Allianz Field℠

A NEW ERA FOR SOCCER IN MINNESOTA

PHOTOS: MNUFC

ALLIANZ FIELD

MNUFC

Minnesota United Pays Tribute to Its Northern Heritage

PHOTO: Allianz Field is ready for its home opener on April 13.

Allianz Field Dazzles as Minnesota's First World-Class Soccer Facility

Minnesota is frequently associated with two things: The Aurora Borealis (aka, the Northern Lights) and its "Land of 10,000 Lakes" moniker. So when Minnesota United FC (MNUFC) set out to build a new stadium, they wanted to incorporate both elements into the design. They did just that, and then some.

After becoming the 22nd club in Major League Soccer in 2017 and playing at the University of Minnesota's TCF Bank Stadium for its first two seasons, Minnesota United took the home pitch for the season opener on April 13 against New York City FC in their new home, the $250 million Allianz Field. Designed by Populous and built by Mortenson Construction, the stadium is being hailed as one of the most modern, beautiful facilities of its kind.

Unlike the other stadiums in the Twin Cities — U.S. Bank Stadium (Minnesota Vikings), Target Field (Minnesota Twins), TCF Bank Stadium (University of Minnesota football) — which weren't intended to be world-class soccer facilities, Allianz Field is designed specifically for the world's game and meets FIFA field regulations.

"We were looking for an exciting, modern, forward-looking stadium that was aesthetically very pleasing and reflective of the state and our community," said Bill McGuire, owner of Minnesota United FC and the former CEO of UnitedHealth Group.

"We wanted to create something that was uniquely Minnesota," said Bruce Miller, principal in charge/senior principal at Populous. "The design developed around using the inspiration of the Aurora Borealis and the waters of Minnesota, both the Mississippi River and all of the lakes that represent the state."

A Gleaming New Exterior

The unique exterior of the stadium, which gives Allianz Field its signature look, is made from a cutting-edge tensile fabric that had never been used before — PTFE laminate. While PTFE is not new, the process of taking two pieces of PTFE sheeting and laminating them to a colored fiberglass mesh is groundbreaking. For Allianz Field, the fiberglass mesh has a liquid silver color.

PTFE laminate has a superior structural durability and is tear resistant, and because it's both strong and could be stretched a great distance, it was a cost-effective choice as well. Additionally, it serves the functional purpose of blocking the wind and rain, protecting fans from the elements. The PTFE membrane mimics the qualities of the water in Minnesota's lakes — sparkling bright in the sun, but transparent and refractive in the shade.

"A tensile membrane doesn't weigh very much, so we didn't need a lot of structural steel to support it," said Greg Huber, Allianz Field's construction executive for Mortenson Construction. "It's also very flexible, so it takes on a form that's unlike a lot of other materials we use. Architecturally, we could be more creative with the material."

With LED lighting on the PTFE skin, the exterior of the stadium can change colors in response to different events and activities. It's similar to Allianz Arena in Munich, home to FC Bayern Munich, which plays in the Bundesliga.

"As the skin is lit with the LED lighting at night, it takes on the ethereal quality of the Aurora Borealis," Miller explained. "During the day, the building takes on the quality of the sky because of its reflectivity and transparency."

"One of the great collaborations of the project was how well the design team, engineers and architects worked with the manufacturer, installer and the construction manager to make this particular element successful," continued Miller.

"Allianz Field is an iconic, landmark facility," said Dave St. Peter, CEO and president of the Minnesota Twins.

Matt Majka, president of the Minnesota Wild, agrees. "There's something really attractive about the simplicity and lines of the architecture."

Being Mindful of the Birds

For a team with a bird as its nickname and mascot — the Loons — bird safety was an important consideration in the design of Allianz Field.

Every year, hundreds of thousands of migratory birds, representing more than 300 species, fly through the Twin Cities. To ensure the stadium was as safe as possible for the birds, specialists from the Audubon Society and the American Bird Conservancy were consulted. They determined that, based on its lack of reflectivity and transparency, the PTFE fabric is safe for the birds.

Developing a Soccer Atmosphere

Allianz Field is an open-air stadium. But to keep fans protected from the elements and to reduce the crowd noise coming from the stadium, a 360-degree translucent rain screen canopy covers fan sections.

"We wanted a stadium that was built

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The design of the seats on Allianz Field's north side proudly displays the team's name

ALLIANZ FIELD, FROM PAGE 2A

for the game of soccer and the fans of the game," McGuire said. "That means natural grass and an open stadium. Although we have a roof, the stadium remains open."

