

Wisconsin Center District facilities timeline

Milestone events in bold.

1835	Byron Kilbourn, one of Milwaukee's "founding fathers," donates land near present-day Kilbourn Avenue and 6th Street for use as a public grounds and market.
September 6, 1881	Industrial Exposition Building, a forerunner of the modern convention center, officially opens on the land and adjacent parcels. The building hosts trade gatherings, public expositions and civic and cultural events.
1885	Industrial Exposition Building is completed.
July 28, 1903	Merchants and Manufacturers Association appoints committee to study feasibility of replacing the now-outmoded Industrial Exposition Building.
June 4, 1905	Fire breaks out during a "skat" tournament and destroys Exposition Building.
1905-1909	Milwaukee Auditorium Company, an ordinary stock corporation, is formed by civic-minded business people and conducts fund raising to construct a new Milwaukee Auditorium.
September 11, 1907	Groundbreaking ceremonies held for Milwaukee Auditorium, designed by distinguished Milwaukee architectural firm of Ferry & Clas.
August 1, 1908	Cornerstone laid for Milwaukee Auditorium.
December, 1908	Contractors successfully test the novel cantilevered balcony deck in the under-construction Milwaukee Auditorium, loading a completed section with 9 tons of brick, 2.5 tons of bagged cement and 25 workers.
September 21, 1909	Milwaukee Auditorium, completed at a cost of under \$500,000, is dedicated.
October 15-24, 1909	15,000 dairymen from across the country attend National Dairy Convention, one of the first conventions held in new Auditorium.
April 18, 1910	Legendary Italian tenor Enrico Caruso performs Verdi's <i>Aida</i> with New York's Metropolitan Opera Company in the Milwaukee Auditorium, with 6,800 people in attendance and the second of the acclaimed singer's three Milwaukee appearances.
1911	Auditorium Annex construction project adds Kilbourn, Walker & Juneau Hall spaces to east side of Auditorium.
January, 1911	First Milwaukee Auto Show is held in Milwaukee Auditorium, beginning long-term (though not uninterrupted) annual tenancy of Automobile Dealers Association of Mega Milwaukee, founded in 1908.
October 26, 1911	William Howard Taft is first of many United States Presidents, former Presidents and Presidential candidates to speak in Milwaukee Auditorium.

October 14, 1912	Former President Theodore Roosevelt, seeking to return to the White House on the Progressive Party ticket, gives a three-hour speech in the Milwaukee Auditorium less than half an hour after being wounded in an assassination attempt. The bullet was slowed by his spectacle case and speech in his breast pocket.
January 31, 1916	President Woodrow Wilson speaks in the Auditorium about being prepared for the prospect of going to war against Germany, though the U.S. remained officially neutral in World War I.
1916	A huge, multi-day bazaar is held in the Milwaukee Auditorium to raise funds for War Relief for Germans. This exemplified most Milwaukeeans' Teutonic heritage and cultural ties to Germany. Within a year, war would be declared against Germany and such activity would be considered treasonous.
1918	Influenza seating is implemented in the Milwaukee Auditorium to limit contagion during the catastrophic worldwide influenza epidemic.
October 11-24, 1918	As the flu epidemic escalates, all public gatherings are banned, theaters, schools, saloons, billiard halls and meeting places are closed, and a 5 pm curfew is placed on stores. The Milwaukee Auditorium is used as a temporary hospital and morgue. By October 24, the epidemic in Milwaukee subsides, and most restrictions are lifted. Decisive action by public officials keep Milwaukee's death rate lower than the state's.
May 13, 1919	Enrico Caruso returns to Milwaukee Auditorium for his last Milwaukee appearance. Caruso dies two years later at the age of 45.
1919	U.S. Army doughboys returning from World War I are billeted in the Milwaukee Auditorium.
May 20-27, 1922	The new Wisconsin Outdoors Show in the Auditorium features indoor trap shooting for the first time in Wisconsin.
1923	Nine-year-old Arthur Erdman is killed by a pane of glass falling from a Milwaukee Auditorium skylight during a Loyal Order of Moose Lodge #49 event. Eerily, another pane of glass falls from a courtroom skylight and shatters during the ensuing civil trial, on October 29, 1925. The Auditorium Board is held liable for the boy's death.
November 8, 1924	The new Marquette University Band, with John Phillip Sousa and His Band, debut Sousa's new Marquette University song at the Milwaukee Auditorium.
November 29-December 4, 1926	The Radiological Society of North America holds its 12 th Annual Meeting at the Milwaukee Auditorium
September 21, 1929	John Phillip Sousa and His Band, in their annual stop at the Milwaukee Auditorium, help celebrate the venue's 20th Anniversary.
1930	The first photo using flashbulbs in the Milwaukee Auditorium is made during the 1930 Radio Show.

