



## **Baird Center announces charitable partners for Grand Opening Gala**

*United Way and UPAF to benefit from proceeds of May 16, 2024 celebration*

**MILWAUKEE- (October 16, 2023)** – The \$456 million dollar Baird Center expansion will be opening in magnificent fashion with a not-to-be-missed gala celebration on May 16, 2024. Held in the new, spectacular rooftop Baird Ballroom with its breathtaking views of the Milwaukee skyline, the Grand Opening Gala will be a night to remember for attendees.

In fitting with the goal of the expanded Baird Center being an economic driver for downtown Milwaukee that benefits the entire community, the Baird Center has announced a majority of the revenue from ticket sales will be donated to United Way of Greater Milwaukee & Waukesha County and the United Performing Arts Fund (UPAF).

“The United Way and UPAF are two charitable organizations with deep roots and a long history of working for the betterment of Milwaukee and its people,” said Marty Brooks, president and CEO of the Wisconsin Center District. “We couldn’t be more proud to work with them as the Gala’s charitable partners and know that the expanded Baird Center will start making a positive impact on our community from day one.”

The expanded Baird Center is projected to bring in 100,000 new out-of-state visitors to Milwaukee annually and support 2,300 full-time equivalent jobs throughout the state of Wisconsin.

“The Wisconsin Center District and all of its partners have created a beautiful state-of-the-art space that will entice tens of thousands of people every year to stay in our hotels, eat in our restaurants, and visit our attractions,” stated Amy Lindner, president and CEO of United Way of Greater Milwaukee & Waukesha County. “United Way is so proud and so grateful to be part of celebrating this new catalyst for our community. The Baird Center and its grand opening celebrations showcase United Way’s core belief that we accomplish more together.”

The Grand Opening Gala will feature live performances, unique entertainment and fine dining. The party will also be one of the community's first opportunities to see the curated art collection, much of which is being created by local artists, displayed throughout the Baird Center. The collection will add another dimension to the already vibrant public and private art scene in downtown Milwaukee.

“The opening of the Baird Center represents a significant milestone in the growth of Milwaukee, further positioning our city as a premier destination for all and contributing greatly to the economic vitality of our region,” said Patrick Rath, UPAF president and CEO. “I am confident that our

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performing arts sector will benefit in exceptional ways from the people and energy the Baird Center will bring to our downtown area going forward. We at the United Performing Arts Fund are grateful to Baird and the Wisconsin Center District for their great dedication to the performing arts in Milwaukee and are honored to be a part of the Baird Center Grand Opening festivities.”

Earlier this month, the [production team for the Grand Opening Gala was announced](#), including notable event planner David Caruso as the experience director, Mike Underwood as logistics manager, Samantha Mitchell of Samantha Starr Events as event manager, Oscar Sanchez of Ambrosia Events as event manager, and Connie Bolle of Levy Restaurants as food and beverage liaison.

Details and availability for table sales will open mid-November.

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### **Baird Center**

The [Baird Center](#), located in the heart of downtown Milwaukee, is the hub of convention business in Wisconsin and is ideal for trade and consumer shows, conventions, banquets, business meetings and celebrations. The current convention center offers 188,695 square feet of contiguous exposition space and 37,500 square feet of ballroom space, accommodating up to 1,000 vendors and 10,000 guests while also offering more intimate spaces for groups as small as ten.

The convention center is undergoing a \$456 million expansion to double its size, allowing the convention center to host multiple events simultaneously and offer flexible space arrangements to meet various clients’ needs. The expansion will be completed in Q1 2024. For more information about the expansion, visit [www.BuildingMore.com](http://www.BuildingMore.com). The Baird Center is owned and operated by the Wisconsin Center District and is experience-obsessed and dedicated to providing unforgettable, buzzworthy moments for all clients and guests. For more information and to book an event, visit [www.bairdcenter.com](http://www.bairdcenter.com).

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