The 19,400 fans in attendance at Loons games are right on top of the action. The closest seat is 17 feet from the pitch, while the furthest is 125 feet away. To create this intimate atmosphere, the seats are at a steep rake — 33.4 degrees.

The popularity of the team and the desire for fans to be able to watch them in their new stadium has led to the team selling out its self-imposed cap of 14,500 season tickets. And there's a waiting list, titled "The Preserve", which consists of more than 5,000 hopeful fans.

Uniting the Fan Base — Allianz Field Accommodates All

Fans enter Allianz Field at mid-level, making the stadium easy to navigate. The seating level is half above the entry point, and half below.

"We were interested in having a relatively low vertical profile, so the stadium didn't stick up well beyond anything around it and overpower it, which resulted in, among other things, going down 18 feet to the pitch," said McGuire.

"It was more cost effective and will also contain the great sound that will be coming from within the building," Miller explained.

"From an ADA and accessibility perspective, it's fantastic," said Huber.

"Accommodating everyone in this building, not only someone in a wheelchair, but everyone in the community, is really one of the universal goals and it's reflected in their team name," said Miller. "It was a very important principle to make this accessible and comfortable for everyone."

Location is Key

Located in the Midway neighborhood of Saint Paul, Allianz Field is 7.5 miles from downtown Minneapolis and 5 miles from downtown Saint Paul, with access to the light rail, bus transit and highway. The stadium sits beside I-94, the principal route connecting Minneapolis and Saint Paul, which carries 150-160,000 cars a day. The primary east-west light rail line has a stop at the stadium and it's expected that 38 percent of fans will travel on the public transit line. Additionally, the stadium is next to a bus stop for the north-south bus line. Bike pathways and parking for 400 bikes complete the transportation options for fans and 23 percent of the fans are expected to walk, bike, park-and-ride or use taxies or ride-sharing services.

"We were interested in having something that was located centrally within the community," said McGuire. "We wanted to be in a neighborhood or area where the stadium would help enhance and advance the community and, hopefully, result in significant redevelopment and other construction within the community. We also wanted a location that had access to all forms of transportation."

"It's aesthetically beautiful and fits in the neighborhood," said Lester Bagley, executive vice president of public affairs for the Minnesota Vikings. "I'm excited to be there for the home opener and support Minnesota United."

The siting of Allianz Field has a regional feel. The south side of the stadium, which faces the highway, has a larger façade and makes a bigger architectural statement. The north side, where the majority of fans will enter the building, dips low to give a more human-scale context to the neighborhoods.

"Allianz Field is more international on the south side and more domestic on the north side," said Miller.

"Long term, I think the success of the field will be measured in what happens in that community," said Walter White, CEO and president of Allianz Life Insurance Company of North America. "It was already in transition, with the light rail and other changes. Now, we're seeing some new additions, new bars and restaurants across the street. So, in five years, I think the community will be very different, much better."

Rising Up from the Ground

Mortenson Construction and its subcontractors employed about 2,050 workers onsite who worked 663,000 hours to bring Allianz Field to life. Additionally, 33 percent of the subcontractors were minority-owned businesses, while 11 percent were women-owned businesses.

"It's our version of the Yellow Wall in Dortmund (Bundesliga)."

CHRIS WRIGHT
CEO | **MNUFC**

To add character to the physical structure, the base of Allianz Field was made with board formed wall. This is a process that patterns the concrete with a wood grain finish. Mortenson used 16 form liners in their molds. Although they were strategically placed, the result was an almost random pattern, giving a very unique look on the concrete along the perimeter of the stadium.

"This was an economical way to produce something that is really unique," said Huber. "There's a lot of architectural character to it."

"We had this idea of the big statement of the building, which is kind of the ethereal quality of the skin and reflecting the waters of the state," added Miller. "But then we thought about the human scale of the building and what it's like to approach it. So we wanted a material that was far more tactile, far more approachable and had more definition and refinement in terms of scale to the human experience. We also wanted to create a contrast to the very slick material on top. We wanted the material to ground the building, be a little bit rough and have more contrast to the light ethereal skin. That led us to the board form wall."

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With seating for 150 guests, the Brew Hall is the centerpiece of Allianz Field's food and beverage options.

The concrete on the interior of the concourse, including the corridors, concession areas, bathrooms and the Brew Hall, was decorated with block patterns. The block is called the "Loon" and was specifically designed for the stadium. The blocks were burnished in different colors and contained black speckles in reference to the loon on the team's crest. This provided a lot of color variety within the stadium, giving it more of an artistic look.

