



# Midnight Sun



A Publication of the 26th National Veterans Wheelchair Games

Monday, July 3, 2006

## Welcome from the Local Organizing Committee 'Chasing the Midnight Sun'

**O**n behalf of the 26th National Veterans Wheelchair Games local organizing committee, welcome to Anchorage! Excitement is high as volunteers and residents of Anchorage look forward to extending true Alaska spirit to competitors, coaches and family members. As a city, Anchorage is truly honored to host the largest annual wheelchair sports event in the world!

This year's local organizing committee consists of many professional leaders in the Anchorage community, chairing 50-plus committees and working hand-in-hand with the local VA and

Northwest Chapter, PVA—a successful partnership using a new model of organization for the 2006 Games. The Games have received overwhelming support from local and rural communities, federal, state, and municipal agencies, corporate, civic and veterans' service organizations, and many others. Everyone has been generous with their time and talents.

Many exciting events are planned for the week. July 3 starts off with the Games Kick-off in Town Square and Opening Ceremonies at the Sullivan Arena. Some great entertainment is planned in the staging tent at the arena starting at 3 p.m., to include award-winning Alaska Native rock 'n' roll band Medicine Dream, four-time Iditarod champion sled dog racer Martin Buser (and perhaps some puppies!) and Hobo Jim, Alaska's official state balladeer. The welcome reception following the ceremony will have an Alaska gold rush theme with more exciting entertainment.

July Fourth is a big day in Anchorage, starting off with a parade followed by an afternoon of celebration and events. There will be family-friendly entertainment, food and games, as well as antique cars and fire trucks, and police and military displays. Following the Games handcycle race, the ceremonial finish of Sadler's Ultra Challenge will occur. Be on hand to cheer these wheelchair athletes who have raced throughout the past

six days in seven stages from Fairbanks to Anchorage—a distance of 267 miles!

Kids Day will be on Thursday, July 6, at Bartlett High School. An exciting block party is planned that evening with musical entertainment featuring Hobo Jim and Tommy Rocker, direct from Las Vegas! We'll have Alaska Native crafters exhibiting their handmade artwork, live bald eagles, reindeer, owls, golden eagles or hawks, costumed critters, a four-time Iditarod sled dog race champion with dogs and puppies, Alaska beer, drawings for Chilkoot Charlie's Alaska Saloon T-shirts and other great prizes.

The week draws to a close with the Closing Ceremonies and Banquet at the Sullivan Arena, where an exciting evening is planned with an Alaska northern lights theme. Highlights from the week will be celebrated, as well as announcing the 2006 Spirit of the Games winner.

Please look for the map of Anchorage in the participant information packets, which includes a list of free things to do in and around Anchorage. There is a wealth of opportunities for whatever your interests may be, from recreational activities to sightseeing, cultural events and shopping for those unique Alaska souvenirs. On behalf of our community, welcome to Anchorage for the 26th National Veterans Wheelchair Games!

**2006 National Veterans Wheelchair Games  
Local Organizing Committee**



### Expected Weather for Games Week

Average temperature 58 degrees

Expect clouds and mostly overcast skies and possible light rain.



## Schedule of Events for Today

9 a.m.-4 p.m.	Registration and Expo	Egan Convention Center
11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.	Kick-off	Town Square
1-2 p.m.	Coaches' Meeting	Egan Convention Center
6:30-8 p.m.	Opening Ceremonies	Sullivan Arena
8:15-10 p.m.	Welcome Reception	Sullivan Arena

## What's Where?



**Durable Medical Equipment (DME)** is located at the Marriott Hotel in the Skagway Room; the Sheraton Anchorage Hotel in the Kuskokwim Room; and the Howard Johnson Hotel in the Anchorage Room. Hours are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. today through Friday, and from 12 a.m. Saturday to 12 a.m. Sunday. The phone number for DME is (907) 382-2934.

### Hospitality

Hospitality desks are located in each hotel lobby and at the Egan Convention Center through Sunday, July 9. Hours are 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. A wealth of information is available at each of these desks, such as recommended restaurants and places to shop, things to do in Anchorage, maps with driving directions, the Games schedule, transportation schedule, departure information and extra luggage tags, lost luggage forms, Spirit of the Games Award ballots, and optional tour information.

