



### Chamber Monitors New Legislative Session

Colorado lawmakers return to the State Capitol January 8 and launch the 2014 Legislative Session. Last year's session, with contentious debate on guns, civil unions and marijuana was one of the most controversial sessions in state history.

Glendale Chamber COO Jeff Allen says, "While no one expects the 2014 session to be as intense as last year, businesses can't afford to ignore what's going on at the State Capitol." And he says, "The Chamber can be your eyes and ears at the Colorado Legislature. We'll monitor legislative proposals and keep you informed about bills that could impact your business and your family."

#### What To Look For

The economy improved last year and that means Colorado lawmakers have a little more money to work with. But, political observers note, as always, there are bound to be budget battles.

Allen says you can also expect to see proposals on labor and employment policies, oil and gas regulations and the environment. He says, "The Chamber will keep you up to date on any proposed laws and help sort out what kind of impact they might have." He adds, "You can count on us to lobby on behalf of Colorado businesses and organizations."

Allen predicts, "Lawmakers on both sides of the aisle will have an eye on the upcoming 2014 election." You can look for Republicans and Democrats to introduce bills and try to shape debate in a way that puts them in the best position with voters.

Some political observers predict Republicans will introduce legislation designed to repeal last session's controversial gun laws. It's doubtful they would have enough votes to pass anything through both the Senate and House, but political insiders say they hope to keep the issue alive because they feel it could be a boost for them in the election.

Allen says, "It's the Chamber's mission to continue to build a vibrant business climate in and around Glendale, and we'll be keeping a close watch on developments at the State Capitol."



Chamber COO Jeff Allen

## RugbyTown® Rising

RugbyTown Rising is an ongoing series dedicated to sharing the past, present and future story of the nation's only municipally-owned rugby team and their home sports complex.

# The Crown Jewel Of American Rugby

by Eiden Hughes

Writer for and on behalf of the City of Glendale

The dream behind connecting the diverse Glendale community into rugby was proving to be a success by 2009. More and more fans were attending matches within the stadium and interest in bringing high-level rugby events to the one-of-a-kind complex was beginning to grow.

#### Finishing Touches

With the stadium, event center and com-

munity sport center now complete, the next phase of the project was ready for implementation. General contractor *Turner Construction* was in the process of demolishing several deteriorated apartment buildings and clearing space for the practice pitch. The turf practice field would become part of *Infinity Park* complex, adding an eight-acre park including the pitch, a pavilion, picnic areas, walking paths, public lawns and a field house.



Glendale City Council and Arapahoe County Officials cut the ribbon to open the new park expansion to complete the Infinity Park complex.

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Renovation was also beginning in the fire house building to convert office space into the *High Altitude Training Center* (HATC), a recovery area and training room for the Raptors and visiting teams. Once completed, athletes would have state-of-the-art training and recovery facilities to match their impressive municipally-owned complex.

“Our focus was to keep the design and build process highly collaborative between the city, the general contractor (Turner Construction) and the design team (*Ohlson Lavoie Collaborative and Design Studios West*),” Deputy City Manager and Director of Finance for the City of Glendale Linda Cassaday said. “Taking this approach allowed us to streamline the design and build process, eliminate the need for multiple design submissions, and ultimately apply funds to the construction of the complex more efficiently.”

The turf field opened for practices and matches late spring of 2009 and the surrounding park area was completed in June 2010. A close follower to the new park, the HATC and recovery areas were open for use in March 2011. Upon the opening of the HATC and recovery area, Mike Dunafon and his team could congratulate everyone involved on a job well done — the *Infinity Park* complex was now complete.

**National, International Interest**

With the completion of the *Infinity Park* complex and the growing success of the *Raptors RFC*, Glendale garnered national and international attention for its state-of-the-art training and playing facilities. The city played host to the *Churchill Cup*, and international tournament, in 2009 and 2010, the *National Collegiate All Star Championships* in 2009 and 2010, the *CanAms* in 2009, several *USA Eagles* test matches and *USA National Club Championships*.

