

Delaware North Opens Retail Store for the Chicago White Sox

CHICAGO (Jan. 11, 2012) – Delaware North Companies, a global hospitality, food service and retail management company, has developed and begun operating a spacious and striking new retail store adjacent to U.S. Cellular Field for the Chicago White Sox. Delaware North's Sportservice division operates retail services and food concessions for the White Sox at U.S. Cellular Field.

The [Chicago Sports Depot](#) is a one-stop shopping destination for fans of Chicago's professional and regional college teams. The store carries White Sox, Bulls, Bears, Blackhawks and Cubs merchandise, as well as merchandise for Illinois, Northwestern, Notre Dame and several other colleges. The store is one of the largest of its kind at any professional sports stadium.

"The goal is to be the best sports merchandise and apparel store in the country," said Chicago Sports Depot General Manager Joe Nigro. "As soon as they walk in the door, we want them to be wowed and to carry that feeling of awe throughout the store."

The 12,000-square-foot store was developed through a close collaboration between [Delaware North](#) and the Chicago White Sox, with [RGLA Solutions](#) of Chicago serving as the project designer as well as the interior architect and [360 Architecture](#) of Kansas City, Mo., as the exterior architect. [McHugh Construction](#) of Chicago was the general contractor. The Delaware North Companies Facilities Department oversaw the project as a liaison between the White Sox, Delaware North staff, RGLA and subcontractors.

From conception to opening, the project took only 13 months. The concept design was approved by the White Sox in October 2010, with construction beginning in April 2011. The two-level store celebrated its grand opening on Nov. 20 and is now open daily.

"I think this store sets the example and the tone for where we are going to go in the future," said Delaware North Companies Sportservice Vice President of Retail Jeff Hess. "With projects like the Chicago Sports Depot, we are making a mark in the industry."

Wide Array of Merchandise

The Chicago Sports Depot's wide selection of Chicago team merchandise includes such brands as Nike, New Era, Majestic, Reebok and Banner 47. Items available for men include tie racks, shoe trees, leather briefcases and shaving bags. Memorabilia autographed by Chicago sport stars such as Brian Urlacher, Patrick Kane, Paul Konerko and Derrick Rose is available in custom-made memorabilia cases that feature light boxes.

In addition to a number of large areas featuring White Sox merchandise, the store includes sections dedicated to the Chicago Bears, Bulls and Blackhawks, as well as smaller sections with Cubs and college team merchandise. Dedicated store space is provided for jerseys, headwear, women's and children's apparel, and collectibles.

The Chicago Sports Depot also includes a home, garden and automotive section. Fans can purchase unique items such as White Sox logo yoga mats and White Sox blankets featuring Mickey Mouse. In addition, the store features a custom screen printing and jersey area.

Twenty points of sale make it easy for fans to find exclusive products and check out without losing valuable game time.

Enhanced Lighting and Signature Design

The signature element of the new store is a digital staircase featuring 15,000 LED lights. Developed in collaboration with RGLA and Phillips Color Kinetics Division, the staircase has the capability of playing sports-related video images as customers move to and from the second level. It is believed to be the only staircase of its kind in North America.

[Peter Basso Associates Inc.](#) provided specialty lighting recommendations to enhance the lighting design by RGLA and Phillips. Delaware North used the lighting consultant after working with Peter Basso Associates in building the “The D Shop” at Comerica Park in Detroit.

To ensure fans do not miss a single play of any game, the Chicago Sports Depot features 75 video monitors, including four video walls. The store’s flow was carefully considered to give guests a fluid shopping experience from one section to the next. Glass hand railings and a glass elevator allow guests to see the monitors from every vantage point in the store.

The store entry at 35th Street features atrium space that soars to 40 feet in height. The first floor ceilings are 20 feet tall. A 14-foot ceiling on the upper floor with exposed structure allows for the maximum visual height. The store is accessible from either the outside or inside the stadium on game days.

“Green” Integration

The Chicago Sports Depot was designed to current “green” building standards with a focus on energy efficiency. Many of the materials used are indigenous to the Chicago area, as are the plants that cover 75 percent of the building's roof in an irrigation planter system. Along with the white roof, the plants help prevent heat absorption to reduce air conditioning usage. They also absorb rainwater that would otherwise reach city sewer lines and require treatment.

Visual Details

Large-format interior wall graphics featuring current and former star players and scenes from White Sox and other teams’ championships were produced using a 3M Controltac Graphic Film with pressure-sensitive adhesive that was applied to the walls in a fashion similar to a decal. The murals were created by RGLA and the White Sox.

Reproductions of front-page newspaper stories were incorporated onto the walls to recreate the local excitement of past championships. A display of White Sox logos allows customers to connect with the team through memories of various eras.

The attention to detail extends into every space of the store, including the bathroom – where a catcher’s mask light fixture is installed. The custom-designed floor is made of concrete with an epoxy coating for a glossy finish that makes it durable and easy to maintain. White baseball stitching was added using a vinyl template to give the floor a signature look.

Editors: Professional, high-resolution photos are available. Video is also available on [Delaware North’s YouTube](#) channel.