"The block patterning is about creating visual movement throughout the building rather than just having a very plain or monolithic wall on the inside of the concourse," said Miller.

Additionally, the majority of the materials used in the construction of Allianz Field — 91 percent — were locally sourced from Minnesota.

"We're excited Allianz Field was built by the hometown team and reflects Minnesota with the Northern Lights piece and our rivers and lakes," said Bagley. "It's a Minnesota-made and Minnesota-delivered facility. They've done a brilliant job on the design and construction."

"The unique recurring comment is the ability to understand the building immediately when you walk in," said Miller. "It's very transparent. It's obvious in terms of how you're oriented and that was intentional. It's an easily understood space even though it's very large. It's not overwhelming in scale, but it has a large presence on the inside the bowl."

Team's Supporters Stand Up

The Wonderwall is the team's supporters' section. Located behind the south goal and directly underneath the video board, the Wonderwall features 2,800 safe standing spaces. At a 34.75-degree angle, this section is the steepest legally allowed in a facility and will give the team a dominating presence.

"It's our version of the Yellow Wall in Dortmund (Bundesliga)," said Chris Wright, CEO of MNUFC. "It's going to be incredibly loud, compelling and unique,

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Allianz Stadium Sydney, Australia

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Allianz Riviera Nice, France

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ENT-3282 (4/2019)

Allianz Field
BY THE NUMBERS

- **250 million** — cost to build Allianz Field
- **1.9 million** — Minnesotans within 30 miles of Allianz Field
- **675,229** — gallon reservoir for recycled water from the stadium's canopy
- **324,000** — watts of sports lighting on the field
- **296,193** square feet — stadium footprint
- **88,000** square feet — PTFE fabric
- **19,400** — seating capacity
- **2,800** — seating capacity in the Wonderwall supporters' section
- **1,400** — light fixtures on the PTFE façade
- **400** — bicycle rack spots
- **360** — LED sports lights
- **280** — ADA and companion seats
- **192** feet — overall length of the bar in the Brew Hall
- **125** feet — farthest seat from the pitch
- **120x75** — pitch dimensions
- **100** — percent privately funded
- **96** — taps in the Brew Hall
- **27.5** miles — heating pipe installed under the pitch
- **25** — suites
- **17** feet — closest seat to the pitch
- **4** — hospitality clubs

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The Wonderwall, the team's supporters' section, features standing spaces for 2,800 fans at the steepest angle allowed in a facility.

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and the centerpiece of the entire fan experience."

The section was named after the 1990s song "Wonderwall" by the British band Oasis. In 2011, when, as the Minnesota Stars of the North American Soccer League, then assistant coach Carl Craig would sing the song after every win. Later, the players joined in, singing the song in the locker room. But it became part of the fan culture when the players started singing it to the supporters' section.

Now, "Wonderwall" is the team's victory anthem and is belted out by thousands of MNUFC fans after every team win.

The Pitch — Designed for Minnesota's Temperatures

Similar to the design of the stadium, the pitch also has several unique elements.

The sod came from the Green Valley Turf Company in Colorado. Using an innovative and rare approach, the grass was grown on a plastic sheet. This allowed the roots to grow horizontally because they couldn't grow through the plastic. When it was time to move the sod to Allianz Field, the roots weren't cut. This allowed the sod to get a better hold once it was transplanted at the stadium. Allianz Field is the first MLS facility to have its sod grown in this manner.

A hydronic field heating system will push warm air and glycol through 27.5 miles of tubing directly beneath the root zone. This will keep the soil warm and the grass green and sturdy during the cooler early spring and late fall matches. Additionally, the pitch features a high capacity drainage system so the field can shed water very quickly.

"Because of the large canopy that is traditional in soccer facilities, the pitch gets a lot less natural light," said Miller. "So in addition to the heating system and the capacity to inject air into the root zone system, we also have grow lights. These are big, high-power lights on a big truss that provide additional lighting to the pitch."

Dazzling Video Displays

A 115'x23', 15 HD pixel LED video board (which is as large as a tennis court) and 10 380'x2.5' ribbon displays provide a stunning visual experience for MNUFC fans. Produced by Daktronics, the large video board, on the south end of the stadium, can show any combination of live video, instant replay, match statistics, graphics, animations and sponsor message. It can display one large image across the entire board or be divided into multiple windows for multiple simultaneous uses.

To coordinate the displays, Daktronics installed its Show Control System that provides a combination of display control software, video processes, data integration and playback hardware.

