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### **ATHLETE REGISTRATION OPENS FOR 2006 NATIONAL VETERANS WHEELCHAIR GAMES**

**ANCHORAGE, AK – February 10, 2006** – Registration is now open for athletes to compete in the largest annual wheelchair sports event in the world, the 26<sup>th</sup> National Veterans Wheelchair Games. More than 500 veterans from across the United States, Puerto Rico and Great Britain are expected to compete in the Games, taking place in Anchorage, Alaska July, 3 - 8, 2006.

Presented by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA), the Games are open to all U.S. military veterans who use wheelchairs for sports competition due to spinal cord injuries, certain neurological conditions, amputations or other mobility impairments. The 2006 Games are hosted by the Alaska VA Healthcare System and the Northwest Chapter of PVA.

Wheelchair sports can play an important role in the lives of disabled people and have a lasting importance on their lives. For many newly injured veterans, this event is their first exposure to wheelchair athletics. Veterans interested in competing in the Games may call the PVA Sports Department to receive an application, at (800) 424-8200. Athlete registration also is available online at [www.wheelchairgames.org](http://www.wheelchairgames.org).

Competitive events will be held at the Sullivan Arena, Bartlett High School, the William A. Egan Civic & Convention Center, Delaney Park Strip, Cellular One Sports Center and other venues. The 2006 Games competitions will include track and field events, archery, swimming, table tennis, weightlifting, air guns, basketball, softball, quad rugby, bowling, handcycling, slalom, power soccer and a motorized wheelchair rally. A powerchair relay and a powerchair track event will be offered as exhibition events. Athletes compete in all events against others with similar athletic ability, competitive experience or age.

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## Registration Opens for Wheelchair Games 2/2/22

In addition to the competitions and the Opening and Closing Ceremonies, the event will include a "Kids Day," on Thursday, July 6, when local children with physical and developmental disabilities will interact with participating athletes, be introduced to wheelchair sports, participate in selected sporting events and watch veterans compete. The public is invited to attend any or all of the sports competitions throughout the week. Admission is free.

Anchorage is actively recruiting more than 2,000 volunteers who will help with the Games. Volunteers can work as greeters, setting up venues, assisting with meals and transportation, or helping the athletes get ready to compete. To download a volunteer application, visit [www.wheelchairgamesanchorage.net](http://www.wheelchairgamesanchorage.net).

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**About VA:** *A Cabinet-level department, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is a world leader in rehabilitation, with comprehensive recreation therapy programs at its medical facilities. Celebrating its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, VA provides excellence in patient care, veterans benefits, memorial programs and customer satisfaction. VA employees continue to offer their dedication and commitment to helping veterans get the services they have earned. To learn more about VA programs and benefits, visit VA's Web site at [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov).*

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**About PVA:** *Founded in 1946, Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) this year celebrates its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary. During the past six decades, PVA has helped paralyzed veterans attain the benefits they earned and provided these veterans with the programs and services to improve their quality of life. PVA is a dynamic, broad-based organization with more than 21,000 members in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. To learn more about PVA, visit its Web site at [www.pva.org](http://www.pva.org).*