



Special Olympics **Nebraska**

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NEBRASKA SELECTED TO HOST THE 2010 SPECIAL OLYMPICS U.S. NATIONAL SUMMER GAMES

LINCOLN/OMAHA TO HOST EVENT FUNDRAISERS, COMPETITIONS AND CEREMONIES

Washington, D.C. (July 6, 2007) – Special Olympics North America announced the selection of Lincoln/Omaha as the site for the 2nd Annual U.S. National Games.

Nearly 4,000 athletes and 15,000 family members, sponsors and coaches from across the country will travel to Nebraska for the 2010 Special Olympics U.S. National Summer Games, tentatively scheduled for late July 2010.

Governor Dave Heineman, Lincoln Mayor Chris Beutler and University of Nebraska Lincoln Chancellor Harvey Perlman joined Chuck Cooper, President/CEO of Special Olympics Nebraska (SONE), Greg Epperson, Senior Director of Sports for Special Olympics North America (SONA) and special Olympian and board member Jason Gieshen to announce the state of Nebraska as the host for the 2010 Games.

"Omaha and Lincoln have been selected as the hosts for the 2010 Games and we plan to execute a phenomenal sporting event for these special athletes," Cooper said. "For an entire week in July, nearly 20,000 people from all over the country will experience Nebraska. Both communities played a vital role in securing Nebraska as the site selection," said Cooper.

Nebraska will serve as the second host for the Special Olympics U.S. National Games – the first-ever U.S. National Games were hosted in Ames, Iowa in 2006.

"Nebraska showcased the best facilities and atmosphere for the 2010 Games. Ames, Iowa was a great event and we have an opportunity to build on the past success. We anticipate more than 3,000 athletes and 1,000 coaches will enjoy all that Nebraska has to offer for an entire week," said Epperson.

"Our state has played host to several national competitions over the years and the decision to bring the Special Olympics to Nebraska is further proof of the excellent reputation our residents and communities have earned when it comes to hospitality," said Governor Heineman. "I firmly believe that the people of our state are our greatest resource, and the fact that we were chosen to host an event of this caliber is something all Nebraskans can be proud of. On behalf of our entire state, we look forward to welcoming the athletes and their families, the Special Olympics staff and the many volunteers who make this event possible in 2010."

"The city of Lincoln is thrilled to host this major event in conjunction with UNL and the City of Omaha," said Mayor Beutler. "We expect the economic impact to be \$30 million or more as thousands of athletes and their families book rooms, eat, shop and visit our tourist attractions for an entire week. We are pleased and proud that our Nebraska athletes will be competing in their home state, and we look forward to sharing our great city and state with visitors from across the country."

"I'm very happy that Nebraska has been chosen to host the National Games," said Jason Gieshen, a special Olympian and Special Olympics Nebraska board member. "I'm proud to be a part of Special Olympics and thanks to all who have made it possible to bring the 2010 National Games to Nebraska. I hope everyone will get involved in some way. You can be a volunteer, a sponsor, an athlete, a family member, or a coach. Or you can simply help with a donation. We will need your help. Everyone wins when we all work together."

Competition venues will most likely be based around the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, with most athletes staying in University dormitories. Competitions will most likely be held in the following sports: Aquatics, Athletics, Basketball, Bocce, Bowling, Cycling, Golf, Gymnastics, MATP (Motor Activities Training Program), Power Lifting, Soccer, Softball, Tennis and Volleyball, with Flag Football introduced as an exhibition sport. In addition, many social and non-sporting events will be held for athletes in conjunction with the games.

"We are dedicated to providing our athletes with the best competition venues and housing available and look forward to working with both Lincoln and Omaha to accomplish that goal," said Cooper.

The 2010 Special Olympics U.S. National Games will become a registered 503c non-profit organization, with Chuck Cooper as the President/CEO. The organization will form a governing board of high-level executives to budget, plan and execute the 2010 Games. Nearly 6,000 volunteers will be needed for the 2010 event, and Cooper said they have set a goal to raise \$6 million over the next three years to cover costs associated with the Games. There is never a charge to participate to any Special Olympic athlete and no one is ever denied an opportunity to participate in any competition based on their ability to pay.

About the Special Olympics North America

Special Olympics is an international organization dedicated to empowering individuals with mental retardation to become physically fit, productive and respected members of society through sports training and competition. Special Olympics offers children and adults with mental retardation year-round training and competition in 26 Olympic-type sports.

For more information on Special Olympics, visit www.specialolympics.org

About Special Olympics Nebraska

Special Olympics Nebraska provides year-round sports training and competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with developmental disabilities, giving them the opportunity to develop physical fitness, demonstrated courage, experience joy and participate in the sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, and other Special Olympics athletes and the community.