

❖ MEDIA RELEASE ❖

McGuire

Associates ❖

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Department of Justice Commends New Panther Arena

Newburgh (December 20, 1996) - - For the past six months, Kevin McGuire, Chairman and CEO of McGuire Associates, Inc. has been working as a consultant with Huizenga Holdings, Inc. - the developer of the Broward County Arena, new home of the Florida Panthers hockey team. In this role, Mr. McGuire has been overseeing the arena's compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). He has been working on such issues as lines of sight, design of seating platforms, unisex bathroom availability, and dispersion of wheelchair seating.

“It should be noted,” said Mr. McGuire, “that for the first time an owner and developer have retained a disability access consultant during the critical arena design stage.” In carrying out his charge “to do the right thing” and make the Broward County Arena the most accessible arena in the country, McGuire has addressed these issues with an acute awareness of the barriers, large and small, that face patrons with disabilities.

A particular challenge for the developers has been the line of sight issue. Federal regulations require that arena wheelchair seats must not be isolated, must offer a choice of views and ticket prices, and provide a line of sight “comparable” to seats provided to the general public. Several advocacy groups for the disabled have filed suits to challenge developers to address these issues.

Recently, the Department of Justice (DOJ) was asked to review such a suit against the developer of the Broward County Arena. In his response, Thomas M. Contois, a DOJ attorney, commended the developer for the arena design. Mr. Contois comments, in part - *“the developer of the arena has directed the designers to adopt the features necessary for wheelchair users in every wheelchair seating location with sightlines over standing patrons... We (DOJ) were also pleased to learn that the wheelchair locations have been well dispersed throughout the arena, including several wheelchair locations placed on the ice level for hockey games. **Indeed, if built according to these plans, this facility could be a model of accessibility for indoor arenas throughout the United States.**”*

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