January, 1932	A banked wooden bicycle track is built in the Milwaukee Auditoriumø Bruce Hall, temporarily turning it into a velodrome to host Wisconsinø first 6-day indoor bicycle race.
July 30, 1932	Expelled from membership in the International Baby Chick Association, G.A. Norman rises at a meeting of its executive committee in the Auditorium, and shoots at the organizationø secretary, Reese V. Hicks, who had announced the expulsion. The president, Charles Sawyer, jumps in front of Hicks and is killed instantly. Norman continues shooting and then turns the gun on himself and commits suicide. Hicks is wounded by three bullets, but survives.
April 17, 1933	A Volksfest is held at the Milwaukee Auditorium to celebrate the end of Prohibition ten days earlier. Some 15,000 people turn out to freely drink beer in public; around 5,000 are turned away from the celebration, which had been delayed to avoid interfering with Lent.
September, 1935	Ahead of the 1936 elections, Eugene Dennis, secretary of the Communist Party in Wisconsin, argues at the Auditorium for a broad, united movement on the Left to oppose fascism. Few Progressive organizations are eager to welcome communists into their coalition.
February, 1938	A rally of the pro-Nazi German-American Bund in the Auditorium is disrupted by hecklers; the Bundø brown-shirted Order Division begins throwing punches, and rioting ensues. Many protestors are arrested, but charges are dismissed by a judge, who essentially says the Bund had it coming. The Bund and a front organization, the German-American Alliance, are later denied use of the venue.
October 7, 1938	Over 7,000 people play bingo together in Bruce Hall.
March, 1940	First Milwaukee Sentinel Sports Show is held in Milwaukee Auditorium.
May 21, 1941	World featherweight title match at the Milwaukee Auditorium between Wisconsin native Phil Zwick and champion Petey Scalzo
1942-1945	Works Project Administration artist Thorsten Lindberg creates a series of wall murals depicting Wisconsin and Milwaukee historical figures, commerce and other themes in public areas of the Milwaukee Auditorium.
August, 1942	The Auditorium is opened to the public for free ice skating.
1943	Sports promoter Bill Veeck presents a basketball double header to be played in the Milwaukee Auditorium, pitting two top black teams, the Harlem Globetrotters and the New York Renaissance, against two white National Basketball League teams, the Sheboygan Redskins and the Oshkosh All-Stars. 4,000 fans pack the Auditorium.
1946-1950	Milwaukee Auditorium Board and City of Milwaukee collaborate to build new, larger venue adjacent to Milwaukee Auditorium. The new øMilwaukee Arenaö will be one of the first in the nation designed to accommodate the needs of a new entertainment medium ó television ó and will arrive just in time to be associated with the rise of a new musical genre ó rock & roll.
August 26, 1949	Cornerstone laid for new Milwaukee Arena.

April 9-15, 1950	Milwaukee Arena opening celebration held amid week-long, city-wide “Progress Week.” Daily Arena programs include ethnic music & dance, military bands and choruses, opera, the “Civic Progress Symphony Orchestra,” live radio shows, and national stars including Frances Langford, Art Linkletter, William Bendix, Lawrence Welk, Eddy Arnold, the Carter Family and Chet Atkins.
May 9, 1950:	One month after the Milwaukee Arena formally opened its doors, the venue hosts its first sporting event: a middleweight fight between ex-champ Rocky Graziano and Vinnie Cidone. With more than 12,000 looking on, Graziano scores a technical knockout in the fourth round.
1951-1955	Milwaukee (now Atlanta) Hawks bring NBA basketball to Milwaukee ó Milwaukee Arena is home court.
October 3, 1952	In a campaign rally at the Milwaukee Arena with Senator Joe McCarthy, Presidential candidate Dwight D. Eisenhower (R) does not, as expected, defend his friend, former Secretary of State George Marshall, whom a McCarthy ally slandered as ða front man for traitors.ð The omission harms their friendship and causes Eisenhower lifelong regret.
June 15, 1956	West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer is honored in a ceremony and speaks at Milwaukee Auditorium.
January 30, 1959	Piano sensation Van Cliburn performs in the Auditorium with the Milwaukee Pops, conducted by Harry John Brown. Concert is a watershed success leading to the founding of the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra later that year.
February 22, 1959	Movie star/comic Jerry Lewis performs at the Auditorium with the Milwaukee Pops, conducted by Walter Scharf.
April, 1959	A dozen police are called in to quell a disturbance at a professional wrestling event in the Milwaukee Arena, prompting management to ban pro wrestling from the facilities and cancel several events scheduled for the fall.
May 12, 1962	President John F. Kennedy (D) addresses the Democratic Party of Wisconsin’s Jefferson-Jackson Dinner at the Milwaukee Arena.
January 27, 1964	Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. addresses a standing-room-only crowd in the Milwaukee Auditorium, during the civil rights push for fair housing and school integration in Milwaukee.
September 4, 1964	The Beatles perform at sold-out Milwaukee Arena.
November 11, 1964	The Rolling Stones perform at the Milwaukee Auditorium
October 16, 1968	NBA basketball returns to Milwaukee when new Milwaukee Bucks team starts season. Arena is home court until 1988.
June 14, 1972	Elvis Presley performs the first of what would be three concerts at the Milwaukee Arena.

May 24-26, 1974	New \$15 million convention center opens. Milwaukee Arena and Auditorium are merged with new center to create convention and entertainment complex called MECCA – the Milwaukee Exposition & Convention Center & Arena.
1974	MECCA Board decides to renovate Milwaukee Auditorium.
June 28, 1974	Elvis Presley performs at the renamed MECCA Arena.
April 7, 1977	Elvis Presley performs his last MECCA Arena concert, just a few months before his death.
1977	Milwaukee becomes a professional hockey city when Milwaukee Admirals, previously an independent amateur team, join International Hockey League. MECCA Arena is home ice until 1988.
October 2, 1977	Controversial new basketball floor featuring design by Robert Indiana is unveiled. \$32,500 investment pays off as the floor and MECCA Arena gain international fame and instant recognition for TV audiences.
November 5, 1978	Auditorium Restoration and Improvement Project is completed and renovated Milwaukee Auditorium is officially opened. Renovations include new heating, lighting & air conditioning systems, new lobby on Kilbourn Avenue, restored architectural details and acoustical improvements.
April 29, 1979	The ðNew Barbarians Tour featuring Keith Richard & Friendsö is over-hyped by radio speculation about what celebrity ðfriendsö may appear or perform. Enraged fans damage the MECCA Arena, but repairs are made quickly.
October 9, 1980	Black Sabbath & Blue Oyster Cult's ðBlack & Blue Tourö stop at the MECCA Arena show starts late, ends early, and degenerates into rioting after Sabbath's bass player is hit in the head by a bottle ó a low point in Milwaukee concert history that leads Milwaukee police chief Harold Breier to declare rock & roll ðbannedö from Milwaukee.
October 14, 1980	Bruce Springsteen's extended, crowd-pleasing performance in MECCA Arena tests a new performance curfew, as police are persuaded not to halt show.
October, 1984	The Milwaukee Wave professional indoor soccer team first takes to the field in the Milwaukee Auditorium.
November 10, 1984	The Milwaukee Wave, competing in the National Professional Indoor Soccer League, play their first official game, against the Chicago Vultures, winning 6-3.
October 1, 1988	Bradley Center hockey arena opens. 10-year non-compete ðagreementö prohibits any Arena marketing, and gives Bradley Center veto power over Arena bookings plus 15% of all Arena rent for spectator events. Admirals, Bucks and Wave move to new facility.
October, 1991	Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce's independent study recommends expanding Milwaukee's convention facilities.

