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Deadline Passes With One Bid, Letter Of Intent To Buy Coyotes

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The deadline for bidders willing to keep the Coyotes in Glendale passed Friday with "one formal bid to purchase the team and one 'near-bid' filed in bankruptcy court," according to Paul Hunter of the TORONTO STAR. White Sox and Bulls Chair Jerry Reinsdorf as expected "stepped up with a bid to purchase the team for as much as" \$148M, while Ice Edge Holdings LLC, led by Research Edge LLC Managing Dir Daryl Jones, also filed a "letter of intent to bid." The group said that it will "bid up to \$150[M] before the Aug. 5 auction for bidders wishing to keep the team in Phoenix." If U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Redfield Baum "decides that neither bid adequately satisfies creditors, another auction will be held on Sept. 10 that is open to bidders interested in relocating the team." RIM co-CEO Jim Balsillie is "expected to bid for the team if bankruptcy court rejects the two bids now on the table." Balsillie's reps "had no comment" Friday (*TORONTO STAR*, 7/25). In Phoenix, Carrie Watters noted Ice Edge "missed the court's June 26 deadline to submit term sheets outlining offers and now Friday's bid deadline," but Jones said that the group "should have a detailed bid to the judge" by the August 5 auction. Jones said that the missed deadlines are "because the group began reviewing the team's finances just three weeks ago." Jones: "As excited as we are about this, we can't make major decisions in this time frame" (*ARIZONA REPUBLIC*, 7/25). Former RIM VP/Global Sales Anthony LeBlanc, who is a partner in the Ice Edge bid, said, "Southern Ontario can support another (NHL) team -- there's absolutely no question, and I think Jim would be a tremendous owner. It's just that we don't think that Phoenix is the right team because we think there's a real savvy business case that can be had in Phoenix." Ice Edge has "won the blessing" of NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman (*GLOBE & MAIL*, 7/25).



Group Files Letter Of Intent To Bid On Coyotes By August 5

BEHIND THE BID: The GLOBE & MAIL's Paul Waldie reports Ice Edge "has been in discussions with officials from Saskatoon and Halifax about playing five Coyotes' regular season games in either community," and the group is "leaning toward Saskatoon, although no firm deal is in place." If the NHL approves the plan, the Coyotes "would play 'home games' in Saskatoon's 11,300-seat Credit Union Centre against" the Canadiens, Flames, Oilers, Devils and Canucks. If the Coyotes make the playoffs, Ice



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Playing Five Coyotes Games In Canada Part Of Ice Edge's Plan

Edge "would hold some of those games in Saskatoon as well," and the group also "plans to move" the Coyotes' farm team, the AHL San Antonio Rampage, to Thunder Bay, Ontario. Jones: "Our plan from the outset was to work with a Canadian city that doesn't have NHL territorial rights issues, and also one that wouldn't be considered a threat to the fans in Phoenix." Waldie reports Ice Edge officials "will present the idea ... to the NHL's executive board Wednesday in Chicago." The group has "no plans to relocate the Coyotes and sees the Canadian games as a way of generating additional revenue so the club can stay in Phoenix." Ice Edge "raised the idea with several other Canadian cities, including Winnipeg where the Coyotes once played as the Jets, but the discussions have gone the farthest with Saskatoon and Halifax." The group "did not approach Hamilton or Toronto, both targeted by other groups interested in NHL franchises." Waldie notes the Canada games are a "key component of Ice Edge's proposal and it is unlikely the group will be able to pursue a bid if the NHL turns down the idea." The group's plan to purchase the Coyotes "hinges on a new lease agreement with the City of Glendale" for Jobing.com Arena, and Ice Edge has had "discussions with the city and it is hopeful a deal can be reached." The group also is "still lining up financial backers and it recently held a meeting at the Magna Golf Club near Toronto for a dozen potential investors." Meanwhile, Ice Edge also plans to offer Coyotes Managing Partner & coach Wayne Gretzky a "long-term coaching contract and a major ownership stake." Plans also include "opening a Gretzky's restaurant in the Jobing.com Arena." Ice Edge officials have "met with Mr. Gretzky to go over its plans," and while "no agreement has been reached, Mr. Gretzky is believed to be receptive to the ideas, including playing games in Saskatoon" (*GLOBE & MAIL*, 7/27). LeBlanc said of the Coyotes, "They have the greatest asset that you could ever want in a hockey owner in Wayne Gretzky and he is not being utilized and he knows it. Wayne really, really wants to keep this team in Phoenix" (*GLOBE & MAIL*, 7/25).

GETTING IN ON THE ACTION: In Hamilton, John Kernaghan reports Coyotes Owner Jerry Moyes "will join a debtors' grilling of civic officials trying to keep" the Coyotes in Arizona. Moyes "could appear in court and personally question Glendale's city manager about documents and negotiations related to the stay-put initiatives." Meanwhile, the NHL was "pleased at Friday's filings," but they "came on the heels of reports showing more financial bleeding" by the Coyotes. The team reportedly lost "more than \$60[M] last season alone," and there are "worries by watchdog groups that the City of Glendale will forsake taxpayers in a lease deal to keep the team at Jobing.com Arena." Baum has "set a Friday deadline for objections to the bids and an Aug. 3 date for responses to them," ahead of the August 5 auction (*HAMILTON SPECTATOR*, 7/27).

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