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# PRESS RELEASE

## Swiftel Center wins the international 2015 Venue Excellence Award

Brookings, S.D. (8/25/2015) – The Swiftel Center was awarded the 2015 Venue Excellence Award by the International Association of Venue Managers (IAVM) at the Venue Industry Awards Luncheon in Baltimore earlier this month. This is the highest award in the venue industry given by IAVM, which is the world’s largest professional association dedicated to the management of public assembly venues.



“We are incredibly honored to receive the 2015 Venue Excellence Award from our peers who represent some of the best arenas in the world. Thanks to the city of Brookings, our building sponsors, our strong community fan-base, and VenuWorks for the continued support,” said Tom Richter, CFE, executive director. “The Swiftel Center truly is Midwest hospitality at its best!”

Swiftel Center staff accepting the 2015 Venue Excellence Award. Back (left to right): Andrea Hogie, Molly Nagelhout, Jeremy Linstad, Steve Peters, president and founder of VenuWorks, Dave Biteler, Matt Chapman. Front (left to right): Karla Bautista, Tara Krause, Tom Richter, Kayla Bessler, Kristina Lankow. Not pictured: Curt Roland.

The Venue Excellence Awards recognize excellence in the management and operation of public assembly venues including arenas, convention centers, performing arts centers and stadiums. The award winner is determined based on excellence in each of the following: operational excellence,

team-building and professional development, safety and security, and service to the community. Out of all arenas worldwide, the Swiftel Center was acknowledged as the best of the best in the Arenas category.

This prestigious award is a significant accomplishment for any venue but comes with even greater reward considering the size of the Swiftel Center facility, staff and city population. To-date, no arena award winner has been located in a city with a population less than 380,000.

Past arena award winners include:

- 2014: Orleans Arena; Las Vegas, NV; Current population: 613,599
- 2013: INTRUST Bank Arena; Wichita, KS; Current population: 388,413
- 2012: Sydney Entertainment Centre; Sydney, Australia; Current population: 4.84 million

At the Venue Industry Awards Luncheon, Richter accepted the award along with the entire Swiftel Center full-time staff (except for one member on personal leave). This was the first time in the history of the awards that an entire venue staff was present to accept an excellence award. Including Richter, the staff consists of 11 full-time employees. Thanks to the support of VenuWorks, the staff was able to accept the award in-person as a team.

“We all were part of winning this award!” said Molly Nagelhout, box office manager. “It was important and a great honor to be able to accept it together.”

Stand-out activities performed by the Swiftel Center were noted at the awards luncheon, including the simulated mass casualty exercise held at the facility in coordination with local emergency authorities. Other highlights included the annual “Tough Enough to Wear Pink” campaign and recent award received by the in-house catering for its dedication to fulfilling the goals of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

A team-first attitude was reflected in the Swiftel Center’s Venue Excellence Award application: “We have an ‘all-hands-on-deck’ attitude which means staff are ready, willing and able to jump in to sell concessions, clean bathrooms, take tickets and whatever else it takes to get the job done.”

The Swiftel Center employs more than 200 part-time staff members. The hard work and dedication of the part-time team is a significant contribution to the facility’s overall success.

Since opening its doors in 2001, the Swiftel Center has hosted more than 2,840 events; 256 in 2014 alone. To-date, the Swiftel Center has entertained more than 1,395,000 guests, which is 60 times the population of the city of Brookings.

As a multipurpose facility, the Swiftel Center hosts the range of events including community festivals, consumer shows, conferences, sporting events, banquets, concerts, and wedding receptions. Oftentimes these events are held back-to-back, which requires overnight conversions. This past February, the Swiftel Center arena was converted from the Martina McBride concert set-up to an up-scale, private retirement banquet in less than 12 hours.

To celebrate and share the Venue Excellence Award honor, the Swiftel Center invites the community to an Open House Celebration on Thursday, September 17 starting at 7pm. At 7:30pm, there will be a short program; Vicki Hawarden, president/CEO of IAVM will present the award to the Swiftel Center. Drinks and hors d'oeuvres will be available throughout the celebration. Guests will be able to take self-guided tours of the facility. For more information, please visit [www.swiftelcenter.com](http://www.swiftelcenter.com), call (605) 692-7539 or follow us at [www.facebook.com/swiftelcenter](http://www.facebook.com/swiftelcenter).

### **About the Swiftel Center**

The Swiftel Center is a gathering place for cultural, recreational and educational events. With a 30,000 square foot arena, state-of-the-art banquet rooms, conference rooms and in-house catering, the Swiftel Center is an international award-winning venue of excellence and one of South Dakota's premiere event centers.

### **About VenuWorks**

VenuWorks is America's emerging leader in venue management, providing customized solutions for arenas, theatres and convention centers throughout the country, with management services that include operations, catering, concessions, along with the booking and marketing of sports and entertainment events.

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