August, 1992	MECCA-commissioned feasibility study shows need for larger convention facilities, recommends \$167 million plan to expand south to Wisconsin Avenue.
June 1, 1993	In the MECCA Auditorium, President Bill Clinton delivers his first national foreign policy address.
September, 1993	1994 City of Milwaukee Budget devotes City hotel room tax to expanding convention facilities, providing the first concrete commitment of funds for expansion. The Budget also funds the launch of the downtown Riverwalk project; together, the projects are catalysts for a major downtown Renaissance.
April, 1994	Wisconsin State Legislature votes to create a new “Wisconsin Center District” to fund, plan, build and operate a new convention facility. Governor Tommy G. Thompson signs legislation at a MECCA ceremony.
June, 1994	The Wisconsin Center District Board of Directors is formed.
July, 1994	The Milwaukee Common Council ratifies the Wisconsin Center District legislation.
March, 1995	Cream City Associates, LLC, a partnership of Clark-Hunzinger Construction, TVS Architects, Engberg-Anderson Architects and other firms, is awarded the Design/Build contract for the new convention center.
November 22, 1995	Agreement between the Wisconsin Center District and City of Milwaukee transfers “MECCA” assets to the District, allowing the District to issue bonds for a new convention center. The City pledges funds for deferred Arena capital improvements. The “MECCA” name passes into history as the Arena and Auditorium revert to their original names.
February 14, 1996	Groundbreaking for the new convention center is held with a Valentine’s Day “Hearts and Spades” theme.
April, 1996	The Wisconsin Center District’s requirements for diversity in hiring and contracting are strongest such commitment in Wisconsin history. Demolition of buildings on convention center site begins.
September, 1996	1997 City Budget includes \$6 million for Milwaukee Arena renovation work.
November, 1996	Design/Build contract with Grunau Project Development is signed for Milwaukee Arena renovations.
February 19, 1997	A convention center naming rights partnership is announced with Milwaukee-based Midwest Express Airlines, consistently rated the best domestic carrier in the U.S. Under the 15-year, \$9.25 million agreement, a historic first for convention centers, the new facility will be called “Midwest Express Center.”
May, 1997	Milwaukee Arena renovation work, scheduled to continue operations, begins.
October, 1997	New basketball floor is installed in Milwaukee Arena.

November, 1997	New Milwaukee Arena scoreboard is installed.
January, 1998	Milwaukee Arena seat refinishing/reupholstering project begins.
June 26, 1998	Wisconsin Center District staff moves into Midwest Express Center offices.
July, 1998	Wisconsin Center District launches its first website at www.wcd.org .
July 15, 1998	10-year Arena non-compete contract with Bradley Center expires.
July 22, 1998	Demolition of ðMECCAö convention hall begins.
July 24-26, 1998	The Grand Opening of the Midwest Express Center includes a “Community Open House” exhibition and a memorable black-tie gala.
July 31-August 4, 1998	The National GovernorsøConvention is the first booked event in the new Midwest Express Center.
October, 1998	Demolition of the old ðMECCAö convention hall is complete.
September 25-27, 1998	The Milwaukee Arena hosts the Davis Cup by NEC Semifinals ó an international event that marks the buildingø re-emergence on the sports scene.
October, 1998	Phase II of Midwest Express Center construction begins.
October 31-November 1, 1998	Neil Diamond concerts mark official “Grand Re-Opening” of renovated Milwaukee Arena.
March 3-20, 1999	20-show run of <i>Riverdance: The Show</i> in Milwaukee Auditorium breaks all-time gross sales record for all Wisconsin Center District facilities, suggests continued viability of building.
April, 1999	Wisconsin Center District conducts internal study to examine future of Milwaukee Auditorium, considering options of demolition, restoration, renovation or ðdo-nothing.ö Report recommends major renovation.
July 23, 1999	Former Pink Floyd singer/songwriter Roger Waters opens his first U.S. tour in twelve years with an instantly sold-out concert at the Milwaukee Auditorium.
September 21, 1999	Milwaukee Auditorium 90-year Anniversary.
October 27, 1999	Wisconsin Center District 2000 Budget includes funds for a commissioned engineering and market analysis of the relative feasibility of restoring, demolishing, renovating or deferring action on the Milwaukee Auditorium.
February 16, 2000	Wisconsin Center District allocates \$350,000 to restore and upgrade ice making equipment so Milwaukee Arena can again host ice events.
March 7, 2000	Wisconsin Center District and U.S. Cellular officials announce \$2 million “naming rights” agreement for Arena – facility will be called “U.S. Cellular Arena” for six years.

