

CHAPTER 33

Arenas, Auditoriums, Exhibition Halls*

A. NATURE AND COMPOSITION OF FACILITIES

1. DESCRIPTION OF FACILITIES

Expansion in the field of public assembly buildings reached historic highs during the period 1946-65. This growth, however, is expected to be dwarfed during the next 10 years based on current (1966) indications.

The term "public assembly buildings" covers a number of different type structures. Specific descriptive names have been loosely applied to many. In general terms, those most used in the field, the buildings break down into the following categories:

1. *Auditorium-theaters*.—Theater-type structure generally with fixed seating and a stage. Seating ranges from a hundred or less to 5,000 and in some few cases more than this latter figure.

2. *Coliseums-arenas*.—Buildings with large seating capacities grouped around an open center area or arena. Most of the seats are fixed although temporary seating can usually be added to enlarge the capacity. These range in size from those with a few hundred seats to those with a capacity in the neighborhood of 20,000.

3. *Exhibition halls*.—Flat-floor structures of various sizes with no fixed or permanent seating capacity. These are used for public or trade exhibitions where manufacturers, dealers, etc., display their wares to potential buyers.

In actual practice, many buildings combine two or more of the above features and there has been a trend in recent years to all-purpose complexes that are flexible enough to be adapted to all three of the above outlined purposes.

Service-wise, these buildings play important roles in the communities and areas in which they are located.

The auditorium-theaters provide recreation in the forms of entertainment of professional and amateur types. The coliseum-arenas provide facilities for sports events, large meetings and conventions, pageants, and a wide variety of entertainment needing large areas in which to perform.

The exhibition halls are most commercial. They, when combined with large meeting facilities such as coliseums or auditoriums, are in actual practice, convention centers. Conventions are held with the meetings in the coliseum or auditorium and exhibits of products located in usually adjacent flat-floor exhibit halls. The convention business in the United States has grown to become "big business" and competi-

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