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Curling club launches major campaign to modernize aging building



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Victoria Curling Club president Paul Addison addresses press conference Friday. *TIMES COLONIST*

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Victoria Curling Club players have been successful, and include the last two B.C. men's championship rinks that represented the province at the Brier, and Corey Chester and Taylor Reese-Hansen, who aspire to the 2026 Milan-Cortina Winter Olympics in mixed doubles.

But they, along with more than 1,000 other members, play in a 72-year-old facility on Quadra Street that is seriously lacking in terms of its aging electrical, mechanical and HVAC systems.

"We are being held together by bailing wire and duct tape," said club president Paul Addison.

That has led to the club launching a five-year, \$5-million renovation project, announced Friday, to modernize its equipment and make the building more accessible.

It has been dubbed "Rebuild Our House."

The first \$60,000 has come from the pockets of club members, followed by a \$100,000 contribution from the Victoria Curling Legacy Foundation from its reserve fund accrued by hosting the 2005 and 2013 world men's championships at the adjacent Save-on-Foods Memorial Centre. On hand from the legacy foundation to present the cheque to the club was legendary Victoria sports builder Keith Dagg and niece Elaine Dagg-Jackson, who has coached Canada in curling at seven Winter Olympics.

The rest of the funding is to be raised through the corporate sector and by applying for provincial and federal grants.

"Curling is about bringing people together, but our aging building is getting in the way of that," said Addison.

"It is not as welcoming and accessible as it needs to be and our ice-making equipment and arena floor won't last much longer."

Addison added that a full architectural assessment of the building was done and showed: "The building itself is solid and safe but everything else is past its life expectancy."

The club said the funding needs include \$2 million to replace a cracked and sinking refrigerated floor, \$1.3 million for an energy-efficient compressor, chiller and cooling system, and \$1.2 million to upgrade ventilation and climate control throughout the building.

The latter especially would make the building more usable in the summer months, when it becomes stifling, and sits mostly empty except for Skafest and the massive Times Colonist Book Sale, which this year sold more than 100,000 books and raised \$265,000 for literacy programs on the Island.

Improved air flow would make the building a thriving hub in the summer, said Addison, envisioning more music concerts and events such as pickleball tournaments, trade shows, garden markets and weddings.

The City of Victoria owns the land and the club owns the building, which was built in 1952 and houses eight curling sheets, which have produced six rinks that have played in the Brier from 1958 through 2024.

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