March 9-11, 2000	U.S. Cellular Arena hosts last Wisconsin Independent Schools Athletic Association high school basketball tournament. Association merges with Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association.
March 19, 2000	The Business Journal reports that the Greater Milwaukee Committee is studying the possibility of adding a 4,000-5,000 seat indoor amphitheater to the Bradley Center. Around the same time, a proposal is floated for a similar venue at the Henry W. Meier Festival Park.
April 5-9, 2000	Disney on Ice returns to U.S. Cellular Arena with nine performances of "The Little Mermaid."
April 9, 2000	U.S. Cellular Arena's 50-year anniversary is noted in a ceremony at a Disney on Ice performance.
April 17, 2000	City of Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission resolves not to recommend historic designation for Milwaukee Auditorium, eliminating potential preservation requirements.
July 5, 2000	Wisconsin Center District Board commissions independent economic and engineering feasibility study of Milwaukee Auditorium, again comparing options of demolition, restoration, renovation and "do-nothing."
August, 2000	Back-to-back Veterans of Foreign Wars and American Legion conventions are among largest ever in Midwest Express Center, and feature speeches by Presidential candidates George W. Bush and Al Gore.
October 12, 2000	Commissioned economic and engineering feasibility study recommends renovating Milwaukee Auditorium to continue serving market for 3,000-5,000 seat concerts, theatrical productions and assemblies.
October 18, 2000	Wisconsin Center District Board votes to proceed with Milwaukee Auditorium renovation planning and design based on ability to fund project with available funds and anticipated building revenues.
December, 2000	Milwaukee Auditorium Renovation Project design proposals received and Request for Proposals issued for construction management.
January 23, 2001	Wisconsin Center District Board selects Construction Management Team of Grunau Project Development and Hunt Construction Group to oversee Milwaukee Auditorium Renovation Project planning and construction.
February 22, 2001	VOA Associates, Inc., architects of successful Chicago-area and other theater renovations, is chosen in design competition for Milwaukee Auditorium Renovation Project.
March 2-5, 2001	U.S. Cellular Arena hosts Conference USA Women's Basketball tournament.
April 4, 2001	Wisconsin Center District Board votes to proceed with \$32 million Milwaukee Auditorium Renovation Project.
April 9, 2001	Plans for outdoor Wisconsin Athletic Hall of Fame "Walk of Fame" project are unveiled at ceremony outside U.S. Cellular Arena. Walk of Fame will

display plaques honoring top state athletes and sports figures, traditionally displayed inside Arena before 1998.

May 1, 2001	Plans finalized for skywalk connection from Midwest Express Center to Hilton Milwaukee City Center.
May 16-17, 2001	The first-ever National Electrical Wire Processing Technology Expo, jointly developed by WCD and Expo Productions, Inc., is a resounding success, paving the way to become growing annual event at the Midwest Express Center.
June 14, 2001	Wisconsin Center District Board approves \$30.0 million variable rate demand bond issue for Milwaukee Auditorium Renovation Project.
June, 2001	Milwaukee Auditorium Renovation Project bond sale completed.
June, 2001	Pile testing, engineering assessment and other preliminary construction-related work begins for Milwaukee Auditorium Renovation Project.
June 26, 2001	Construction begins on Hilton skywalk.
July 13, 2001	President Vicente Fox of Mexico addresses the National Council of La Raza in the Midwest Express Center.
July, 2001	Construction begins on ðWalk of Fame.ö
November 1, 2001	Hilton skywalk opens.
November 1, 2001	Auditorium closes for construction. Project will transform Auditorium to 2,500-4,000 seat theatrical venue called ðMilwaukee Theatre.ö
November 29, 2001	Ribbon-cutting ceremony officially opens Wisconsin Athletic Walk of Fame. 50th Anniversary Induction Dinner adds Alan “Bud” Selig, Connie Carpenter, Earl Gillespie, George Thompson and Jim Taylor to the rolls of inductees, bringing total to 114.
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January 8, 2002	Public summit addresses potential merger of Wisconsin Center District and Bradley Center, combining of Midwest Express Center Phase III plans and Bradley Center renovation proposal.
March 6, 2002	Environmental abatement and demolition work in Milwaukee Theatre Project, mark commencement of major construction activities.
March 7, 2002	Wisconsin Center District launches all-new, content-rich, service-oriented website at www.wcd.org .
March 8-17, 2002	2002 <i>Milwaukee Journal Sentinel</i> Sports Show ends show’s 62-year history as a downtown event.
March 23 & 25, 2002	U.S. Cellular Arena hosts 2002 NCAA Division I Women’s Basketball Mid-East Regional Tournament.
April 24, 2002	WCD Board approves \$2 million in Milwaukee Theatre Project design enhancements, bringing total project cost to \$34 million.

June 11, 2002	Midwest Express Airlines announces it will change its name to "Midwest Airlines."
June 17, 2002	Demolition begins on north wall of former Milwaukee Auditorium to make way for northward expansion in Milwaukee Theatre Project.
July 5-9, 2002	In conjunction with the 2002 All-Star Game, the John Hancock All-Star FanFest brings hundreds of thousands of visitors to the Midwest Express Center.
August 28, 2002	Wisconsin Center District Board votes to change Midwest Express Center name to "Midwest Airlines Center" in wake of name change decision by airline. Both new names are effective January 1, 2003.
September, 2002	Demolition phase of Milwaukee Theatre Project largely ends as construction advances.
Fall, 2002	Cost overruns add \$2 million to Milwaukee Theatre project cost.
December 18, 2002	Officials from WCD and the Milwaukee Wave jointly announce that, beginning with the 2003-04 season, the Major Indoor Soccer League team will host home games in the U.S. Cellular Arena at least through the 2012-2013 season.
December 19, 2002	104-foot long, 94-ton truss is assembled on site and installed to enhance structural integrity, form top of proscenium and enclose fly space of Milwaukee Theatre
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January, 2003	WCD, Jam Theatricals and Weidner Center for the Performing Arts (Green Bay) form partnership to present a Broadway series at Milwaukee Theatre.
January 28, 2003	WCD Board meets to discuss significant unforeseen problems and cost overruns that may raise project cost to over \$40 million. Project schedule and October completion deadline remain intact.
March 27, 2003	WCD Board conditionally approves room tax increase to cover new \$41.9 million project budget, but delays implementation to allow study of financing alternatives.
May 9, 2003	WCD Board approves alternative financing plan and averts hotel room tax increase.
May 15, 2003	WCD, Jam Theatricals and Weidner Center publicly announce partnership and plans to present Broadway shows.
June 4, 2003	Partnership press conference announces 2003-2004 Broadway subscription series of five shows and launches season ticket sales: the <i>Radio City Christmas Spectacular Starring the Rockettes</i>, <i>Urinetown: The Musical</i>, <i>Miss Saigon</i>, <i>Fame: The Musical</i>, and <i>Oliver!</i>
June 19-22, 2003	U.S. Cellular Arena hosts prestigious 2003 U.S. Gymnastics Championships.

