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First National Bank Secures Naming Rights to A-State's Convocation Center

JONESBORO, Ark. (10/19/17) – In recognition of a \$5 million contribution by First National Bank to the Red Wolves Foundation, the Arkansas State University Board of Trustees voted Thursday to rename A-State's multi-purpose facility currently known as the Convocation Center to "First National Bank Arena."

"This naming rights partnership is a great testament to the students, faculty and staff who represent our University," said A-State Director of Athletics Terry Mohajir. "The fact that a strong business leader in our region chose to co-brand with our University speaks volumes about our emerging brand. We will continue to find creative ways to host exciting events in the First National Bank Arena in order to serve Northeast Arkansas and the region."

The naming rights will become effective Jan. 1, 2018, and extend through the next 12 years, as announced this afternoon at a press conference on the facility's arena floor. First National Bank's gift of \$5 million, one of the largest in A-State Athletics history, guarantees it the naming rights to the facility through Dec. 31, 2029.

"First National Bank has always been committed to supporting the communities we serve, and I couldn't think of a better way to do that than partnering with Arkansas State University," said Will Brewer, Vice Chairman of First National Bank. "The Convocation Center has a long history of providing great experiences to families across the state, and First National Bank has a long history of serving families in this area."

"This is a great opportunity to do something together to serve the people of Northeast Arkansas. Naming the First National Bank Arena provides us with an opportunity to support our local university while also giving us the ability to tell people about our great organization."

First National Bank was founded in 1889 and has 14 locations across Arkansas. With \$1.3 billion in total assets, the bank is among only 5% of financial institutions in the nation to receive a 5-star rating from Bauer Financial for over 27 years running.

"Like the Convocation Center itself, First National Bank has been a major presence in our region for many years and so it is only fitting that our magnificent facility bear the First National name," said Arkansas State University System President Dr. Chuck Welch. "A-State is extremely grateful to the bank for their generosity and significant support. This is certainly a very exciting day for our university and community."

The Arkansas-based bank is the first donor of any kind to ever have naming rights for the 207,507 square-foot facility that opened in 1987 as the Convocation Center. The arena lists official capacity for athletics events as 10,563 and 11,704 for concerts.

The facility's first event was Arkansas State's spring commencement in May 1987, while the first A-State Athletics contest played in the arena was a volleyball match versus Southeast Missouri State on Sept. 28, 1987. A facility dedication ceremony was held in December 1987.

"One of the great strengths of our university and region is the way they come together to support each other," said Arkansas State University Chancellor Dr. Kelly Dampousse. "While many think of FNB Arena as a venue for athletics or concerts, a wide variety of events take place here, including important moments like A-State and high school graduations. On behalf of the wide range of students, faculty and staff that will use First National Bank Arena, I want to express my sincere appreciation for their investment in the future of Arkansas State University."