Embracing Local, Authentic Food and Beverage Options

Minnesota United selected Delaware North Sportservice as its food and beverage partner for its four clubs, 22 suites and concession stands.

"We wanted the food and beverage at Allianz Field to align with the vision of Bill McGuire and Chris Wright to create a unique fan experience that revolved around a global story," said Carlos Bernal, president of Delaware North Sportservice, "But at the same time, we were charged with creating an authentic offering that reflected the diversity of the Twin Cities and the international flavors thriving there."

"Our food and beverage offerings reflect the diversity of soccer and celebrate our multicultural fan base," said Wright. "We're global, but we're also local. We have international foods and we have local vendors inside and outside of the stadium that represent this incredibly diverse sport, diverse world and diverse market in which we live."

Providing direction to Allianz Field's food and beverage program is executive chef Bill Van Stee and consulting chef Justin Sutherland. A native of Saint Paul, Van Stee knows the community and was influential in identifying what's important and meaningful to MNUFC's fan base. Sutherland, who's part of the Madison Food Group, is the owner/operator of a number of local restaurants and has been featured on the Bravo series, "Top Chef."

The highlight of the food and beverage program is the Brew Hall, located at the north end of the stadium. Stretching the width of the pitch, the 4,100-square-foot Brew Hall boasts 96 taps and a variety of local craft beer. It features a 120-foot window wall that can be opened during good weather, creating a canopy in the concourse. When the window is open, fans can access the 60-foot bar both from the concourse and inside the Brew Hall, which seats 150 guests. In addition to amazing burgers and traditional American pub fare, the menu will feature a wide selection of local and ethnic flavors.

Atop the Brew Hall is the Taylor Communications and Star Tribune Roof Deck with its own bar and grill. A social destination with perfect views of the

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A hydronic field heating system and high capacity drainage system keep the pitch match ready.

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Minnesota United uses grow lights to keep the pitch green and lush during the cold shoulder seasons.

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pitch for up to 250 fans, the Roof Deck is the ultimate community experience for fans.

In addition to traditional stadium fare, fans are treated to Indian-inspired rice bowls, Caribbean soul food, chicken samosa, vegetable sambusa, chicken shawarma, tacos al pastor, street tacos, esquites (Mexican street corn), lamb merguez sausage and linguica sausages.

"From the basic concession stands, one of the things we're doing is taking familiar menu items, but giving them an international twist," said Eric Sampson, Delaware North's general manager at Allianz Field. "It's like stadium fusion with an international flare."

Allianz Field features 19 traditional concession stands where fans form a line and order from a customer service person through a typical point-of-sale transaction. There are also 19 portable stands throughout the stadium that are evenly split, with half offering a variety of ethnic food and half offering beverages.

With the continuous play aspect of soccer, speed of service at the concession stands is essential to get fans back to their seats quickly.

To accommodate this, a unique feature in Allianz Field's food and beverage service is its three grab-and-go market locations. One is a full-service market with a full complement of hot and cold food, snacks and beverages.

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Allianz Field's concession stands offer a variety of international and local food and beverage options.

One market features desserts. And the third market is a minibar, with a primary focus on beer. Fans flow through the markets making their own selections before advancing to the checkout stations. The markets are strategically located on the busiest sides of the building, with two on the south side of the stadium and one on the east side.

"It's a fantastic speed of service driver," said Sampson. "The transactions go a lot quicker so we can get guests through the markets much faster."

Another transaction timesaver: no taps. With the exception of the Brew Hall, Delaware North eliminated beer taps and all soda fountains. Instead, beer is served in cans and soda is served in bottles.

"This building is programmed for speed," said Sampson. "Instead of pouring a beer and having it be potentially foamy and all the challenges that come with maintaining and operating draft and soda lines, we're simply going to reach into a cooler or ice bath and grab a nice cold beer, crack the can and hand it over. It's the quickest way to serve beer. Operationally, the yields are better and there's less waste, which lets us preserve prices."

All of the premium spaces at Allianz Field have food and beverage packages included with the ticket. They feature both high-profile fare and authentic street food. Rather than have fans load up a plate and sit down at a table to eat before or during halftime, Delaware North created an environment where fans can graze while they're relaxing, talking and trying different stations.

"We're trying to invite guests to move around a room, creating a social atmosphere with these beautiful spaces and incredible environments," Sampson said.

And to further provide quality fare for Allianz Field's 19,400 fans quickly, Delaware North staffs the stadium with 248 direct employees and 205 nonprofit volunteers.

