

New Indian Wells chief unveils "aggressive" expansion plans for tennis event

Matt Cutler

Raymond Moore, the new chief executive of the BNP Paribas Open, has unveiled proposals to build a new stadium as part of a bold new expansion strategy for the top tennis event, which takes place every year in Indian Wells, California.



Moore has succeeded Charlie Pasarell at the helm of the US event, which is a Masters 1,000 tournament on the men's ATP World Tour and a Premier Mandatory competition on the Women's Tennis Association (WTA) Tour. In addition to constructing a new 8,000-seat stadium by 2014, Moore wants to oversee the construction of new parking, entrance and ticketing facilities with a view to attracting 500,000 spectators through the gate on an annual basis within five years.

The tournament attracted a record 370,406 fans in March, surpassing the 2011 benchmark of 350,086. It boasts the fifth highest attendance of any tennis tournament in the world, behind the four Grand Slams of Wimbledon, the French Open, Australian Open and US Open. The new stadium would be developed on the north end of the existing 16,100-seat main stadium, and Moore told USA Today that two different designs had been put forward. The tournament's owner, Larry Ellison, will have a crucial say in the project before final plans are then sent to the city of Indian Wells for approval.

"We'll be creating jobs," Moore said. "If we can get it done by 2014, we'll be very happy and very excited. We will need a lot of cooperation from the city and the agencies that issue permits and approvals. We're going through that whole process as we speak." Moore added: "It's an aggressive timeline and it's an aggressive program, but working for Mr. Ellison, he doesn't know anything else. It's very exciting and very energising."

The Indian Wells Tennis Garden, one of the largest tennis venues in the world, was completed in 1999 at a cost of US\$77 million, but the likely cost of the new development has not been disclosed. "It's not cheap, and it's very ambitious," Moore said. "We haven't finalised our plans yet or the cost," he added. "We're right in the process of doing this. By the end of the month, we should have a handle on both of those things, and then it will depend on Mr. Ellison and if he wants to go forward or not." In March, Roger Federer won the 2012 BNP Paribas Open men's tournament, while Victoria Azarenka claimed victory in the women's competition.

Fonte: SportBusiness International. Disponível em:

<<http://www.sportbusiness.com/news/186422/new-indian-wells-chief-unveils-aggressive-expansion-plans-for-tennis-event>>. Acesso em: 04 Oct. 2012.