



COUGAR DOME CHATTER

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Having been a very long time since my PR days at Mount Saint Vincent, I toyed with the best way in which to present the first edition of Cougar Dome Chatter, but then I got to thinking... For most, the first introduction to The Cougar Dome came when this weird, Michelin Man type bubble showed-up on the grounds of CEC, just over a week ago, and although most of you are curious, many are uncertain as to what the Cougar Dome is all about. Well, we're here to "chat," and I'm going to tell you!

Let's start at the beginning... Three years ago this December, a local family had an idea. They wanted to build a tennis and multi-sport facility that would provide free access to **all** students (21,000 to be exact) within the Chignecto Central Regional School Board. That was the idea, and three years later, that is the reality, almost.

The Cougar Dome will be open prior to the end of this year, which means, we are nearing the finish line, and as such, I figure it's time to dispel a few of those myths, and confirm the facts.

What is The Cougar Dome?

A not-for-profit organization... Yes, we have a charitable registration number.

A tennis and multi-sport facility, which means what? In terms of the basics, the Dome (meaning the bubble itself) has:

- Six full-size tennis courts
- 15,000sq. ft. portable synthetic turf surface, expandable as needed
- 3-lane, 326m synthetic track
- Long and triple jump pit(s)
- 10 bay golf range

In addition to the Dome, the attached, permanent Clubhouse will house:

- Locker Rooms (one male, one female)
- Lounge
- Reception Area
- Pro Shop
- Meeting Room (which can be rented)
- My office (I know, I'm spoiled)
- Truro's newest Subway Restaurant, including the first-ever in Atlantic Canada, Subway Café (I need my morning coffee, so I'm really excited about this one)

The Cougar Dome will provide free access to students between the hours of 9am-3pm, while at the same time, ensuring open access for general public use during school hours, as well as early mornings, evenings and weekends (I promise, I will have information regarding our hours of operation, fees, schedules and programs to share with you very soon).

But, “what is The Cougar Dome,” is the easy question to answer. The harder question is, how is the Dome being funded?

Here’s the deal...

To build The Cougar Dome, the cost is \$2.1M; \$1.5M of which has already been raised thanks to the incredible support we have received from our public funders, our corporate sponsors and our private donors. Obviously, however, we still have some work to do.

It is our hope that we will be able to complete this build debt-free, as any/all contributions are one-time only (i.e. all contributions are used for the build, and/or initial equipment needs). As a not-for-profit, we are not looking to make money. After our doors open, any/all revenues will go towards operating expenses, and should we be fortunate enough to have a surplus, at any time, that money will be put back in to the pot to be used for recreational programming, and/or infrastructure within our community.

That said, should any of you be kind enough to consider a contribution, please know, there are many ways to give...

A cash contribution via a sponsorship or donation is always appreciated. No amount is too small, and every little bit counts, so please don’t feel intimidated by numbers.

An in-kind contribution can be equally as important, as any reduction to the cost of the build reduces the need for additional funds. Whether lumber, flooring, paint, furniture, etc. – it all counts!

Voting for our entry to win \$150,000 through the AVIVA Community Fund, starting October 21st, 2013 (<https://www.avivacommunityfund.org/users/registration/register>) is another important way to aid in our final fundraising efforts.

And, finally, if time and energy are something you are in a position to give, volunteers are always welcome, needed, and very much appreciated.

Needless to say, there are many ways in which to help us in our efforts over the next few months, and should you be willing, I would ask that you please contact me directly at director@cougardome.ca.

Also, for any of you who may have questions or concerns related to The Cougar Dome, which I have not yet answered, as I’ve barely touched the tip of the iceberg, please feel free to email me any time.

Ok, although I have a million other things I would like to chat with you about today, unfortunately, I’ve exceeded my word limit covering off the housekeeping items. That said, I will have much more interesting chatter for you next month. In the meantime, I will finish today’s column by telling you, very simply, this facility is going to be amazing, and I am really excited that we will soon be able to open our doors to each and every one of you!