### Internet Cafe

You are far from home and just won a medal—how do you let your friends back home know? Come to the Internet Café and send them a message, of course! This year, the Internet Café will be located in the lobby of the Egan Convention Center. Café hours are 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Computers and printers are available, compliments of longtime Games sponsor Hewlett-Packard. Staff will also be available to help with questions. Also, be sure to tell your friends and family back home about the Games Web site. Results, news releases and photos will be posted starting mid-week, at [www.wheelchairgames.org](http://www.wheelchairgames.org).

### Medical Emergencies and Assistance

Full medical suites are available only at the following hotels: Marriott, Sheraton Anchorage, and Howard Johnson. These medical suites will be fully operational through July 8, ending at 10:30 p.m. The medical suites will be open for athletes each day from 7 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. for treatment of injuries and illnesses. If you have a medical emergency after the medical suites are closed, contact the operator at the hotel where you are staying. That operator will take the athlete's name and room number and communicate with the physician or nurse on call.

**Do not call 911 unless there is a life-threatening emergency!** If this occurs, please have the hotel operator contact 911.

**All other hotels will have** nurses on duty after hours only. It is the same procedure for contacting the hotel operator for medical emergencies after 10:30 p.m. If medical issues arise during the day, athletes need to go to the medical suites at the Marriott, Sheraton, or Howard Johnson, or be evaluated at the various venue sites where medical teams are also stationed. The medical staff will be easily identified by their red shirts with a white cross on the back.

Only registered athletes or volunteers on duty will be treated by VA medical staff in the hotels or at the venues. If family members need medical assistance, a list of local emergency clinics and hospitals will be available at the hospitality desks.

### Wheelchair Repair

Wheelchair repair is available through Sunday, July 9 for emergencies only. The main wheelchair repair station is located at the Marriott Hotel. Invacare personnel are also available at most sports venues for emergency repairs. Contact the hospitality desk at your hotel for specific locations or for after-hours emergencies. The hospitality desks are open from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily.

# Transportation

## Opening Ceremonies

Transportation to the Opening Ceremonies begins today at 4 p.m. from each of the hotels. Do not wait until the last minute to get to the Opening Ceremonies because transportation is limited. The earlier you get there, the better! Come early, relax and enjoy the entertainment.

## Hotel Transportation to Main Transport HUB

There are three main transportation loops from the hotels to the Egan Center, which is the main transportation hub. All hotel buses go to the Egan Center. **You must transfer at the Egan Center** to be transported to your event venue.

**Red Loop** – hotels located on the east side of downtown, which include:

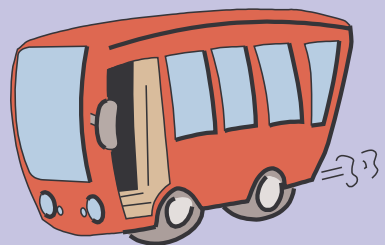
- Sheraton Anchorage Hotel
- Clarion Suites Hotel
- Howard Johnson
- Aspen Hotel (must push to the Clarion to pick up transportation)

**White Loop** – hotels located on the west side of downtown:

- Hawthorne Suites Hotel
- Marriott Hotel

**Blue Loop** – hotels located in midtown:

- Hilton Garden Inn
- Homewood Suites
- Motel 6
- Fairfield Inn



## To & From Sporting Venues

Transportation departs from the Egan Center starting **one hour** prior to game time. Please plan ahead when departing from your hotel to the Egan Center.

**Please plan ahead ...** Athletes need to be at their respective sports venues at least a half-hour before start time. It is **strongly recommended** that you depart from your hotel two hours prior to start time. If your sport is at the Egan Center (Weightlifting, Table Tennis or Air Guns) you only need to depart from your hotel one hour before.

Remember, when departing from your hotel you will be taken to the Egan Center where you will transfer to another bus that will take you to your event. For Opening and Closing Ceremonies you will be taken directly from your hotel to that venue site.

## Egan Center distances from hotels:

*Sheraton Anchorage Hotel* – 7 blocks

*Clarion Suites Hotel* – 3 blocks

*Howard Johnson* – 2 blocks

*Hawthorne Suites Hotel* – 9 blocks

*Marriott Hotel* – 5 blocks

*Aspen* – 7 blocks (no transportation is available from this hotel. You must push to the Clarion (2 blocks) for transportation.

*Hilton* – 2 blocks (no transportation is available from this hotel. You must push to the Egan Center (2 blocks) for transportation.

