

La Palestre Arena

2024/2025 and 2025/2026 Season Report

Including 2026/2027 Outlook

Prepared for: Town of Gravelbourg Council

Facility: La Palestre Arena

Prepared: 2026

Executive Summary

La Palestre Arena continues to serve as one of the Town of Gravelbourg's most important community assets, providing recreational, social, developmental, and regional economic benefits throughout the year.

The 2024/2025 season represented a period of operational recovery and stabilization following significant infrastructure related events, including water line issues and the June 2024 hail and wind storm. Despite elevated maintenance demands and operational pressures, the facility maintained strong community participation, tournament activity, and recreational programming throughout the season.

The 2025/2026 season represented one of the strongest and most collaborative operating years in recent history for La Palestre. Expanded programming, increased female hockey participation, sold out advertising partnership inventory, increased fundraising success, stronger communication between user groups, and growing community engagement all demonstrated strong momentum toward long term sustainability.

Throughout both seasons, La Palestre Arena continued to demonstrate its importance as:

- A regional recreation hub
- A youth development facility
- A volunteer driven community asset
- A gathering place for families and residents
- A centre for community pride and engagement

This report provides:

- Operational and programming overview
- Financial performance review
- Revenue and utilization analysis
- Advertising partnership and fundraising highlights

- Infrastructure and maintenance overview
- Community impact observations
- Strategic outlook heading into 2026/2027

1. Introduction

La Palestre Arena functions as a multi use recreational facility serving Gravelbourg and surrounding regional communities.

The facility supports:

- Minor hockey programming
- Female hockey development
- Senior hockey
- Recreational hockey
- Skating Club
- Curling
- Public skating and shinny
- Community events and tournaments
- Fundraising initiatives
- Regional recreation partnerships

The arena continues operating through a collaborative model involving:

- Town staff
- Volunteers
- User groups
- Schools
- Advertising partners
- Local businesses
- Contractors
- Community organizations

The 2024/2025 and 2025/2026 seasons demonstrated both the growing importance of the facility and the increasing operational pressures associated with maintaining aging recreational infrastructure in a rural community setting.

2. 2024/2025 Season Overview

2.1 Programming & Operations

The 2024/2025 season featured a full range of youth and community programming, including:

- Learn to Hockey
- U7 hockey
- Two U9 teams
- U11
- Shared U13 programming
- U15 hockey
- Sr. Hornets hockey
- Skating Club
- Curling Leagues and Doubles Leagues
- EGS High School Curling
- Learn to Curl programming
- Bonspiels
- Recreational hockey programming
- Public skating and shinny

The arena operated on an intensive evening and weekend schedule throughout the skating season, generally running from October through March.

Operational highlights included:

- Minor hockey tournaments and Minor Hockey Day
- Shared regional U13 programming
- Weekend league games and playoff hosting
- Hockey 360 development sessions
- Volunteer supported seasonal ice installation
- Collaborative scheduling between all user groups

Public skating and shinny continued to be offered free of charge whenever possible, reinforcing the arena's role as an accessible community recreation facility.

2.2 Financial Overview

2024 Financial Summary

Category	Budget	Actual	Difference
Revenue	\$110,350	\$114,648	+\$4,298
Expenditures	\$180,450	\$321,234	-\$140,784

The 2024 operating year was heavily impacted by:

- Water line rupture
- Insurance related repairs
- Infrastructure maintenance work
- Emergency operational costs
- Facility recovery requirements

Although revenues exceeded budget expectations, expenditures increased significantly due to major one time infrastructure and maintenance pressures.

2.3 Revenue & Ice Rental Activity

It is important to note that from approximately mid November through the end of February, the Curling Club rents and operates the curling facility under a flat monthly rental arrangement. Monthly charges are prorated during partial operating months at the beginning and end of the curling season.

This arrangement reflects the Curling Club's independent seasonal operation of the curling facility, including league scheduling, school programming, recreational programming, ice installation, and ongoing curling ice maintenance responsibilities.

The monthly revenue totals throughout this report include Curling Club rental revenues.

It is also important to note that Gravelbourg Minor Hockey independently rents and operates the arena kitchen during the hockey season under a monthly rental arrangement. Monthly revenue totals also include kitchen rental revenues alongside ice rentals and other facility revenues.

Primary users during the 2024/2025 season included:

- Gravelbourg Minor Hockey (GMH)
- Sr. Hornets
- Skating Club
- TRIM and SHARKS recreational hockey
- Private rentals
- Specialty events and camps

2024/2025 Monthly Revenue Totals

Month	Revenue
October 2024	~\$4,031
November 2024	~\$14,621
December 2024	~\$19,434
January 2025	~\$16,938
February 2025	~\$14,739
March 2025	~\$6,050

The season demonstrated strong winter utilization, tournament activity, and increasing demand for ice time and facility rentals.

3. 2025/2026 Season Overview

3.1 Programming & Operations

The 2025/2026 season demonstrated substantial operational growth and increased community engagement.