Premium Spaces on Every Level

The west side of Allianz Field offers many experience levels. The Field Club, which can hold 450 fans, is on the same level as the pitch and the players' locker rooms. The loge boxes are on the main concourse level.

The level above the main concourse includes the Stadium Club,

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We become united through shared experiences.

Cheering as the ball flies into the net.

Raising our scarves in triumph.

And watching our team soar to victory.

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The Brew Hall features 96 taps delivering a variety of local craft beer options.

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The Stadium Club offers premium viewing and food and beverage options for 750 fans.

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which has a capacity of 750; the Upper 90 Club, which can accommodate 90 fans; and the Party Suites. The Upper 90 Club offers a shared suite experience, but in more of a social and club environment.

The top level contains traditional, enclosed suites. And the final premium spaces are open-air cabana suites with glass along the back and a more celebratory environment than traditional suites.

Paperless System Delivers Seamless Fan Experience

MNUFC partnered with VenueNext to develop their own app in a move toward a completely paperless system. In addition to mobile ticketing, the app includes every piece of information a fan will need, from transportation, parking and menus, to access points, the team schedule, and team and player statistics.

To support a robust, paperless environment, the team partnered with Atomic Data to create an incredible WiFi system. Allianz Field has more than 470 wireless access points covering the full bowl, gates, premium spaces and operational spaces.

"Because of our relationship with Atomic Data, we feel we'll be the most robust MLS stadium in the country relative to WiFi access," Wright said.

SeatGeek is the team's primary and secondary ticketing provider and all tickets will be delivered to fans via the team's app. Season ticket holders who are unable to attend can either transfer their tickets to friends and family or resell them through SeatGeek's secondary market.

"The great part about the system is that the data from those transfers and resales are collected and Minnesota United and Allianz Field will know who their fans are," said Russ D'Souza, co-founder of SeatGeek.

"We're incredibly honored to be partners with the club," said D'Souza. "The thing that really attracted us the most about Minnesota United is the caliber of people on the business side of the operation. They've got a great group of people who are great partners to work with."

"These three parties — VenueNext, Atomic Data and Seat Geek — are helping us deliver what I consider to be one of the most seamless mobile experiences for fans in MLS," said Wright.

Loonatics Provide Exceptional Customer Service

"Our intent is to become one with the fan," said Wright. "We have a robust guest experience philosophy built out for our entire game day staff."

Branded the "Loonatics" MNUFC's game day staff is representative of the supporters, fans, key stakeholders and club members in all of Allianz Field's spaces. The guest experience philosophy was developed by Authentic, known for the work they've done with Virgin Airlines. Brave New Workshop Comedy Theater brought the philosophy to life by teaching the "Loonatics" an improvisational mindset to interact with and serve the fans in a celebratory way.

"We want our full-time and part-time staff to have total buy-in and be passionate about our club and its fans," said Wright. "They need to interface in unique ways with the many different types of fans, supporters and guests that make up our Minnesota United fan base; they truly are the Allianz Field experience."

Outfitting the Fans

Minnesota United merchandise is featured in the Black and Blue team store in the northwest corner of the stadium. Open year-round, the team's 2,149-square-foot flagship store is operated by Fanatics and will feature onsite jersey customization on game days. Three additional stores located in the stadium's other three corners are open on game days.

The Welcoming Great Lawn

The north side of Allianz Field features the Great Lawn. Covering 28,000 square feet, three quarters of the Great Lawn is grass and mature trees. Chosen for their survivability in an urban environment, the majority of the trees are native to the area. A wide variety of maple trees, with names like Autumn Blaze, Fall Fiesta Sugar and Northwood Red, will create a brilliant painting of color in the fall. They were strategically placed to create unique experiences around the stadium.

To water the area and aid in the stadium's sustainability efforts, rainwater from Allianz Field's roof is captured in

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pipes beneath the Great Lawn that have a capacity of 675,229 gallons. This reservoir gives the facility the ability to collect two million gallons of rainwater every year.

Breaking the Tradition — Allianz Field was Privately Funded

One of the unique aspects of the stadium was its funding. Allianz Field is the first professional team facility in Minnesota constructed without any public taxpayer funding.

"There have been a number of stadiums built in the last decade in the Twin Cities using significant amounts of public money," McGuire said. "It was obvious to us that if we wanted to proceed with the stadium, it was going to be dependent on us being able to fund it ourselves."

Now that construction of Allianz Field is complete, ownership has been transferred to the city of Saint Paul, but Minnesota United will continue to operate it.