July 16, 2003	WCD and the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra announce the first show in the Milwaukee Theatre: singer/pianist Michael Feinstein with the Milwaukee Symphony Pops, on November 7, 2003.
August, 2003	Milwaukee Theatre project is completely enclosed. Most interior walls are erected and drywalled. Paint and finishes have begun to be applied.
September 4, 2003	Additional Grand Opening Weekend acts are announced: Dennis DeYoung with the Festival City Pops Orchestra and the Chicago Children's Choir (November 8), and Daniel Rodriguez with the Festival City Symphony and the Heritage Chorale of Milwaukee (November 9).
October 14, 2003	University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Panthers and WCD jointly announce that the U.S. Cellular Arena will be "home court" for Panthers men's basketball through 2006-2007. The agreement brings to the Arena nine 2003-2004 season men's games, all home games in future seasons, and several women's team home games.
October 18, 2003	The Milwaukee Wave play their first home game in the U.S. Cellular Arena under the new agreement, beating the Baltimore Blast 7-5.
November 7-9, 2003	The Milwaukee Theatre Grand Opening Weekend features singer/pianist Michael Feinstein with the Milwaukee Symphony Pops on Friday, November 7, Dennis DeYoung with the Festival City Pops Orchestra and the Chicago Children's Choir perform on Saturday, November 8, and Daniel Rodriguez with the Festival City Symphony and the Heritage Chorale of Milwaukee on Sunday, November 9.
November 22, 2003	Comedian Bill Cosby performs The Milwaukee Theatre's first sold-out show.
November 22, 2003	The UW-M Panthers men play their first home season game in the U.S. Cellular Arena, beating Montana 95-83.
November 29, 2003	The Milwaukee Theatre hosts its first rock show, a near-sellout featuring A Perfect Circle.
December 12-28, 2003	The <i>Radio City Christmas Spectacular Starring The Rockettes</i> comes to The Milwaukee Theatre for a 32-show run attended by over 87,000 patrons, marking the venue's first full-scale theatrical event.
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February 2 & 8, 2004	Back-to-back instant sellouts feature Sting and Josh Groban.
February 10-15, 2004	<i>Urinetown: The Musical</i> is the first Broadway production in the Premier Season of Broadway at The Milwaukee Theatre.
March 11, 2004	The 2004-2005 season of Broadway at The Milwaukee Theatre is announced; shows include <i>Fosse</i> , <i>The King & I</i> , <i>Thoroughly Modern Millie</i> and <i>Peter Pan</i> .
May, 2004	Miller Brewing Company makes \$4.2 million, 12-year commitment to become a major sponsor of WCD facilities.

June 25-November 4, 2004	The 2004 election season is good business for WCD, with party conventions, rallies, fundraising banquets, poll-watcher training and other political events in all three buildings.
September 29-October 3, 2004	The Ringling Brothers, Barnum & Bailey Circus returns to the U.S. Cellular Arena for the first time in decades, with its new "Hometown Edition."
December 4, 2004	Jerry Seinfeld sells out two back-to-back, 4,100-seat shows at The Milwaukee Theatre.
March 8, 2005	The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Panthers Men's Basketball Team wins the 2005 Horizon League Championship, defeating the Detroit Titans 59-38 in the U.S. Cellular Arena. The Panthers later advance in the NCAA playoffs as far as the "Sweet Sixteen" round.
April 24, 2005	The Milwaukee Wave win the MISL regular-season championship, defeating the Baltimore Blast 11-8 in the U.S. Cellular Arena to secure a 24-15 season record.
May 21, 2005	In the first of two 2005 MISL Championship games, the Milwaukee Wave beat the Cleveland Force 10-9 in the U.S. Cellular Arena on May 14. The Wave beat the Force again a week later in St. Louis, also 10-9, to secure the Championship on May 21.
July 9-14, 2005	The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) 96th Annual Convention comes to the Midwest Airlines Center, also bringing Milwaukee Theatre performances by comic Chris Tucker and singer Gladys Knight.
November 10-13, 2005	Tyler Perry's <i>Madea Goes to Jail</i> is a blockbuster, with six Milwaukee Theatre performances all but sold out.
December 4, 2005	The Boston Pops Esplanade Orchestra comes to The Milwaukee Theatre for their first Wisconsin performance in years and their first such holiday show in decades.
December 15, 2005	Ice is laid on the floor of The Milwaukee Theatre's stage for two performances of <i>Broadway on Ice</i> , starring Olympic skater Dorothy Hamill & Broadway actor/singer Davis Gaines.
February 2, 2006	WCD & Feld Entertainment announce 5-year agreement to continue bringing Disney on Ice to the U.S. Cellular Arena through 2010.
February 11, 2006	The U.S. Cellular Arena hosts the Major Indoor Soccer League 2006 All-Star game, pitting the top players of the MISL against the Mexican Federation's National Futbol Rapido team.
February 18, 2006	<i>A Prairie Home Companion starring Garrison Keillor</i> sells out The Milwaukee Theatre, and is the first live national broadcast from the renovated facility.
February 25, 2006	Colombian rocker Juanes performs a nearly sold-out show at the Milwaukee Theatre ó the first largely Spanish-language event in the Theatre.

