

**AP**

# Omaha convention center could get a new name

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OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Officials at a convention center in Omaha hope to sell the facility's naming rights for top dollar.

The current 15-year, \$14 million naming rights contract for the CenturyLink Center will expire in the fall, [the Omaha World-Herald reported](#).

The Metropolitan Entertainment and Convention Authority voted Wednesday to hire a consultant to create a new naming rights contract that could go to a new sponsor. The authority hopes to get at least \$10 million for the naming rights for an undetermined number of years. That money is used to help fund upkeep and upgrades, said Kristyna Engdahl, MECA spokeswoman.

CenturyLink officials said they're interested in keeping the company's name on the complex.

"We've been known in the greater Omaha area by our CenturyLink Center Omaha sponsorship for the last 14 years. Omaha is an important market for CenturyLink and we would welcome the opportunity to continue our relationship," said Rachel Woodward, a spokeswoman for the company.

While the convention authority has had a good working relationship with CenturyLink, officials wanted to explore other options, Engdahl said.

The authority has contracted with Professional Sports Partners to create a new agreement. It will pay the company \$10,000 for at least six months and an additional 3 percent of the gross naming rights deal if the company secures a naming rights agreement.

The arena and convention center opened in 2003. Qwest had a 15-year agreement with the city, but the complex was renamed in 2011 after CenturyLink acquired Qwest. When the naming rights first were discussed in the early 2000s, Mutual of Omaha, ConAgra and Cox Communications were all likely candidates.

Naming rights for an arena will likely attract a business that values being philanthropic, said Phani Tej Adidam, professor of marketing and entrepreneurship at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

“It’s like giving back,” he said. “They want to show they’re a good citizen.”

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Information from: Omaha World-Herald,  
<http://www.omaha.com>

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