Keeping Naming Rights in the Twin Cities

In 2017, Allianz Life Insurance Company of North America, based in Minneapolis and a leading provider of annuities and life insurance products, signed a 12-year agreement with MNUFC for naming rights to the stadium. Allianz Field is one of eight stadiums around the world (seven devoted to soccer) that bears the Allianz name. In addition to Munich, the other facilities are in Turin, Italy; Nice, France; London, England; Vienna, Austria; Sao Paulo, Brazil; and Sydney, Australia.

> **"We were pretty excited because we don't have a major name presence in the area. It was important to us to get in at the front end."**
>
> **WALTER WHITE**
>
> CEO and President | **Allianz Life Insurance Company of North America**

"We thought Allianz was a natural choice because Allianz Life's North American headquarters is in Minneapolis," said McGuire. "They're a great local company with great values and a desire to be engaged in this community. It's a wonderful match and we're very proud to partner with them."

"We were pretty excited because we don't have a major name presence in the area," said White. "It was important to us to get in at the front end."

"From a pure name recognition standpoint, this was really a unique opportunity," White continued. "With the field being so close to such a major thoroughfare, in pure impressions or advertising terms, it was a pretty powerful proposition. The fact that the ownership group was building this without taxpayer support was appealing. They had the right interest of the community in mind. We've always been heavily involved in the community, and with this neighborhood being in transition, we think the field will really give it a boost."

What's Your Gate's Name?

As two of the early sponsors, Bell Bank and Element Electronics signed multiyear deals for naming rights to two of the stadium's four entrances, the southwest and southeast gates respectively. Located along I-94, they are the stadium's two most visible gates.

"We're relatively new to the Twin Cities on the commercial banking side of our business," said Michael Solberg, CEO and president of Bell Bank. "How you brand yourself and market yourself in a big metropolitan area like Minneapolis-Saint Paul has become even more challenging than it was in the past. We saw partnering with this startup brand in the Twin Cities as a new way for us to get the word out about who we are as a company and about building our brand. There are also a lot of similarities to what Minnesota United is trying to do and what we're trying to do as an organization. So we were attracted to their vision as well."

"We were fortunate to be in the right place at the right time in our company's trajectory to be able to take advantage of this unique opportunity, because it really doesn't come along very often," Solberg continued.

Developing the Surrounding Area

The location of Allianz Field in the Midway section of Saint Paul is set to revitalize a 35-acre site. The city is providing $18 million for infrastructure improvements to the areas surrounding the stadium, for the development of roads, sidewalks and utilities.

"We wanted the stadium to serve as a potential driver and catalyst for advancement in the area overall," said McGuire.

The site has been approved for up to two million square feet of mixed-use development, including retail, residential, business, hospitality and entertainment spaces. Allianz Field's Great Lawn doubles as the public green space for this development.

The Ultimate Launch

The official opening of Allianz Field was staged over a week in an intentional and deliberate manner.

