binder on the desk and said, 'We have raised the money it will take for us to run the Super Bowl. We have commitments in writing right here. It's all corporate money. None of it is government money. We can host your Super Bowl because funding is not going to be a problem for us.'"

It was a \$25 million commitment.

"We have visionary thinkers leading our corporations who understand the big picture," she says. "And that is that we can be perceived as a smaller market without the resources. But we made a statement that day that we are a big player and our companies are here

to participate. I'm not sure we would have gotten the bid without it."

Maybe not, but there was a lot backing the \$25 million. A major factor was the city's investment in infrastructure improvements, including Lucas Oil Stadium, the JW Marriott hotel complex, the convention center expansion and the new Indianapolis International Airport. The owners were also impressed by the city's determination to create a better community in the Super Bowl's wake. Improvements, including a new \$9 million athletic facility, in the city's near east side neighborhood will benefit the area long after Super Bowl.

While estimates of the Super Bowl's financial impact range from \$125 million to \$425 million, Melangton says there's not enough accurate information to estimate what the numbers will be for Indianapolis, though they're likely to be somewhere in between.

And the exposure from hosting one of the most-watched sporting events in the world? Priceless.

Melangton's involvement with sporting events in Indianapolis closely parallels the city's rise as a sports venue. The Indiana Sports Corporation was formed in 1979 to attract national and international sports to the city. Since then, Indianapolis has hosted more than 400 national and international sporting events, attracted numerous sports organizations and built or

renovated more than \$1 billion worth of facilities. From 1977 through 2007, the direct economic impact of amateur sports in Indianapolis is estimated to be in excess of \$3 billion.

In 1999, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) moved its headquarters to Indianapolis, bringing with it a number of high-profile events, including the 2010 NCAA Men's Final Four and the 2011 NCAA Women's Final Four.

Indianapolis is also home to a number of professional teams, including the Indianapolis Indians baseball team, the NBA's Indiana Pacers, the WNBA's Indiana Fever, the USHL's Indiana Ice and the NFL's Indianapolis Colts. Mega-events such as the Indianapolis 500, the NASCAR Allstate 400 at the Brickyard, the Red Bull Indianapolis GP at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway and drag racing's U.S. Nationals at O'Reilly Raceway Park leave the city well equipped to handle Super Bowl-size crowds.

Melangton says when she joined the Sports Corporation in 1994 getting the Super Bowl wasn't even discussed. "Our strategy was to focus on events we knew we could do a great job on, no matter how big or small, then bigger and better things would start coming. And, really, that's what's happened.

"One key to our success is that we all work well together," she says. "The facilities here don't compete against each other for events. People decide which facility is best for an event and everybody works together to do that. Our leadership—our corporate citizens and our government—have always worked together. That does not happen everywhere. It's been a huge strength. Everybody has the greater good in mind instead of just what's best for them."•