March 4-7, 2006	The U.S. Cellular Arena again hosts the Horizon League Championship Tournament, and the UW-M Panthers again take the title, ultimately proceeding as far as the second round of the NCAA tournament.
April 29, 2006	Andre Rieu and his Johann Strauss Orchestra perform their first-ever Wisconsin concert at The Milwaukee Theatre. Most of the house is filled by a Milwaukee Public Television membership drive, and the show is a rapid sellout.
May 19-21, 2006	The National Rifle Association 2006 Annual Meeting & Exhibits brings some 50,000 people to the Midwest Airlines Center and U.S. Cellular Arena.
November 3, 2006	Former President Bill Clinton headlines an election rally for incumbent Governor Jim Doyle (D) in The Milwaukee Theatre.
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February 24-March 4, 2007	The Automobile Dealers Association of Mega Milwaukee celebrates the 100th anniversary of the Auto Show – almost all of which, since 1910, were held in WCD facilities.
April 27, 2007	The Marcus Center for the Performing Arts and Broadway Across America announce that the long-awaited Milwaukee premier of Disney's <i>THE LION KING</i> will occur in February, 2008 ó at The Milwaukee Theatre.
June 11, 2007	WCD and U.S. Cellular Corp. renew U.S. Cellular Arena title sponsorship until 2014.
July 19, 2007	The new Milwaukee Bonecrushers indoor football team (CIFL) announces that their inaugural season will launch in the spring of 2008, with the U.S. Cellular Arena as home field.
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February 3-March 2, 2008	Disney's <i>THE LION KING</i> runs in The Milwaukee Theatre for 33 performances, selling over 110,000 tickets, grossing over \$6 million, and breaking box office records for any entertainment event ever staged in Milwaukee.
February 15, 2008	Presidential candidate Senator Barack Obama (D-Illinois) leads a campaign rally in the Midwest Airlines Center exhibit hall.
February 16, 2008	Senators Hillary Clinton (D-New York) and Barack Obama (D-Illinois), competing Presidential primary candidates, both address the Democratic Party of Wisconsin Founders Day dinner in the Midwest Airlines Center ballroom.
March 21, 2008	The Milwaukee Bonecrushers play their first game, against the Chicago Slaughter, in the U.S. Cellular Arena, launching their 2008 season.
September 28, 2008	Robin Williams performs sold-out show at The Milwaukee Theatre.
November 13-18, 2008	The Radio City Christmas Spectacular returns, this time to the U.S. Cellular Arena, with their first-ever arena tour.
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May 9, 2009	James Taylor & His Band perform sold-out concert at The Milwaukee Theatre.
September 21, 2009	The 100th Anniversary of the dedication of the Milwaukee Auditorium.
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February 24, 2010	Wisconsin Center District Board of Directors approves increasing county-wide food & beverage sales tax increases from 0.25% to 0.5%, to cover capital revenue shortfall stemming from 2007-2009 recession. Increase takes effect July 1, 2010.
April 9, 2010	U.S. Cellular Arena 60th Anniversary.
April 13, 2010	Midwest Airlines and Frontier Airlines combine under Frontier Airlines brand; convention center is officially renamed “Frontier Airlines Center.”
May 8, 2010	Roller derby returns to the Arena after some 35 years, when the Brewcity Bruisers league of the Women’s Flat Track Derby Association (WFTDA) brings their 2010 Championship Bout to the venue.
June 22, 2010	Acting on a request by the Greater Milwaukee Hotel-Motel Association, the Wisconsin Center District Board of Directors votes to increase the county-wide sales tax on hotel rooms from 7% to 7.5%, to provide increased funding for VISIT Milwaukee, effective January 1, 2011.
July 5, 2010	Increase in sales tax on prepared food & beverage sold in Milwaukee County takes effect, changing tax from 0.25% to 0.5%.
July 11-18, 2010	National Model Railroad Association convention and National Train Show are held at the Frontier Airlines Center, 75 years after the organization’s founding in Milwaukee.
August 16, 2010	President Barack Obama (D) addresses fundraising dinner for gubernatorial candidate Tom Barrett (D) in the U.S. Cellular Arena.
August 27-September 2, 2010	The American Legion returns to Milwaukee for the group’s 2010 National Convention in the Frontier Airlines Center.
October 22, 2010	Milwaukee Auditorium/Milwaukee Theatre 101st birthday celebration held in conjunction with <i>Neil Berg’s 100 Years of Broadway</i> concert. Festivities include cake, gifts and massive group photo in Theatre Rotunda.
January 1, 2011	Hotel room tax in Milwaukee County increases from 7% to 7.5%, as requested by the Greater Milwaukee Hotel-Motel Association. Additional revenues increase VISIT Milwaukee funding.
January 8, 2011	The Brewcity Bruisers women’s flat track roller derby league launches its first full season of five bouts in the U.S. Cellular Arena.
April 29-May 1, 2011	The õjukebox musicalö <i>Rock of Ages</i> comes to the Milwaukee Theatre, starring former <i>American Idol</i> Constantine Maroulis in the lead role he performed on Broadway.
May 7, 2011	Singer/songwriter James Taylor performs a private concert at the Milwaukee Theatre.
August 14, 2011	Singer Janet Jackson brings her Janet Jackson: Number Ones, Up Close & Personal Tour to the Milwaukee Theatre.

April 20, 2012	Comedian Daniel Tosh performs at the Milwaukee Theatre after a near-instant sellout.
June 2-3, 2012	The Brewcity Bruisers bring the Midwest BrewHaHa Roller Derby Tournament to the U.S. Cellular Arena for the first time; it becomes an annual event.
August 4, 2012	Celebrated singer/songwriter Barry Manilow performs a sold-out show at the Milwaukee Theatre
September 19, 2012	Delta Airlines acquires naming rights to former Frontier Airlines Center, now named öDelta Center.ö
September 22, 2012	President Barack Obama (D) appears at a Presidential campaign rally at the Milwaukee Theatre.
October 14, 2012	A reenactment marks the 100 th anniversary of the 1912 assassination attempt on Presidential candidate Theodore Roosevelt.
December 15, 2012	Comedian Kevin Hart performs a sold-out show at the Milwaukee Theatre.
January 4, 2013	<i>Economic Impact Analysis</i> is released, showing that Wisconsin Center District facilities and operations contribute almost half a billion dollars annually to the Milwaukee area economy, supporting nearly 4,000 full-time jobs.
March 15, 2013	Renowned singer/songwriter Leonard Cohen brings his Old Ideas World Tour to the Milwaukee Theatre for his first appearance in Milwaukee in 38 years.
May 28, 2013	Comic Larry the Cable Guy performs a private show at the Milwaukee Theatre
July 1, 2013	Citing changes to its marketing strategy, Delta Airlines elects not to renew title sponsorship of convention center; name reverts to generic öWisconsin Center.ö
July 15, 2013	UWM Panthers menø basketball team announces return to U.S. Cellular Arena for 2013-14 and four future seasons after one-year absence
October 12, 2013	Famed singer/songwriter Rod Stewart performs a private concert at the Milwaukee Theatre.
November 8-10, 2013	Hosted by the Brew City Bruisers, the 2013 Womenø Flat Track Derby Association Championships come to the U.S. Cellular Arena.
March 6, 2014	WCD funds \$3 million in upgrades to the U.S. Cellular Arena over three years, including a new scoreboard and seats.
April 30, 2014	Richard A. Geyer, WCD President & CEO since 1996, officially retires. Human Resources Director Russell Staerkel becomes President & CEO.
May 14, 2014	WCD releases <i>Wisconsin Center Expansion Market & Feasibility Study</i> , assessing market needs, financial feasibility and other factors impacting potential expansion of convention center. Study recommends adding 60,000 square feet of exhibit space, a 12,000 square-foot ballroom and 10,000 feet of meeting space, and proposes a comprehensive solution to growing community debate about building a new basketball arena to replace the BMO Harris Bank Bradley Center.

