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Friday, October 4, 2013

## DCU Center shows off renovations



Guests are greeted by a woman on stilts as they arrive for the preview event and ribbon-cutting of the new \$23 million renovation project at the DCU Center Thursday. See slideshow at [telegram.com](http://telegram.com). (T&G Staff/STEVE LANAVA)

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WORCESTER — It was a little after 5 p.m. Wednesday and the workers renovating the DCU Center had a bunch of stuff left on their "to-do list."

Concrete blocks were still being laid down on the outdoor plaza, strips of aluminum were missing from the building's façade, and the wall containing the ticket windows was still being attended to.

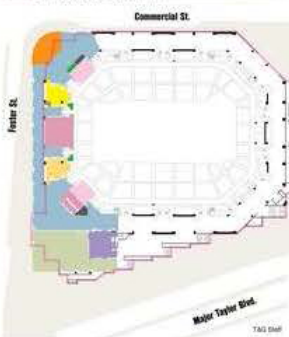
The 31-year-old facility is scheduled to formally open next week for a visit by the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus, but DCU Center officials had planned on folks stopping by Thursday for a sneak peek at how the \$23 million project has turned out.

The crews didn't finish their chores the evening before, but enough work was completed to go forward with Thursday's ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Though there was construction work that still needed

### DCU renovations

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said they were impressed by what had already been finished.

"It looks nice," said Heather Stolikes of Worcester.  
"They did a good job."

#### **Photo galleries**

- [SLIDESHOW: DCU Center showcases \\$23M renovations at Ribbon Cutting and Preview event](#)

Mrs. Stolikes, her husband, Michael, and the couple's three children frequently go to the arena for events including Worcester Sharks hockey games, the Monster Truck show and the circus.

"The improvements they made will really benefit the people who actually attend events in the building," said Mr. Stolikes.

Initial work upgrading the municipally owned facility began in January and moved into high gear in May when the facility shut down for renovation and expansion.

City officials said the makeover was necessary so that the building would remain competitive with similar arenas in Providence, Hartford and Manchester, N.H.

The improvements included a redesigned box office, four new event suites, retail space along an expanded concourse, and revamped rest rooms.

The mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems were also updated.

The DCU Center's exterior was also reconstructed to complement work to structures in the nearby area of the CitySquare project.

City Manager Michael V. O'Brien said not all the work was completed on time because of some unforeseen problems such as water leakage in the 30-year-old tunnel that runs below the DCU Center.

He said Consigli Construction Co. ran double shifts and worked through weekends to catch up on the work.

"They did a good job and the craftsmanship is excellent," said Mr. O'Brien.

Mayor Joseph M. Petty said that the work is being funded through tax revenues generated as a result of a special financing zone made up of the arena, the abutting convention center, the Hilton Garden Inn, the Major Taylor Boulevard parking garage and the Residence Inn on Plantation Street.

Councilor-at-Large Frederick C. Rushton said the improvements were necessary because the center is part of the social and economic fabric of the community.

He said it is a gathering place for families and friends who hold shared memories of events held in the building.

"By reinvesting in this facility, we will create new memories," said Mr. Rushton, who heads the council's Economic Development Committee.

State Rep. Mary S. Keefe, whose 15th Worcester District includes the center, said the facility provides "synergy" for the downtown, generating income for nearby businesses.

Sandra Dunn, general manager, said the 14,800-seat complex aims to provide a diversity of events for the public.

She said about 110 events a year are held in the building.

District 2 Councilor Philip P. Palmieri, who represents the area, said he's always been pleased by the success of the facility but added that he hoped officials would one day be able to lure back regional NCAA basketball championship games.