Programming included:

- Learn-to-Hockey
- U7
- U9
- U11
- U13
- Shared U13 Ice Cats
- U15
- Sr. Hornets
- Skating Club
- Curling leagues and doubles leagues
- EGS High School Curling
- Learn to Curl programming
- Bonspiels
- Recreational hockey
- Female hockey development
- Public skating and shinny
- Specialty camps and events

3.2 Female Hockey Expansion

One of the most significant developments during the 2025/2026 season was the expansion of female hockey opportunities.

Highlights included:

- Introduction of the U13 Ice Cats program
- U11 Ice Cats activities
- Female Hockey Day
- Girls on Ice camps
- Female hockey development opportunities

These initiatives significantly expanded opportunities for girls and young women participating in hockey within the community and region.

3.3 Increased Community Engagement

The 2025/2026 season saw substantial increases in:

- Arena utilization
- Community attendance
- Social media engagement
- Volunteer participation
- Fundraising involvement

Improved collaboration between user groups led to the development of the “Palestre Pulse” weekly newsletter, which promoted programming, scheduling, events, and arena activities throughout the season on the primarily on the Palestre Facebook page.

Arena weekends increasingly evolved into full day community events featuring:

- Hockey games
- Curling events
- Public skating
- Kitchen and lounge operations
- Community fundraising
- Tournament activities

This strengthened the arena’s role as a regional social and recreational hub.

3.4 Community Collaboration

The 2025/2026 season demonstrated exceptional cooperation between:

- User groups
- Volunteers
- Town staff
- Sponsors/Grants
- Local businesses
- Contractors
- Advertising partners

Community volunteers contributed significant volunteer hours toward:

- Seasonal arena preparation
- Ice installation
- Cleaning
- Event support
- Operational assistance

4. 2025/2026 Financial Overview

4.1 Financial Summary

Category	Budget	Actual	Difference
Revenue	\$109,800	\$131,962	+\$22,162
Expenditures	\$1,217,154	\$1,320,797	-\$70,306

The 2025 operating year continued to reflect:

- Recovery work related to the June 2024 hail and windstorm
- Insurance related repairs
- Infrastructure restoration work
- Elevated operational maintenance requirements

Despite these pressures, revenues substantially exceeded projections due to:

- Increased facility utilization
- Growing advertising partnering support
- Fundraising success
- Expanded user participation

4.2 Ice Rental Activity

The 2025/2026 season demonstrated substantial year over year growth in:

- Facility usage
- Programming diversity
- Female hockey participation
- Community events
- Private rentals
- Kitchen usage
- Additional revenue sources

Primary users included:

- Gravelbourg Minor Hockey (GMH)
- Sr. Hornets
- Skating Club
- Slough Sharks recreational hockey
- Female hockey programming
- Private rentals
- Camps and specialty events

2025/2026 Monthly Revenue Totals

Month	Revenue
October 2025	~\$10,672
November 2025	~\$17,302
December 2025	~\$19,141
January 2026	~\$21,095
February 2026	~\$16,967
March 2026	~\$8,719

The increase in revenues compared to the previous season reflected:

- Higher participation rates
- Expanded female programming
- Increased tournament activity
- Greater community engagement
- Improved event coordination
- Increased private rental activity

4.3 Additional Revenue Growth

The season also demonstrated growth in additional revenue streams, including:

- Private rentals
- Advertising partnerships
- Advertising
- Sponsorship
- Fundraising

These additional revenue sources contributed significantly toward improving long term operational sustainability.

5. Advertising partnering & Fundraising

5.1 Advertising Growth

The 2025/2026 season saw significant growth in arena advertising partnering participation.

Highlights included:

- Arena advertising inventory selling out
- Addition of 11 new agricultural wall billboards
- Increased community business participation
- Introduction of new puck board advertising options

Advertising fee modernization also reflected increased commercial demand and stronger facility visibility within the community.

5.2 Fundraising Success

One of the most significant accomplishments of the 2025/2026 season was the collaborative fundraising effort involving all arena user groups.

The community-led 50/50 fundraiser raised more than:

\$37,000

that will go toward future arena infrastructure planning.

This fundraising initiative demonstrated:

- Exceptional community support
- Cross organizational collaboration
- Long term sustainability awareness
- Strong volunteer involvement
- Growing recognition of infrastructure priorities

5.3 Community Support

The arena continued receiving substantial support from:

- Local businesses
- Volunteers
- Contractors
- Community organizations
- Families
- User groups
- Advertising partners

This support remains essential to the continued operation and sustainability of La Palestre.

6. Facility Improvements & Maintenance

6.1 General Infrastructure Pressures

The 2024/2025 and 2025/2026 seasons highlighted the increasing operational pressures associated with maintaining aging recreational infrastructure.

