



HOW DID WE GET HERE PROPOSED PARTNERSHIP WITH UCCR AND CRYSTAL CONFERENCE CENTER



June-September	Crystal ad hoc Phone Conference brainstorming group – 6-8 people
July – August	Conversations with Tina Heck of UCCR at Disciples General Assembly – 3 people Telephone conference call with Mike Carr/Tina Heck with 4-5 CCMR/Crystal folks
August	Approval by Regional Board for UCCR Feasibility Study Data and information on 33 questions/items from UCCR collected by CCMR and Crystal staff and submitted to UCCR
September	Three-day visit by Mike Carr to Lansing to interview staff etc. & Crystal to tour the facility with Brenda and Russ, meeting with Crystal Commission members and CCMR reps.
October	Contract with UCCR Marketing dept. to do marketing of Crystal in 2018
December	70+ page Feasibility Study document presented to Crystal Commission and CCMR Execs. Presentation of UCCR Feasibility study by Mike Carr to Crystal Commission
January 20	Crystal Commission meeting to review and discuss the proposal, identifying further questions to explore
February 6	Telephone Conference Call with UCC Ohio Conference representatives who moved their conference centers to UCCR management in 2013-14. Crystal Commission prepared 15 questions for them. Desire was to talk to group who made this change for due diligence in considering UCCR.
February 10	Crystal Commission, after discussion, voted to request Regional Board to approve the management of Crystal by UCCR beginning in 2019.
March 3	Regional Board approves engaging UCCR in an initial 2-year contract to manage Crystal Conference Center beginning in 2019.



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

WHAT WILL IT MEAN TO HAVE A PARTNERSHIP WITH UCCR TO OPERATE CRYSTAL CONFERENCE CENTER?



1. Question: What is UCCR?

Answer:

- A. Began in 1970 when California ecumenical group looked at how to be more economically efficient and a provide stronger opportunities for residential camp/conference experiences. N. California Disciples helped lead the way.
- B. UCCR is a not-for-profit 501(c) co-op organization with the member groups making up the organization. Each member group has TWO representatives as part of its Owners Council
- C. They manage 13 locations across the country currently, providing Planning, Reservations Department, Financial Services, Human Resources, Risk Management & Regulatory Compliance, Marketing, and other services in the process of operating a facility
- D. They provide a site manager, maintenance and other staff necessary to operate the Crystal Conference Center during its 5-6-month season, including interviewing, hiring, background checks, salaries, and benefits. UCCR would not be providing deans or counselors for individual camps or groups.
- E. They would oversee the purchase of food, supplies and maintain healthy meals and snack options with a variety of menus
- F. They have a full-time booking staff that would be booking groups for use of facilities. UCCR would not be taking registrations for individual camps – each group including CCMR would be responsible for their own programs and registrations etc.
- G. Marketing focuses on other non-profits in the area to use the facilities for their groups, when Disciples Camps/Retreats are not using the space. Disciples block out their dates in advance of Crystal being available to others. UCCR provides a website, Facebook page, print materials, social media promotions etc. to reach groups.
- H. UCCR provides an annual site report summarizing guest demographics, year-end financial report and complete projects.

2. Question: What does our Conference Center lose or give up by having an outside manager?

Answer:

- A. Crystal Conference Center will always be the property owners. We would continue to own it. UCCR will only serve as managers of the facility.
- B. The contract with UCCR can be ended – 2 years initially, annually after that.
- C. With 48+ years of experience handling the Financial, purchasing, staffing, licensing, routine maintenance, marketing to groups, booking facilities, UCCR can do it more efficiently
- D. What it means for CCMR is we can focus on our program – camps, retreats etc. without trying to handle operations, bookings, licenses, staffing, operations

3. Question: How do we know what is going on with UCCR, their decisions etc.

Answer:

- A. There is at least twice a year phone conference calls with UCCR and CCMR to discuss concerns, updates, etc.; that usually happens more frequently
- B. UCCR is very cognizant that Crystal is CCMR's largest asset and thus UCCR would be very responsible for being the managers and caretakers of that asset, including being responsible neighbors to those around us.
- C. The UCCR Owners Council meets twice a year with CCMR having two representatives involved in the oversight of the organization.

4. Question: Who is responsible for any annual deficits in the operation of Crystal?

Answer

- A. CCMR would be responsible for any operating deficits.
- B. However, UCCR, who set the budget and determine the per day meal and per day resident fees, working hard to keep cost controls.
- C. In the Feasibility Study, UCCR estimated a possible deficit the first year or two but they had very limited financial information to work with so built cautious budgets for 2019 and 2020. The budget projection for Crystal was bare bones, based upon our occupancy the previous few years. That would change once there was an increase in groups using the facility.
- D. UCCR would be working with CCMR and UCCR marketing office to increase the use of Crystal that would make a difference. Currently, all other UCCR managed facilities are breaking even or doing better than that.

5. Question: What would be the timeframe for UCCR assuming responsibility of Crystal?

Answer:

- A. CCMR Regional Board and CCMR Regional Assembly approval
- B. UCCR Board would receive Feasibility Study Report and vote on approval May 10
- C. Reaching mutual Statement of Agreement and signed – June or July
- D. UCCR Marketing would continue in 2018 (a separate contract that began 2/2018)
- E. UCCR assume Crystal operations by Mid-January 2019
- F. UCCR have a camp administrator on site April through October; interview and hire staff beginning in April; very open/preferring to hire past staff but go through UCCR application and hiring process.

6. Question: Explain to us the Financial costs and process for you operating the facility for CCMR:

Answer:

- A. Administrative Fee: Our normal administrative fee for providing all the services to plan, manage and maintain a facility is to be negotiated but will be 24% or less of bookings income. Crystal being only 5-6-month operation, UCCR will negotiate with CCMR a lower fee.
- B. UCCR requires from CCMR a \$28,000 Operating Capital payment that will be used for start-up costs and cash flow needs during the operating season. This one-time operating fund would be drawn upon as needed. Past UCCR experience is that the balance maintains itself from year to year. This fund would be returned to CCMR if the contract with UCCR was terminated.
- C. UCCR each year reviews the cost for food services and costs for per person per day operations of the camp. They compare the fees to that of other competitors in the area and aim to set a fair, mid-range rate for Crystal. The Per Person rates are set by the UCCR board and reviewed by the Owners Council and CCMR. This is all done in October of the previous year. That per day rate is reflected in the annual operating budget share with UCCR

- D. UCCR Finance Office is in weekly contact with the site manager, monitoring expenditures with expenses.
- E. DISCIPLES CAMPS/RETREATS Booking Fees: they would be the same per day per person as any other group booking facilities. However, Disciples would be given an owner discount of 12%, with payment for camp use being due in September, not at the time of camp. Also, an additional 5% rebate would return to CCMR the following March for all charges that were paid by CCMR for the use of the facilities for their camps/retreats.

7. Question: What happens to our Crystal Camps for children, youth, families and retreats?

Answer:

- A. We will continue to control and be responsible for organizing, promoting, registering and staffing our Michigan Disciples camps as always. We will maintain responsibility and decision making on programs as we have been doing for decades. Registrations for our camps will continue to be handled by the Regional Office.
- B. We will have first choice in booking the weeks/days when we wish to have our camps held at Crystal.
- C. We will pay for use of the camps/retreats at the per day per camper rate less 12%.
- D. If we find a need to expand our use of Crystal for Michigan Disciples camps, we will have first opportunity for requesting the time and dates.
- E. UCCR will assist us in promoting and marketing Michigan Disciples camps along with their overall marketing of Crystal to other non-profit organizations.