June 20, 2014	Australian rockers Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds make a rare Milwaukee tour stop at the Milwaukee Theatre.
June 26, 2014	U.S. Cellular Arena is renamed “UW-Milwaukee Panther Arena” as part of 10-year agreement covering title sponsorship, facility improvements, men’s basketball games and other University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee events.
August 10, 2014	Milwaukee’s new bike-sharing service, Bublr Bikes, launches operations, with one of its öcharterö stations located outside the Wisconsin Center.
October 17, 2014	New \$1.1 million scoreboard in the UW-Milwaukee Panther Arena is unveiled. Illuminated by over 2 million LEDs, it is the only seamless, center-hung scoreboard in the Midwest, and one of only a handful in the United States.
Nov. 11-Dec. 7, 2014	32-show run of Disney’s <i>The Lion King</i> sets record for the highest-grossing week in Milwaukee theatrical history, with a gross of \$1,687,572 at the Milwaukee Theatre for the week ending November 30, surpassing the previous record of \$1.6 million set by <i>The Lion King</i> in the week ending March 2, 2008. Overall, more than 94,000 patrons attend, generating over \$6 million in box office revenue and some \$19 million in local economic activity.
March 13, 2015	Contemporary Christian artist Chris Tomlin and guests Tenth Avenue North and Rend Collective perform a sold-out show at the UW-Milwaukee Panther Arena.
July 15, 2015	The Wisconsin State Senate approves a complex and controversial \$400 million financing package for the proposed new Milwaukee Bucks basketball arena. Among other details, the plan draws funding from State, County, City and Wisconsin Center District revenues, restructures the WCD Board of Directors, and provides for future WCD oversight of the new Arena, the BMO Harris Bradley Center, and the Marcus Center for Performing Arts.
August 12, 2015	Governor Scott Walker (R) signs the Milwaukee Bucks arena legislation.
October 23-25, 2015	Skate America 2015, the first of six stops on the International Skating Union (ISU) Grand Prix of Figure Skating Series, comes to the UW-Milwaukee Panther Arena. The competition marks the first time that Milwaukee has hosted a major international figure skating event
October 24, 2015	Willie Nelson and Merle Haggard perform a sold-out show at the Milwaukee Theatre ó one of Haggard’s last live performances before succumbing to illness at 79 on April 6, 2016.
October 30, 2015	Paranormal Investigators of Milwaukee detect unexplained phenomena they attribute to ghosts long rumored to inhabit the Milwaukee Theatre.
November 10, 2015	Fox Business News presents a debate in the Milwaukee Theatre between Republican Party 2016 Presidential primary candidates. The event also utilizes the UW-Milwaukee Panther Arena, and draws positive national media attention to both facilities.

- January 9-10, 2016 Sesame Street Live returns to the Milwaukee Auditorium/Milwaukee Theatre for the first time since 1996, with òMake a New Friend.ö
- January 22, 2016** **New 5-year, \$1.85 million advertising and title sponsorship agreement, awarding Milwaukee Theatre naming rights to international brewer MillerCoors, LLC, is announced. No name is announced.**
- February 19, 2016 Mama Triedø Flat-Out Friday brings indoor, flat-track motorcycle racing in several classes to the UW-Milwaukee Panther Arena. Dr. Pepper syrup is applied to the floor to provide traction.
- March 5, 2016 A Prairie Home Companion with Garrison Keillor returns to the Milwaukee Theatre, for Keillorø last appearance at the venue as host of the show. As in the past, it sells out.
- March 16, 2016 The Wisconsin Center District and the Milwaukee Admirals AHL hockey team announce that, beginning in the fall, the Admirals will return to the UW-Milwaukee Panther Arena for the first time since the end of the 1987-88. Terms of the new tenancy include \$6.3 million in additional facility improvements, including a new kitchen, concession stands and locker rooms.
- March 17-20, 2016 Feld Entertainment brings *Marvel Universe Live*, an enormous, three-dimensional action spectacle, to the UW-Milwaukee Panther Arena, making extensive use of the Arenaø impressive overhead rigging capacity.
- April 3, 2016 Presidential candidates Bernie Sanders (D) and Donald Trump (R) hold rallies in, respectively, the Wisconsin Center and the Milwaukee Theatre.
- April 9, 2016 Contemporary Christian artist Toby Mac brings the Hits Deep Tour, with Britt Nicole, Colton Dixon, Building 429, Capital Kings, Finding Favour and Hollyn, to the UW-Milwaukee Panther Arena, for a sold-out show.
- April 29, 2016 Country artist Alan Jackson performs at the UW-Milwaukee Panther Arena.
- April 30, 2016 In a ceremony at the UW-Milwaukee Panther Arena, Green Bay Packers great Donald Driver and University of Wisconsin Badgers basketball coach Bo Ryan become the first new inductees into the Wisconsin Athletic Hall of Fame after a 7-year hiatus.
- June 20, 2016** **UW-Milwaukee Panther Arena closes for \$6.2 million Arena Improvement Project, which includes new Milwaukee Admirals locker rooms, new LED event lighting, revamped concession stands, new seating risers, and upgrades to ice-making, restrooms and other systems.**
- October 6, 2016 Seminal shock-rocker Alice Cooper rocks the Milwaukee Theatre
- October 7-9, 2016 Lego© Kids Fest returns to the Wisconsin Center, again drawing thousands of families to downtown.
- October 7, 2016 Mama Triedø Flat-Out Friday Indoor Flat-Track Motorcycle Racing is the first event in the renovated UW-Milwaukee Panther Arena.

