

# 'Civic center a hit,' says manager Beckman

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Staff Writer

Other than the parking lot mud, the first weekend opening of the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center was a success.

"The building is a hit," said Jack Beckman, manager. "All the comments I received were good. The buildings are functional, they were done right and the acoustics in the theater are outstanding."

A head-count for the three days indicates more than 13,000 persons either went through the complex or attended one of the events taking place.

Beckman estimated 6,500 toured the buildings, 3,400 attended the two nights of the Shrine of Democracy barbershop show and 3,500 attended baccalaureate services in the arena for Central and Stevens high schools.

The parking lot was more of a nuisance than a problem and there was minimal damage to auditorium carpets and other floors from the mud, said Beckman. The carpet is treated for heavy use and the civic center has the equipment for cleaning. "We are in a heavy cleanup period right now."

The first weekend "shakedown" uncovered a few bugs that will have to be worked out, he said.

Aisle steps in the auditorium caused some problems Friday night, but a light colored tape was placed across the treads for Saturday's performance and Beckman said the problem seemed to have been solved. Something more permanent will have to be installed.

The balcony rail is too high and cuts off the view for those sitting in the first two rows. Beckman said this problem is being studied and a variance may be asked to permit its removal. City code requires that height.

City code also is creating a problem with bleachers in the arena. The side rails don't meet code and they may have to be replaced.

Backstage speakers in the auditorium, temporary replacements for the specified equipment which was stolen, did not function as they should have.

Light control panels lacked spare fuses and when the automatic control

fuse blew on the barbershoppers' Wednesday dress rehearsal, a special fuse had to be flown in from the manufacturer. Beckman is checking the specifications to see if they called for extra fuses.

Circuit breakers on the carbon arc spotlights kept cutting out during the barbershoppers' performance. These will have to be changed to handle the load.

But, the light and sound people really did a superb job, said Beckman.

"It really is incredible for a building this size that has never been used before to become functional and have as few problems as we did," said Beckman.

He credited much of the success and minimum of problems to the "outstanding cooperation from everyone involved." He cited the custodians, the stagehands, the Fire Dept., Civil Defense, Police Dept., REACT and all who had anything to do with the weekend opening.

"We even had Mayor (Art) LaCroix down here on the phone getting us help," he said.

"And we did it without those 'don't do this, don't do that' signs."

Beckman did say that while some people ignored the warning about no food, drink or smoking in the theater, the rule will be enforced. Refreshments will be available and smoking will be permitted only in the outer lobby — not in the theater or any carpeted lobby.

## Final garden sign-up Saturday morning

Final sign-up for Community Garden Project garden plots will be Saturday starting at 9 a.m.

Supervisors will be available to help gardeners register and select a plot.

The Community Garden is located off East Main Street and LaCrosse Street across from the Extension Bldg. at the Fairgrounds.

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