*Infinity Park* is preparing to host its third *National Small College Rugby Organization* (NSCRO) Championship finals. It will also host the Third Annual *Serevi RugbyTown 7s* tournament in conjunction with the Third Annual *Armed Forces Tournament* in 2014.

Having so many national and international rugby events under its belt easily allowed Glendale to be rebranded as *RugbyTown USA* in 2010. The wide scope of interest also served to draw attention to the extraordinary effort needed to redevelop the area into a green space, and maintain the stadium pitch under harsh environmental conditions.

The oft unsung heroes in that effort are the members of *Infinity Park's* turf management crew. The crew work tirelessly to rejuvenate the pitch after each match — not to mention during the brutal Colorado seasons. Their dedication and expertise has earned them the *Sports Turf Managers Association* (STMA) National Winner for *Field of the Year* in the Sporting Grounds category in 2009, 2011, 2012 and 2013. Additionally, they earned *Field of the Year Overall* from the Colorado Sports Turf Managers Association.

**Raptors Evolution**

Throughout the finishing phases of construction and opening of the HATC, the Raptors players continue to keep their sights set on winning a national championship. Both men's and women's sides had earned reputations for being highly competitive and skilled on the pitch — they had only needed to prove that they were the best, not just one of the best.

The DI men's team was able to reach that goal in the spring of 2011, with a championship win over *Olympic Club* in the final. They continued their championship momentum into 2012, where they were the favorites to win over powerhouse rivals *Belmont Shore* in the final. Unfortunately for Glendale, Belmont proved to have the edge on the day, and the Raptors would finish the year in second place.

A championship title continued to elude the women's team. Each year, Glendale would be a fixture in the women's playoffs, but each year the team would fall just short of the final four.

2011 found the women in the DI finals marked up against *Chicago North Shore*, a team they had defeated earlier in the season. In spite of a heartbreaking loss, the ladies were still allowed to challenge the bottom-seeded WPL team for a chance to



A major part of the High Altitude Training Center includes power and strength training with elite-level equipment.

advance into the higher-level league.

The Raptors faced off against WPL's eighth-seeded *Minnesota Valkyries* on a rainy Saturday in Austin, Texas. While the Valks started off strong — eager to remain in the WPL — the Raptors settled into their pattern of play and dominated over the remaining 80 minutes of play. At the final whistle the Raptors knocked Minnesota

out of the WPL with an irrefutable 53-5 victory.

While elevation into the top women's league in the country was a huge step forward for the Glendale women, it was not the national championship they were seeking. The ladies highest ranking in the WPL was a second place finish in 2012. They continue to add top-talent names to their

roster each season and will be back in the hunt in 2014 for the championship.

For 2014 the men have changed gears. They will be dropping their DI program to participate in the newly formed *Pacific Rugby Premiership* (PRP). The newly formed league will provide a platform to elite-level play among the top teams in the western United States. The Raptors will play their inaugural home PRP match on Saturday, March 1, 2014, in the *Infinity Park Stadium*. Glendale will also retain their Division II men's team and all youth programs.

The successful rebuild and rebranding of the City of Glendale into a rugby-oriented mecca has been the result of countless hours of collaboration between a city government, business and the community.

“Success of our efforts has been dependent on never losing sight of our desire to inject new life and opportunity within the City of Glendale through rebranding,” Mayor Dunafon said. “Rugby has been the vehicle to accomplish that goal and we look forward to the continued evolution of the Raptors organization and the surrounding community.”

The creation of the complex has done much more than bring rugby into the spotlight. It provides the community with a safe, family-friendly location to gather with friends, whether it be for the purpose of cheering on their favorite rugby team, personal fitness, a wedding or birthday, or just a quiet picnic in the park.

We'll see you in RugbyTown USA!