October 8, 2016	Thrash-metal innovators Megadeth perform the first concert in the renovated UW-Milwaukee Panther Arena, with guests Amon Amarth, Suicidal Tendencies, Metal Church and Butcher Babies.
October 29, 2016	The Milwaukee Admirals play their first home game after returning to the UW-Milwaukee Panther Arena; the Iowa Wild prevail, 3-2.
November 5, 2016	Pioneering progressive rock artists The Moody Blues perform at the Milwaukee Theatre.
March 9, 2017	Legendary punk rocker Patti Smith and Her Band perform their 1975 debut album, <i>Horses</i> , at the Milwaukee Theatre, in their first Milwaukee show in 38 years.
March 17, 2017	WCD releases comprehensive <i>Wisconsin Center District Operations Review</i> , conducted by Barrett Sports Group and Crossroads Consulting. Study assesses organizational strengths and weaknesses in marketing, sales, operations, and accounting, and recommends expanding convention facilities and increasing staffing in most areas.
April 25, 2017	New signage officially marks the Milwaukee Theatre’s name change to “Miller High Life Theatre” under sponsorship agreement with MillerCoors LLC.
April 26, 2017	The WCD Board of Directors forms a Search Committee for a new President & CEO to lead the operation and administration of WCD facilities.
June 17, 2017	The inaugural “Backstage at the Miller High Life Theatre” concert in Plankinton Hall features country duo Love & Theft and local band Rebel Grace.
June 18, 2017	Mexican rock stars Gloria Trevi and Alejandra Guzmán perform together at the Miller High Life Theatre, paving the way for more entertainment offerings to the under-served Latino community.
September 3, 2017	The inaugural Fiesta de la Raza brings Spanish-language music acts Larry Hernandez, Gente de Zona, Conjunto Primavera, Montez de Durango, and Chiquis Rivera to the UWM-Milwaukee Panther Arena.
October 26, 2017	Celebrating their 50 th Anniversary, the Milwaukee Bucks NBA basketball team competes against the Boston Celtics in the UW-Milwaukee Panther Arena, in a nostalgic “Return To MECCA” game. Unfortunately, the Celtics prevail on the court, 96-89.
October 27-28, 2017	The Wisconsin Center successfully hosts the WCD campus’s first-ever electronic dance music (EDM) party. Freaky Deaky: The Midwest Halloween Takeover is held simultaneously in four cities; Milwaukee acts include Griz, Flatbush Zombies, Boogie T, Bassnectar, Mija, Bleep Bloop, and Artifakts.
December 21, 2017	The Wisconsin Center District (WCD) Board of Directors, names Marty Brooks as WCD’s new President & CEO, citing his wealth of experience in the events industry. Most recently, Brooks served as the senior vice president and general manager of the America’s Center Complex in St. Louis, since December 2012.

January 22, 2018	Marty Brooks assumes duties as the District's new CEO.
April 13-15, 2018	The Midwest Gaming Classic, a celebration of classic pinball and arcade games, and the largest event of its kind in the Midwest, expands and moves to the Wisconsin Center for the first time, after being presented in hotels and other venues since its founding in 2001.
April 25, 2018	Vice President Mike Pence (R) appears at a political rally in the Wisconsin Center to promote upper-income and corporate tax cuts enacted into law in 2017.
May 5, 2018	Stars on Ice comes to the UW-M Panther Arena, featuring skaters from the 2018 U.S. Olympics team including Nathan Chen, Maia & Alex Shibutani, Adam Rippon, Bradie Tennell, and Mirai Nagasu, along with Karen Chen, Madison Hubbell, Zach Donohue, and 2014 Olympic Medalists Meryl Davis & Charlie White, Ashley Wagner, and Jason Brown.
June 15, 2018	The Wisconsin Center District Board takes a major step toward expanding and modernizing the Wisconsin Center, presenting a commissioned benchmarking report, recommendations, and conceptual renderings for expansion northward to Kilbourn Avenue.
August 24, 2018	The Miller High Life Theatre hosts A Couch Conversation with DJ Kool Herc, moderated by author Michael Arceneaux, as a highlight of the inaugural Hip-Hop Week Milwaukee, a city-wide celebration of hip-hop music and culture.
December 31, 2018	The Wisconsin Center hosts a huge New Year's Eve EDM party, Radiance NYE, featuring EXCISION, ZEDS DEAD, Bear Grillz, Riot Ten, Whipped Cream, and Spock.
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March 14, 2019	Former First Lady Michelle Obama brings her <i>Becoming</i> book tour to the Miller High Life Theatre for a nearly-instant sellout. The event is moderated by late-night TV host and comedian Conan O'Brien.
March 15, 2019	Pop diva Mariah Carey performs her first-ever Wisconsin concert at the Miller High Life Theatre.
April 1, 2019	Former Mott The Hoople members Ian Hunter, Ariel Bender and Morgan Fisher launch a 14-city tour at the Miller High Life Theatre, featuring the glam-rock band's legendary 1974 lineup.
April 15, 2019	The Wisconsin Center District issues a Request for Qualifications for financial services related to crafting a financing plan to expand and complete the Wisconsin Center.