

iAIM's CIAE Program Targets Industry Leaders

by Jack Vivian, Ph.D.

The Ice Arena Institute of Management (iAIM) was founded on the premise that professional management of ice arenas requires professional education. Furthermore, today's competitive marketplace dictates that facility professionals determined to advance their careers must seek opportunities that allow them to achieve their goals. Long hours, hard work and years of experience are not enough. Arena professionals must aim to achieve the recognition they deserve for their noteworthy contributions to the professional management of arenas. They need to become Certified Ice Arena Executives.

The Certified Ice Arena Executive program is unique because a manager cannot simply take a class to earn the right to be called a CIAE. Candidates for the CIAE distinction must prove that they are competent facility managers through work experience, education, service to the industry and the ability to pass a comprehensive examination.

Steps to the CIAE Program

When the Ice Arena Institute of Management (iAIM) launched its groundbreaking program to provide certificates in management (CIAM), operations (CIAO) and programming (CIAP), the first of its kind among trade associations in the ice arena industry, it intended to elevate the knowledge and professionalism of the entire industry. The objective of the iAIM certification program is to equip managers, operators and programmers with the information, competencies and skills they need to successfully carry out their responsibilities. The aim is to enable ice arena professionals to determine and execute the most appropriate methods for operating, programming and managing ice arenas and related facilities under their direction. By accomplishing that objective, iAIM helps ensure that financial results will be achieved - provided the necessary funding for operating the facility is in place - while offering clients economical services and attractive programs.

How CIAE Program Impacts Industry

The aim of the CIAE program is to meet the recognized need of the facilities management profession for a designation that not only will help facility managers gain credibility but also will elevate the prestige of the profession. Therefore, the goals of the CIAE program are to:

- assure professional competence;
- establish standards for ice arena practices;
- increase recognition of ice arena managers, programmers and operators in the industry and community at large; and
- influence the future direction of the industry. Every industry needs proven leaders to help plan future directions. The ice arena industry is in particular need of recognized leaders.

Earning the CIAE designation gives managers the recognition that they deserve. The CIAE designation will honor the most competent ice arena managers in the world. The process and exams have been designed to assess that level of competence in order to compare candidates to standards that define the practices of the industry's top ice arena managers.

Who Runs the CIAE Program?

The CIAE program, like the other three tracks of the iAIM certification program, is administered by a Board of Regents appointed by the Board of Directors of the Ice Skating Institute. The iAIM Board of Regents is an independent entity with responsibility for all policies and decisions related to the iAIM programs and certification, including the Certified Ice Arena Executive (CIAE) program. The board represents a broad section of public and private sector facility managers plus industry suppliers and manufacturers.

Qualifications for the CIAE

To qualify as a candidate for the CIAE program, a manager, programmer or operator must:

- have five years of experience in the industry or related fields. iAIM does not award this designation to anyone not committed to being a long-term employee in the industry.
- have completed the Certificate of Ice Arena Management (CIAM), Certificate of Ice Arena Operations (CIAO), and Certificate of Ice Arena Programming (CIAP). These programs are offered annually at the Oglebay Resort and Conference Center in Wheeling, West Virginia and at other select sites.
- complete 10 hours of executive level courses offered at the annual ISI Conference and pass a written exam. The executive level courses are designed to be the culminating educational experience for the upper 10 percent of the ice arena industry, those who will be called on to provide leadership for the industry in the future. These courses consist of topics on leadership, planning facilities, ethics, and operating in a diverse society.
- demonstrate service to the industry by serving on industry or community boards, instructing in programs, and/or authoring and publishing materials. True industry leaders will be visible, highly recognized and sought after for advice and counsel. Demonstrating these qualities will be the determining factor for admission to final candidacy for the program. It is recommended that candidates who do not have a strong track record in these areas should begin to contribute to their arena managers association, plan to present at an upcoming ISI program, volunteer to help at an upcoming iAIM program, present articles for publication, and generally become more recognized within the industry.
- complete and obtain a satisfactory score on an oral exam concerning good practices in the ice arena industry. This will be a comprehensive exam covering all facets of the industry. Candidates should allow for months of extensive study prior to taking the exam.

How to Apply

Applicants who have completed the CIAM, CIAO, and CIAP programs should contact the ISI office for an application to the CIAE program. All applicants will be required to submit detailed materials demonstrating education, program participation and professional service, along with references. A committee of industry professionals, appointed by the Board of Regents, will review all applications and work with candidates to determine their qualifications for the CIAE program.

Once officially qualified, candidates will be authorized to register for the executive level classes, followed by the written and oral examinations. For those who are asked to strengthen their credentials, the committee will follow their progress and counsel and mentor their development and service to the industry. Candidates should recognize that this is a growth experience that has numerous peaks and valleys to transverse before reaching the ultimate goal. Those who achieve the CIAE status will have earned their designation through hard work, valuable experience and unparalleled education.

iAIM has prepared materials to assist those in candidacy with studying for the executive class exams and for the comprehensive oral exam. The CIAM, CIAO, and CIAP materials will be helpful; however, the body of knowledge required to become a CIAE encompasses more than what can be included in the three prerequisite certification programs and must be seriously studied in order to be successful. Candidates should arrange their personal and professional lives so as to prepare for this purpose.

Maintaining the CIAE Designation

The CIAE designation, like most professional awards, must be renewed every three years. Certification may become inactive if the holder does not attend 30 hours of approved educational programs in any three-year period. Educational activities should cover subject matter that clearly contributes to the applicant's practice as a manager, programmer or operator of an ice arena. iAIM recognizes a wide variety of community, professional and volunteer sources for continuing educational credits (CEUs). For instance, attending the annual ISI conference can merit up to 10 hours of credit. The objective of this aspect of the program is to ensure that CIAEs remain current in their profession and will be competent representatives of the industry in the future.

As the Ice Arena Institute of Management moves aggressively in pursuit of its goal of becoming the acknowledged leader in ice arena management education, the CIAE program will set new horizons for ice arena managers who aspire to leadership roles within the industry. Furthermore, as the CIAE becomes a standard for leadership positions in the industry, employers will increasingly recognize the merits of seeking Certified Ice Arena Executives for employment and promotion. Moreover, some qualified facility management personnel may choose to work as consultants because these options offer challenges and variety for the future. CIAEs will help strengthen our industry from top to bottom. Control your future – strive to become a Certified Ice Arena Executive.

**Jack Vivian, Ph.D., President of JRV Management and Director of the Ice Arena Institute of Management, is an authority on multipurpose sport and recreation facility planning, development, management and operations. He founded the Sport Facility Research Laboratory at the University of Michigan and is a frequent author and conference leader.*