

[Casper Star Tribune](#)

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CASPER EVENTS CENTER ASKS THE PUBLIC TO TEST, REVIEW NEW SEATING OPTIONS

Ron and Kelly Starks found their seats in the middle of the Casper Events Center. There's room for only one elbow, Ron said. They wrapped their arms around each other and laughed.

"So we'll have to do this the whole concert," Kelly said.

Next they took a seat near the front. Kelly's knees touched the back of the seat in front of her, and she stands 5 feet 1 inch tall, she said. The couple enjoys hockey games and concerts at the venue, but Ron said he wouldn't want to attend an event in those seats. They liked a set of roomier seats near the top, they said.

The couple arrived at the Casper Events Center on Wednesday to test seats. The Casper Events Center management hosted the open house in response to complaints about uncomfortable seating and looking into possible solutions, said Events Center assistant general manager Anna Rosburg.

"We've had substantial increases in customer complaints and decrease in ticket sales, so it's significant," Rosburg said. "When Spectra Venue Management came in and took over Oct. 1, 2016, we looked at all that feedback in the past few years and said 'Wow, we have a real problem here.'"

The current seats were installed five years ago to replace the original 1982 seating, Rosburg said. The building is owned by the city of Casper, which turned over management to Spectra Venue Management in October to save money and attract larger acts, according to Star-Tribune archives.

On Wednesday, members of the public filled out surveys as they tested the roomiest to some of the tightest seats in the house. The surveys asked about leg room, seat backs, whether people would use a cup holder and whether the seat was easy to find, along with other comments.

Spectra management plans to present the surveys to Casper City Council, Events Center General Manager Brad Murphy said.