On Monday, March 18, the team

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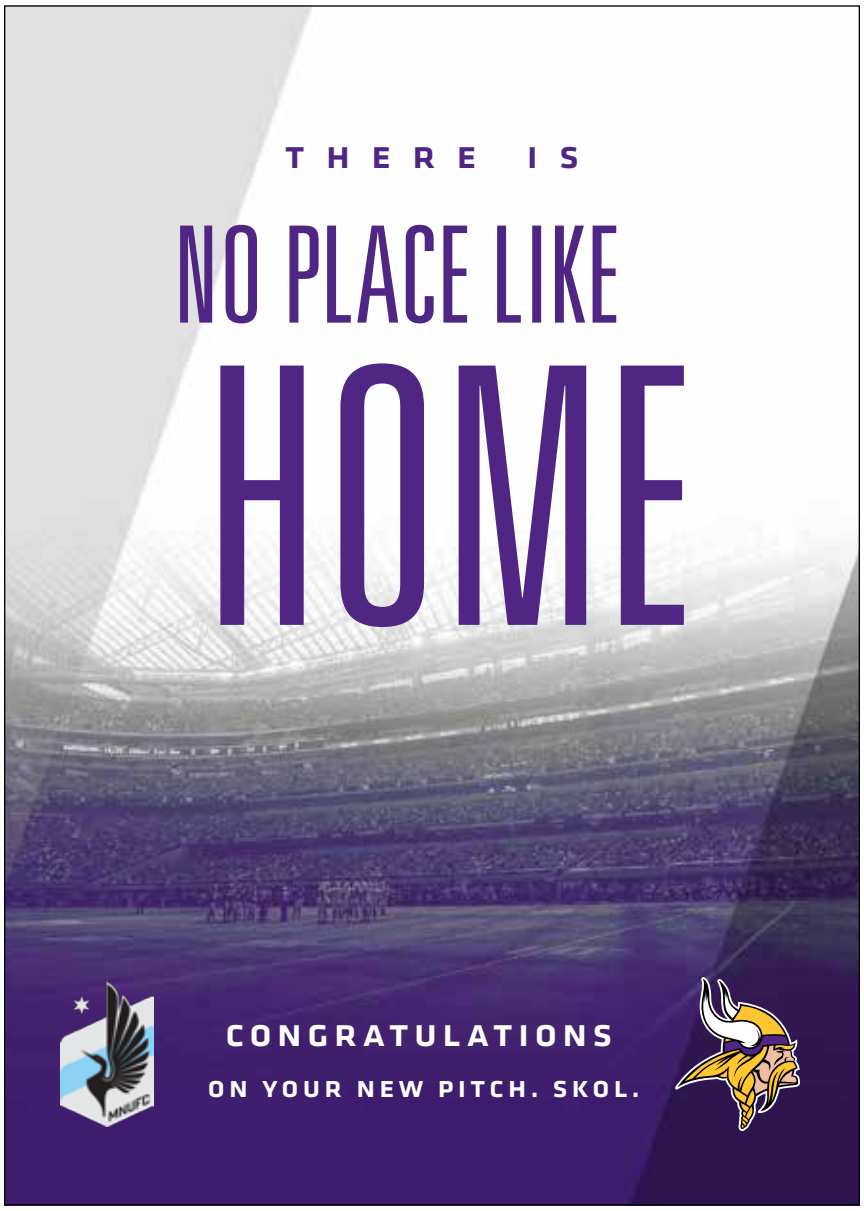

