
Thomas & Mack Center History

Facility History

The Thomas & Mack Center is a state-of-the-art sports and entertainment facility which was completed in 1983 at a cost of nearly \$30 million. The Thomas & Mack Center is one of the West's premier facilities located on the campus of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

The Thomas & Mack Center was named for two prominent Las Vegas bankers, E. Parry Thomas and Jerome Mack, who established the original land foundation and donated \$500,000 for feasibility studies and the initial architectural renderings. Originally designed as a sports venue to house the UNLV Runnin' Rebels, the focus and direction of the facility quickly changed in the preconstruction phases, allowing the facility to become multipurpose.

In 1983, the facility had two major goals: 100 event days per year and one million guests. Today, the Thomas & Mack Center hosts more than 250 diverse and distinct events annually and nearly 15 million guests have passed through its doors.

The facility has had championship boxing, the National Finals Rodeo, superstar concerts, major industrial shows, fun and exciting family productions, and a wide array of sporting events, from the 2007 NBA All-Star Game to Budweiser World Cup Horse Jumping.

Over the past 24 years a variety of superstars and super-groups have performed at the facility, including Elton John, U2, Mariah Carey, Dixie Chicks, Eric Clapton, Celine Dion, N'SYNC, Garth Brooks, Bruce Springsteen, Rod Stewart, Aerosmith, Phish, Linkin Park, Jay-Z, Eminem, Green Day, Stained, and Korn to name a few.

The facility has hosted Disney on Ice, Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus, the Harlem Globetrotters, The Wiggles, The Cheetah Girls, High School Musical Live, The American Idol Tour, The Dancing With The Stars Tour, WWE Raw and numerous others.

Home of the UNLV Runnin' Rebels the Thomas & Mack Center also brings a variety of other sporting events to Las Vegas. The facility hosts championship boxing matches, the National Finals Rodeo, NBA exhibition games, Mountain West Basketball Tournaments, Professional Bull Riders World Finals, Rolex FEI World Cup Championships, and the NBA Vegas Summer League.

The venue contributes significantly to the overall economic impact of Southern Nevada by providing jobs, generating sales tax and providing a facility for tourists and locals alike. Industry related trade publications regularly list the Thomas & Mack Center as one of the top venues in the country.

Fast Facts

The facility is named after two prominent Nevada bankers, E. Parry Thomas and Jerome Mack who donated the original funds for the feasibility and land studies.

- The Gala Grand Opening was held on December 16, 1983 and featured Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, and Diana Ross.
- Maximum seating capacity is 19,522 for boxing and 18,776 for basketball.
- Height from floor to ceiling is 104 feet.
- There are 4500 on-site parking spaces and 6500 additional on-campus parking spaces.
- The concourse is 42,000 square feet.
- The floor is 8,600 square feet (bleachers extended) and 20,000 square feet (bleachers retracted).
- The floor is evenly illuminated with 350 foot candles of metal Halide lighting.

- The Center is cooled by 1,175 tons of air conditioning.
- The Thomas & Mack Center has 30 VIP luxury suites.
- The Thomas & Mack Center is only 1/2 mile from McCarran International Airport and less than 5 minutes from the famous Las Vegas Strip.
- The largest attendance at an event was 20,321 at a basketball game featuring the UNLV Runnin' Rebels vs. Navy.