Major operational pressures included:

- Utilities
- Staffing
- Maintenance
- Mechanical repairs
- Infrastructure recovery work
- Severe weather impacts

Despite these challenges, several facility improvements were completed during the 2025/2026 season, including:

- Exterior wall upgrades
- Roof upgrades
- Door replacements
- Improved lighting and accessibility
- Additional advertising infrastructure

6.2 Refrigeration Plant Maintenance

Detailed refrigeration plant maintenance records between 2024 and April 2026 documented:

- Compressor servicing
- Leak checks
- Oil changes
- Drier core replacement
- Condenser repairs
- Motor replacement
- Brine testing
- Refrigerant additions
- Seasonal start up and shutdown servicing

Documented refrigeration related maintenance costs exceeded:

\$35,000

between 2024 and April 2026.

The records demonstrate that preventative maintenance efforts have remained active and consistent.

The ongoing challenges are primarily related to:

- Aging infrastructure
- Refrigerant availability
- Mechanical wear
- System lifecycle exhaustion

rather than operational neglect.

7. Community Impact

La Palestre Arena continues to provide significant value to Gravelbourg and surrounding communities.

The facility supports:

- Youth development
- Healthy living
- Recreation accessibility
- Female sport participation
- Volunteer engagement
- Community gatherings
- Regional tourism activity
- Local economic activity
- School programming
- Community identity and pride

The arena's role extends far beyond recreation alone.

The facility functions as:

- A community gathering space
- A volunteer hub
- A regional recreation centre
- A youth development facility
- A social and cultural asset

The 2025/2026 season particularly demonstrated exceptional levels of:

- Community pride
- Volunteerism
- Collaboration
- Advertising partnership support
- Participation growth
- Organizational cooperation

8. Looking Ahead – 2026/2027 Season

As La Palestre Arena enters the 2026/2027 season, the facility is positioned at an important transitional stage.

The momentum generated throughout the 2025/2026 season has created a stronger operational and community foundation than in previous years. Participation continues to grow, community collaboration has strengthened, advertising partnership opportunities have expanded, and fundraising support has significantly increased.

Key priorities moving forward include:

- Continuing programming growth
- Supporting female hockey development
- Expanding fundraising initiatives
- Increasing advertising partnership opportunities
- Maintaining affordable community access
- Improving operational efficiency
- Continuing preventative maintenance efforts
- Advancing long-term infrastructure planning

The continued success of the “Palestre Pulse” communication initiative, collaborative tournament scheduling, and cross-promotion between user groups has improved overall facility engagement and strengthened the arena’s role within the community.

The continued support demonstrated by volunteers, advertising partners, user groups, local businesses, Town staff, and residents provides strong optimism for the future sustainability and success of La Palestre Arena.

9. Conclusion

The 2024/2025 and 2025/2026 seasons demonstrated both the resilience and growing importance of La Palestre Arena within the community.

Despite significant infrastructure challenges, severe weather recovery impacts and increasing operational pressures, the facility continued to:

- Expand programming
- Increase participation
- Grow fundraising support
- Strengthen community collaboration
- Improve advertising partnership engagement
- Support youth and community development
- Provide accessible recreational opportunities

The 2025/2026 season in particular represented a period of substantial positive momentum.

Expanded female hockey opportunities, increased facility utilization, sold out advertising inventory, successful fundraising campaigns, and improved coordination between user groups all highlighted the arena’s growing role as a vital regional recreational and community asset.

The ongoing commitment demonstrated by volunteers, user groups, Town staff, local businesses, advertising partners and the broader community reflects the significant value La Palestre continues to provide to Gravelbourg and the surrounding region.

Appendix A – Key Financial Summary

Year	Revenue Budget	Revenue Actual	Revenue Difference	Expense Budget	Expense Actual	Expense Difference
2024	\$110,350	\$114,648	+\$4,298	\$180,450	\$321,234	-\$140,784
2025	\$109,800	\$131,962	+\$22,162	\$1,217,154	\$1,320,797	-\$70,306
2026 YTD (May)	\$167,200	\$100,883	-\$66,317	\$243,500	\$84,330	+\$159,170

Appendix B – Key 2025/2026 Highlights

- Introduction of U13 Ice Cats female hockey program
- Expanded female hockey opportunities
- Increased monthly arena utilization
- Sold out arena advertising inventory
- Addition of 11 agricultural wall billboards
- Community wide 50/50 fundraiser exceeding \$37,000
- Improved collaboration between user groups
- Launch of “Palestre Pulse” weekly newsletter
- Increased advertising partnering participation
- Expanded tournament and Minor Hockey Day activity
- Increased private rental activity
- Facility improvements including roof, wall and door upgrades
- Significant volunteer participation throughout the season
- Growth in social media engagement and community awareness
- Continued free public skating and shinny opportunities
- Increased operational coordination and scheduling efficiency

Appendix C – Strategic Future Considerations

Future discussions and planning considerations may include:

- Capital infrastructure funding opportunities
- Energy efficiency improvements
- Expanded advertising partnering opportunities
- Continued fundraising initiatives
- Preventative maintenance planning
- Long term operational sustainability strategies
- Regional recreation partnerships
- Continued growth in female and youth programming