

Collection #
M 0811

**R. JAMES ALERDING
NFL FRANCHISE FEASIBILITY STUDY
RECORDS, 1973–1975**

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	1 document case
COLLECTION DATES:	1973–75
PROVENANCE:	R. James Alerding, Clifton Gunderson, LLP, 9339 Priority Way West Drive, Suite 200 Indianapolis, IN 46240. 11 Dec 2003
RESTRICTIONS:	None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2004.0058

NOTES:

HISTORICAL SKETCH

Professional football began in the late 1800s, but the National Football League (NFL) did not exist until 1922. Franchises came and went with a few mainstays until the 1950s when the National Football League began to stabilize into its current configuration. Many leagues tried to rival the NFL, but each failed (and usually failed miserably) until the American Football League was created in the 1950s. The AFL would not go away so easily and a merger was established in 1966 that would combine the two leagues by 1970. This merger was necessary financially to both leagues because competition for players was driving salaries far too high for either league to support itself.

Indianapolis, Indiana, never had a professional football team, and by 1973 many citizens of the Indianapolis area were strongly in favor of having one. While working through American Fletcher National Bank (AFNB), R. James Alerding began a feasibility study under the direction of Bob Welch and Frank McKinney to determine whether Indianapolis could financially support a team. Welch was a board member who headed a group of businessmen that wanted to bring professional football to Indianapolis and McKinney was the chair of AFNB.

Alerding's research led him to the financial records of the Cincinnati Bengals and the New England Patriots. Alerding created elaborate spreadsheets that contained information about parking, concessions, and the cost of building a stadium in Indianapolis. His conclusion was that Indianapolis could support a team, and the owner of this team could afford a stadium as well, if fees for parking were used to pay for stadium costs. This study helped the push for a stadium, which would become the Hoosier Dome (later renamed the RCA Dome). A franchise, the Baltimore Colts, was moved to Indianapolis in 1984 and became the Indianapolis Colts after NFL Commissioner Pete Rozelle denied league expansion talks.

Sources:

A History of the Indianapolis Colts (http://www.indystar.com/library/factfiles/sports/football-pro/indpls_colts/history/colts.html) accessed 13 Feb 2004.

E-mail communication from R. James Alerding, 19 Feb 2004 (printout in Accession File).

NFL History (<http://www.nfl-football-merchandise.com/nflhistory.shtml>) accessed 12 Feb 2004

Materials in collection.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection contains 17 file folders containing information from a study prepared by R. James Alerding to

determine the feasibility of building an NFL stadium and operating a professional football franchise in Indianapolis.

Included are notes on telephone conversations and spreadsheets that were projections about parking costs for spectators, income from concessions, how many spectators would be needed at games to turn a profit, and financing a franchise through a bond system. There are also a few letters attempting to access information that would help give further examples, which eventually led Alerding to the financial records of the New England Patriots.

The remaining folders contain finance guides and reports from already existing NFL franchises for the Cincinnati Bengals and the New England Patriots. These two teams both had recently built stadiums, which made them likely models as to whether or not Indianapolis could support an NFL franchise. There are also documents projecting media income in Cincinnati and concession income at Market Square Arena in Indianapolis. Included are copied documents of court rulings that determined how much a player's contract could be depreciated if he signed a contract with an expansion team, which Indianapolis was hoping to be awarded from the NFL.

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Jim Alerding to Bob: Annual Debt Service Projections	Box 1, Folder 8
Record of Telephone Conversation: Jim Alerding to Bill McGowan, 20 Jan. 1975	Box 1, Folder 9
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U.S. Court Ruling on NFL Depreciable Cost of Player Salaries, 5 Mar. 1975	Box 1, Folder 12
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Riverfront Stadium Operating Expenses, 1973	Box 1, Folder 15
Cincinnati Annual Financial Report, 1973	Box 1, Folder 16

CATALOGING INFORMATION

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog: <http://157.91.92.2/>
2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.
3. Select "Call Number" from the "Search In:" box.
4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, M 0811).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.