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NAME CHANGE FOR SALINA BI-CENTER

The Salina Bicentennial Center is no more. Following a special meeting early Wednesday morning, Salina city officials hosted a media conference at the facility to announce a name change. It is now called the Tony's Pizza Events Center.

Salina Mayor Kaye Crawford said that the deal, which gives the Schwan Food Company the naming rights to the venue for 15 years, will put over a million dollars into the city's general fund. As part of the deal, Schwan's will pay \$80,000 a year for the next 15 years for the naming rights, for a total of \$1.2 million.

As part of the multi-year deal, the Tony's Pizza Events Center will re-brand the concession areas, bringing changes to menus with help from Schwan. Most notably they are adding pizza to the menu. They will also launch a new mobile-friendly website in the coming weeks.

Schwan's Vice President of Public Relations Mike Smith told KSAL News that the company likes to invest back in communities that invest in it.

Smith said the company is planning about \$70 million in improvements this year at the Tony's Pizza plant in Salina. The plant, which has been in Salina since 1970, employs about 1,100 people.

The final event at the Salina Bicentennial Center was the Salina Central vs Salina South basketball games Tuesday night. The first event at the Tony's Pizza Events Center will be 4A State Wrestling beginning on Friday.

Construction on the venue began in 1977. The original Bicentennial Center name was the result of public input, and a vote.

The facility the last couple of years has underwent massive renovations. General Manager Ron Rideout said Wednesday that 2016 was one of the busiest years ever at the facility.

The new name takes effect immediately.