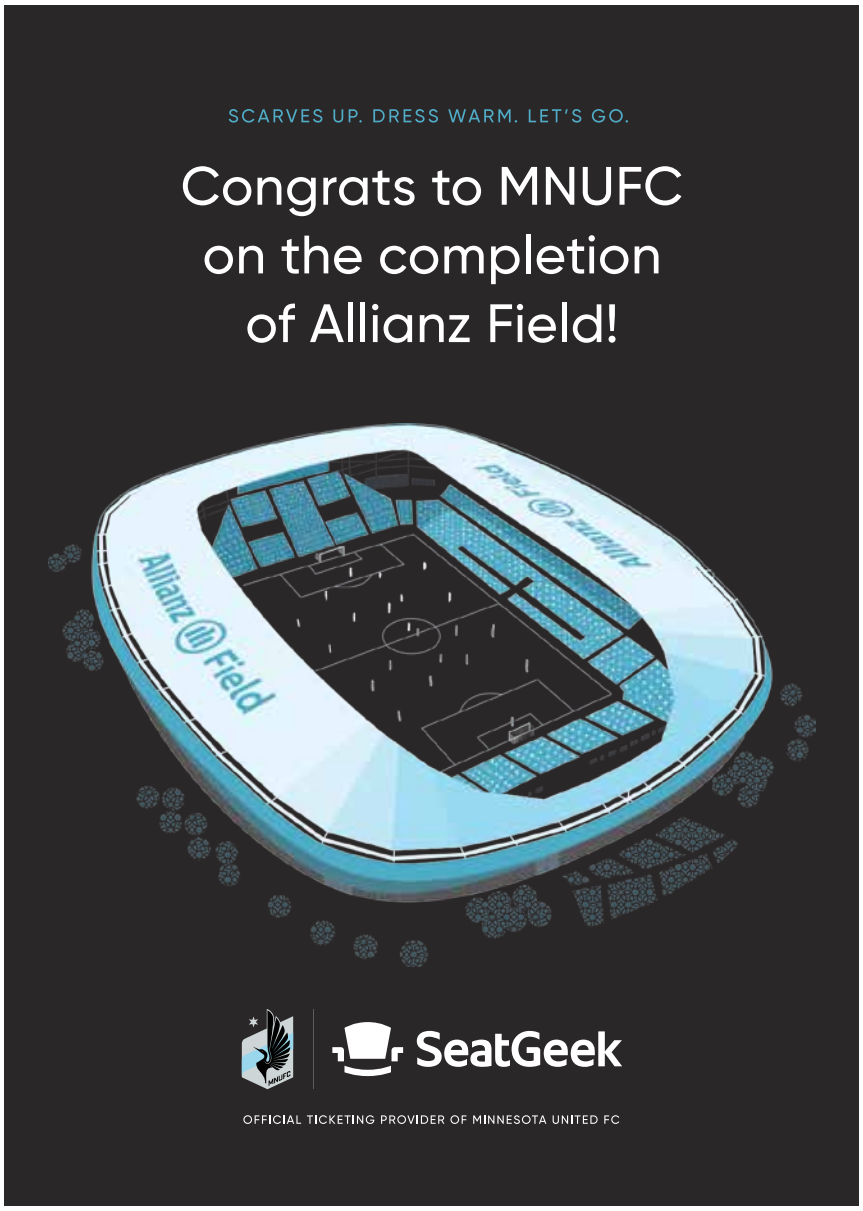

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The Bell Bank gate, on the southwest side of the stadium, is highly visible from the highway.

MNUFC

Rather than a traditional ribbon cutting ceremony, Minnesota United held a scarf raising ceremony to mark the official opening of Allianz Field.

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invited 300 people who played a significant role in the development of Allianz Field, including MLS commissioner Don Garber, to officially open the building. Instead of a traditional ribbon cutting ceremony, MNUFC hosted a scarf raising ceremony, where everyone in attendance took part by raising their Minnesota United scarves high overhead.

The team opened the Brew Hall and team store to the public on Friday, March 22. Saturday featured the opening of all of the stadium's premium spaces and included appearances by team (Minnesota Kicks) legends Alan Merrick and Tino Lettieri. The weekend concluded on Sunday with more than 7,500 season ticket holders getting their first look.

Launch weekend featured a Friday evening performance in downtown Saint Paul by Men in Blazers, in a celebration of Minnesota, its unique fan culture and the team. On Saturday, April 13, the team christened Allianz Field in its opener against New York City FC.

Reaction from the Business Community Tops the Charts

"We're really excited," said Ethan Casson, CEO of the Minnesota Timberwolves and Minnesota Lynx. "Minnesota is a unique area of the country. There are seven pro sports teams (Minnesota Twins [MLB], Minnesota Timberwolves [NBA], Minnesota Vikings [NFL], Minnesota Wild [NHL], Minnesota Lynx [WNBA], Minnesota Whitecaps [women's hockey], Saint Paul Saints [independent minor league baseball]), plus the university of Minnesota teams, which all reside near one another. Everyone's supportive and looks after each other. When something likes this happens, it's great for the sports community and it's a great celebration."

"I'm stunned by the quality of the finished product," said White. "When you think of it as a venue for soccer, there's nothing like it. There's not a bad seat in the house. You feel like you're right over the pitch. Every touch in the stadium is spectacular. Mortenson did a great job building it and Populous' design is state of the art."

"Allianz Field is going to be a game changer in relation to the way soccer is presented to fans of Minnesota United and the Minnesota sports market in general," said St. Peter. "It's a beautiful facility that really sets a high standard in terms of aesthetics."

"The amenities and lighting options are going to make for an incredibly unique experience for soccer fans," agrees Majke.

"It's one of the most beautiful stadiums I've seen," said D'Souza. "It has a truly incredible design and is in a great location. I love the focus on the fans, and the way this team has really embraced the local community."

"I want to give a nod to the ownership for taking a design-focused approach to creating something that is really beautiful," Huber said. "What we created is incredibly special and I think it will be an icon for years to come."

Said Solberg, "One of the intangibles of our sponsorship is the leadership of the team and the ownership of the team. The way they think about and treat their players, their fans and their partners is significant. We've been very impressed throughout the whole process with the type of organization the team is building."

"Minnesota United is an extremely well run organization," said Majke. "They are pros in our industry and understand the momentum of the sport, as well as how that beautiful new venue is going to carry the day. It's exciting to welcome a new neighbor to Saint Paul and to watch their success in the future."

"On behalf of the Timberwolves and Lynx, we want to congratulate Minnesota United on the opening of Allianz Field," said Casson. "This state-of-the-art facility will create extraordinary memories and traditions for fans and supporters for many years to come. We'd like to congratulate the Minnesota United staff and ownership, who spent years making this bold dream a reality."

"The response and comments from people in every quarter have been extraordinarily positive," said McGuire. "They're excited and amazed at the architectural beauty of it. We've built a fortress — and have given our team the ultimate home field advantage."

Allianz Field | Saint Paul, MN

The Future is Bright

Congratulations to Minnesota United on the opening of Allianz Field! We are honored to be your hospitality partner and look forward to delighting fans while bringing your food and beverage vision to life.

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