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The 196,000 square foot addition to the Exposition Hall will attract additional events to bring increased national prominence to Wisconsin.

MADISON – Governor Tony Evers, joined by Dane County Executive Joe Parisi, Dane County Board Chair Sharon Corrigan, and Urban League of Greater Madison President Ruben Anthony, announced Wednesday that the 2019-2021 Capital Budget will include a $30 million investment to help fund the expansion of the Alliant Energy Center to the Exposition Hall, a project that will expand the capacity of existing events and attract additional events that will bring increased national prominence to Wisconsin.

The funding will come through a non-state grant program that provides state bonding support for non-profit or local government projects that have a statewide public purpose. Typically, the grantee provides at least a 50% match.

The current facility does not offer the spaces necessary to accommodate today's meetings and events. This project will convert the Exhibition Hall from being a regional exposition center to a full-service convention center for all of Wisconsin and the upper Midwest.

"The expansion of the Alliant Energy Center will catalyze hundreds of millions of dollars in private development generating $1.7 million in new property taxes and boost our local economies throughout the state," Gov. Evers said. "I'm excited to see this project move forward and I know it will add value to our entire state."

"Thanks in part to past support from the state, Dane County's Alliant Energy Center is now the premier venue in the country for agricultural shows. Expanding the ability of these grounds to host national and even international events is exactly what Wisconsin's farm economy needs right now to preserve jobs and our agricultural heritage," said Dane County Executive Joe Parisi. "I applaud Gov. Evers for capitalizing on this opportunity, bolstering our reputation as a true destination for the state and region."

"This is a testament to Gov. Evers' focus on economic development and job growth. Investment in the Alliant Energy Center will drive a significant return for the state – estimated to be $670,000 in annual state income taxes, more than $1 million in annual state sales taxes and 644 net new jobs," said Dane County Board Chair Sharon Corrigan. "I appreciate the governor's commitment to collaborating with Dane County in an effort that benefits the whole state."

Additional capital budget projects will be announced later this week.

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About the Alliant Energy project:

State assistance was requested to fund a portion of a 196,000 square foot addition to the Exposition Hall in order to expand existing events and attract additional events that will bring increased national prominence to Wisconsin.

The total estimated cost is $77.4 million. The governor's budget includes $30 million for the project.

Other funding sources are expected to include naming rights, land lease/sale proceeds from on-campus private development, existing vendors, contributions from existing large users, new operating revenues, and the County.

This first expansion phase adds 50,000 SF of new exhibit space directly attached to the existing Exhibition Hall at its southern end. It is recommended that this space be divisible by moveable partitions into sub-spaces of 30,000 SF and 20,000 SF, with the possibility of further subdivision of one of these spaces. The flexibility of this solution includes the potential to use the 30,000 SF division as interim ballroom space prior to the construction of the dedicated Ballroom in Phase 2.

The new 50,000 SF of exhibit space will have the same floor utility grid as the existing facility, and its height, finishes and other amenities will be similar to the existing halls. The existing and new halls will flow into each other, with a moveable partition available to separate them when necessary. Several columns would be included along the east-west moveable partition lines to support a second level.

In addition to the new exhibit space built at the same level as the existing halls, this expansion phase will also include an extended public concourse on its eastern side, and service zone with storage, mechanical, electrical and plumbing spaces and loading docks on the western side. A new main entrance will anchor the extended concourse to interface with improved roadways to the south. The new concourse will also extend to the west in order to provide a second access to the parking lot, supplementing the existing connector to parking on the northern side of the existing Exhibition Hall.

This first phase of the project will also include the rebuilding of the all-weather pedestrian connector between the Phase 1 Convention Center expansion and the Clarion Hotel. This new connector will interface very well with a new vehicular arrivals/departure zone that is part of the Master Plan’s exterior space recommendations. The eastern edge 122 of the new concourse will be designed in anticipation of the eventual expansion of additional exhibition space in Phase 3.

On the upper level, built above the expanded Exhibition Hall, will be a 24,000 square foot sub-divisible meeting space/ballroom. This area can be configured into up to eight smaller meeting rooms; or when the moveable partitions are not deployed, there can be a single 24,000-square-foot, column-free meeting and/or dining space. New pre-function concourse space will connect via escalators, elevators, and stairways to the main level below.

A new main kitchen, service corridors and storage areas will be the primary back-of-house spaces at this level. This new kitchen will be connected to dedicated food and beverage loading docks at the main level by service elevators. The existing kitchen at the northern end of the center will remain in use to support other buildings on the Alliant Energy Center campus as well as its existing meeting rooms.