Milestones

- November 21, 1983 - **First event** - UNLV Runnin' Rebels vs. Victoria, Canada
- November 23, 1983 - **First NBA basketball game** - Utah Jazz vs. California Suns
- December 16, 1983 - **Grand opening** - "Christmas With Class" featuring Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin and Diana Ross
- December 18, 1983 - **First rock concert** – Loverboy
- December 30, 1983 - **First basketball sellout** - UNLV Runnin' Rebels vs. Georgetown
- March 1, 1984 - **First ice show** - Walt Disney's World On Ice
- March 30, 1984 - **USA Olympic volleyball team** competes in international competition at Thomas & Mack Center
- April 27, 1984 - **First tractor pull - Big Foot** comes to the Thomas & Mack Center
- April 29, 1984 - **First country western concert** - Waylon Jennings and Willie Nelson
- May 3, 1984 - **Sesame Street Live** makes first appearance at Thomas & Mack Center
- October 25, 1984 - **Muppet Babies** make first appearance at Thomas & Mack Center
- March 3, 1985 - **First classical concert** – Pavarotti
- April 5, 1985 - **Kareem Abdul-Jabbar** breaks the NBA all-time scoring record in a game against the Utah Jazz
- December 7, 1985 - **National Finals Rodeo** makes first appearance
- April 7, 1986 - **World Wrestling Federation** makes first appearance
- April 24, 1987 - **First Coors Grand Prix Challenge** in Thomas & Mack Center parking lots
- November 14, 1987 - **First comedian performs** at Thomas & Mack Center - Eddie Murphy
- May 18, 1988 - **First World Basketball League game** - Las Vegas Silver Streaks vs. Fresno Flames
- August 27, 1988 - **First U.S. Olympic basketball game** vs. NBA All-Stars
- October 19-22, 1989 - **First Broadway musical** - Andrew Lloyd Webber's CATS
- January 25, 1992 - **Largest attendance single performance concert** - 17,590 fans attended the Guns n' Roses concert, **Later broken** by U2 on November 18, 2001 when U2 sold 17,771 tickets
- **July 27, 1992 - \$7.5 million renovation and construction plans announced to enlarge concourse, add restrooms and concession stands, new directional signs, acoustical treatment, new interior design**
- September 12, 1992 - **Fastest sellout in boxing history** - Julio Cesar Chavez vs. Hector Camacho - 19,566 fans - \$4.5 million gross - sold out in less than 36 hours
- November 13, 1992 - **Highest grossing boxing event** - Riddick Bowe vs. Evander Holyfield - \$6 million/17,500 fans. **Later to be beat out** by Evander Holyfield vs. Lennox Lewis in 1999, with a gross of \$18,124,200
- August 16, 1993 - **Quickest concert sellout** - Garth Brooks/First of three shows sold out in 59 minutes
- December 17, 1993 - **Inaugural game of the International Hockey League** - Las Vegas Thunder vs. Atlanta Knights
- May 20, 1995 - **Inaugural game of the Arena Football League** - Las Vegas Sting vs. San Jose
- **July 25, 1997 - \$27 million approved by Nevada Legislature for UNLV facility improvements. (\$11.5 million for Thomas & Mack Center expansion/renovation and upgrades to include: roof repair, upgraded restrooms, padded seats, upgraded concession stands, reconfiguration of main entrances, ADA access, outdoor mall area and lighting)**
- **August, 13-16 1998 - Garth Brooks sells out (4) shows , 72,076, first (4 concerts sellout by one artist)**
- October 16, 1998 - partner with Caesars Palace to promote a **Celine Dion sell-out in the round for 17,469 fans.**
- October 26-28 1999 - **Professional Bull Riders, PBR** makes the Thomas & Mack Center their new home, and signs a (5) year deal.

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- **November 13, 1999 - Highest grossing single event in Nevada History. Evander Holyfield vs. Lennox Lewis fight grossed \$18,124,200.**
 - December 30, 1999 - **Highest grossing single concert.** Elton John and Tina Turner concert grossed \$3,054,000.
 - **January 2001 - National Finals Rodeo announces 10 year extension to keep rodeo in Las Vegas at the Thomas & Mack Center.**
 - July 1, 2002 - Thomas & Mack Center, begins a new day as its own ticketing entity, **UNLVtickets.**
 - January 2003 - Thomas & Mack Center agrees to a 3 year deal with the **Arena Football League, Las Vegas Gladiators.**
 - April 2003 – **Budweiser World Cup Horse Jumping and Dressage** takes place at the Thomas & Mack Center which represents the event's first appearance in the United States.
 - September 11, 2003 – Thomas & Mack Center celebrates its **20 th anniversary, hosting REM** in concert.
 - October 2003 – Los Angeles Lakers play Sacramento Kings in an NBA exhibition game that sells out the Thomas & Mack Center.
 - April 2004 – **Phish sells out all three days of performances** at the Thomas & Mack Center.
 - August 2004 – **Democratic Presidential candidate, John Kerry, and his running mate, John Edwards,** speak at the Thomas & Mack Center.
 - August 2004 – **President George W. Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney** speak at the Thomas & Mack Center.
 - September 2004 – The world's leading live music event, the **World Music Awards,** debuts at the Thomas & Mack Center and is **broadcast live on ABC worldwide to an audience of over 1 billion people in over 160 countries.**
 - August 8, 2006- **The USA Men's Basketball Senior National Team** competes at the Thomas & Mack Center for the first time, against Puerto Rico.
 - October 21, 2006- **PRIDE Fighting Championships debuts in America** at the Thomas & Mack Center.
 - February, 16-18, 2007- The **2007 NBA All-Star Game** takes place for the first time in Las Vegas at the Thomas & Mack Center.