

POPULOUS®

Contact:

Great Ink Communications – 212-741-2977

Roxanne Donovan Roxanne@greatink.com

Sara Williams sara@greatink.com

Lindsay Church lindsay@greatink.com

For Immediate Release

Populous-designed Events Center, The BASE, Opens to the Public in Waco, Texas

Multipurpose Space Offers New Opportunities for Tourism and Diverse Roster of Events

Kansas City, MO – June 1, 2021 – In May, The BASE (Business, Arts, Sports, and Entertainment) opened to the public at the Extraco Events Center, home of the Heart O' Texas Fair and Rodeo, in Waco, Texas. The \$32 million, multipurpose facility was designed by global architecture firm Populous with the goal of bringing more business and tourism to Waco in the diverse form of sports tournaments, concerts, meetings, trade shows and community events.



In 2015, Populous issued a 40-year master plan for the site, which involved collaboration with the County, City and School District Stakeholders, and identified the need for a new Expo Center, Livestock and Equestrian Facilities, RV Parking, as well as High School and City Sports Complexes. The BASE is the first project of the master plan to be built, and is the new front door to the site. It is situated next to the existing Extraco Coliseum, and offers visitors 52,000 square feet of clear-span, multipurpose flexible exhibition space. The site was first developed in 1917 by the U.S. Army and, in 1953, was turned into the first Heart O' Texas Fair and Rodeo, envisioned by the event leaders as an event center for a rodeo crowd of nearly 8,000.

Now no longer just a fair ground, the Extraco Events Center is a year-round multi-use destination complemented by entertainment options available to users at the adjacent Coliseum. Its flexibility and ability to create spaces to scale via divisible walls allows for personalized regional and traveling tournaments, weddings and other celebrations, private meetings and more.

“For The BASE, every decision was tested with the 40-year vision,” said Bill Bourne, an Associate Principal at Populous who oversaw the project. “The debt service will be paid out over a 40-year period, so we wanted to give the most value to the County for what we know they need today, but also to allow the venue to adapt and accommodate future events that don’t yet exist. With a focus on longevity, the materials we incorporated are durable enough for farm and equipment shows, but warm enough for weddings and private events. This meant a lot of masonry, which is great, as this allowed us to showcase the skill and craftsmanship of the local contractors.”

Populous devised a compelling design for The BASE that makes the site feel like a campus. From the moment you arrive, the edges are softened by the beautification of the building’s exterior and landscaping, which features ample spaces for people to gather and sit in the shade. The parking lots of The BASE were created for flexibility as well, with the integration of power, water and sewer to allow for farmer’s markets, vendors, and to enhance amenities for the Fair’s carnival midway and livestock and equestrian competitors. Nearly every inch of The BASE can be used or leased to a client for any type of event.



The facility features an outdoor front porch area which can be used for breakout space during conferences, a reception or mingling area during social events, or a place for fans and players to take a breather during all-day sports tournaments. A central, open concept, food service area also links this outdoor space with the event hall. Portable points of sale and operable walls allow the experience to be customized to size of event, but also allows for operational efficiency.

Daylighting is brought into all public spaces via a mix of translucent panels and windows. Infrastructure is in place to allow the client to control the openings if they need to transform the venue for a black-box event. This openness and transparency were important to give event attendees connection to the outdoors and offer a sense of placemaking.

Future phases of the master plan include expansion and addition of facilities for equine and livestock events. The Extraco Events Center has space for 1,000 horses and will become one of the biggest venues for horse and livestock shows.

Populous also recently completed the Resch Expo in February, which replaced the Brown County Veterans Memorial Arena in the Village of Ashwaubenon, Wisconsin, and adjacent to the iconic Lambeau Field. Other relevant projects include new livestock and equestrian facilities for the National Western Stock Show & Rodeo in Denver, as well as redevelopment of the Pimlico and Laurel Racing and Community facilities in Maryland. For more information, visit our website or contact info@populous.com.

About Populous

Populous is a global design firm that designs the places where people love to be together, like Yankee Stadium, the London Olympics, and the Super Bowl. Over the last 36 years, the firm has designed more than 3,000 projects worth \$40 billion across emerging and established markets. Populous' comprehensive services include architecture, interior design, event planning and overlay, branded environments, wayfinding and graphics, planning and urban design, landscape architecture, aviation and transport design, hotels and hospitality, and sustainable design consulting. Populous has 18 offices on four continents and more than 600 employees with regional centers in Kansas City, London and Brisbane.