*Hilton Garden Inn* – 2 miles (not pushable)

*Homewood Suites* – 2 miles (not pushable)

*Motel 6* – 2 miles (not pushable)

*Fairfield Inn* – 2 miles (not pushable)

## Start Off the Games with a Kick!

Be sure to swing by the Games Kick-off this morning from 11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m. in Anchorage's Town Square, just across the street from the Egan Convention Center. This is a perfect place to go after you finish registering and visiting the 2006 Health & Fitness Expo. The Town Square is a picturesque plaza, with more than 9,000 plants in bloom, right in the heart of downtown. It serves as a venue for civic events, festivals and this year, the National Veterans Wheelchair Games Kick-off (as well as Thursday's block party). At today's event, several of our Games competitors and local officials will demonstrate quad rugby to the citizens of Anchorage. This is an excellent opportunity to show the local community just one of the 15 exciting competitions taking place this week.

Several local media personalities are expected to join in the festivities and try the sport for themselves. Alex Spector, Director of the Alaska VA Healthcare System, and Anchorage Mayor Mark Begich will officially welcome all athletes, families, sponsors and staff to this year's Games.

Now in its sixth year, the first-day Games Kick-off is well on its way to becoming a tradition at the National Veterans Wheelchair Games. So bring your family and friends for an early taste of what's in store later this week. See you there!

## Don't Miss Tonight's Opening Ceremonies!

Come one, come all to what is sure to be a memorable evening with lots of fun and surprises in store! The Opening Ceremonies for the 26th National Veterans Wheelchair Games will be held this evening in the Sullivan Arena. Seating for spectators and guests begins at 5:30 p.m., with the event commencing promptly at 6:30 p.m.

This year, there will be buses departing from each hotel starting at 4 p.m. You will need to arrive at the staging area as early as possible and no later than 6 p.m. Staging for the parade of athletes will be according to state, in a tent on the east side of the Ben Boeke Arena, located on the south side of Sullivan Arena. All competitors are grouped by state in the staging area, and only athletes and qualified coaches will be permitted in this area. (Please do not bring your family and friends to the staging area; they may proceed to the general seating areas inside Sullivan Arena before the festivities begin.)

You may want to grab something to eat before you are picked up at your hotel since only light snacks and water will be provided before the program begins, and the Athletes' Reception does not start until approximately 8 p.m. As you wait for the program to start, you will be treated to some great Alaska entertainment.

During the ceremony, country music singer (and National Guard veteran who served in Iraq) Luke Stricklin will sing the National Anthem, accompanied by some very special guests—our athletes' children.

Immediately following the ceremonies, a festive welcome reception with a "gold rush" theme will be held in the large tent outside the arena. Athletes will enter the dining area first. Each athlete may bring one guest to dinner, and all guests must have a wristband to enter.

Not wanting to give everything away too soon, you can be assured that there will be some special surprises in store for you at tonight's Opening Ceremonies, as well as the lighting of the Games' torch. You won't want to miss the energy and the welcoming spirit of "the Last Frontier" at this year's event!

## Fourth of July Parade

"The Price of Freedom" is the theme for tomorrow's Fourth of July Parade. What better way to start off the parade than with 500+ military veteran athletes participating in the 26th National Veterans Wheelchair Games! Wear your team shirts for the parade procession. **Staging for the parade will take place in downtown Anchorage on G Street between 8th and 9th Avenues.** Buses will drop athletes off at the Egan Convention Center. From the Egan Center, cross the street through Town Square and proceed south down F Street to 8th Avenue. Turn right on 8th Avenue and go one block to G Street. It's an easy push to the staging location. The parade route is approximately one mile long. A limited number of volunteers will be available to push those who request assistance.

Plan to arrive at the staging area between 9 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. If you expect to be in the parade and for the parade to start on time, **everyone must be in place by 10:30 a.m.** Remember, only registered athletes will be in the procession.

## Meals this Week

All breakfasts will be served at the individual hotels; menus vary by location. Lunch is at the Egan Center tomorrow. Box lunches will be delivered to some of the sport venues on Wednesday, Friday and Saturday. Box lunches will also be distributed at the Egan Center for those not competing at those venues over the lunch period. On Thursday, a barbecue lunch will be held at the Park Strip, located on 9th Ave. between N and P Streets. Transportation will be provided if you choose to ride the bus.

All dinners will be served at the Egan Center except on Thursday. The Block Party that day will be in Town Square on 5th Avenue, between E and F Streets directly in front of the Egan Center. In case of rain, the dinner will move into the Egan Center but the Block Party will remain in Town Square—rain or shine!

Starting tomorrow, a daily lunch and dinner menu will appear in the *Midnight Sun*.