



Quest Dispatch

Quest for the Best!



Volume 1, Issue 1

Friday, July 25, 2008

Welcome To Omaha!



Al Washko,
Director, VA Nebraska-
Western Iowa Health
Care System

Al Washko, Director of the VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System in Omaha, and Mark Linquist, President of the Great Plains Chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of America, welcome you to the 28th National Veterans Wheelchair Games. Representing our 2008 co-hosts, they know that all of the athletes and their families will have a fabulous time during their “*Quest for the Best*” experience in Omaha. Enjoy the Games, explore the city and discover the wide-open spaces of beautiful Nebraska! If you have any questions, ask one of our local organizing committee members, easy to spot in their red Games shirts. We are all here to make sure you have a wonderful week in Omaha!



Mark Linquist,
President, Great Plains
Chapter, Paralyzed
Veterans of America

Don't Miss Tonight's Opening Ceremonies!

This evening, as the crowd of proud families and friends moves apart to allow hundreds of veterans in wheelchairs to make their way front and center; as voices blend together to sing our national anthem; and as the flame ignites the official torch for this week's event, we will officially mark the start of the 28th National Veterans Wheelchair Games here in Omaha.

Make plans to attend the Opening Ceremonies this evening in the main arena of the Qwest Center Omaha. It is sure to be a memorable event for athletes, family members, staff, volunteers and guests. Athletes should plan to arrive in the grand hallway of the Qwest Center Omaha for staging at 4:30 p.m. The program commences promptly at 6 p.m.

All athletes should come to their staging areas as early as possible. The parade of athletes will proceed in alphabetical order by state, with the State of Nebraska entering last in traditional Olympic fashion. Competitors will be grouped by state in the staging area, and only athletes and qualified coaches will be permitted in this area. (Our teams from the District of

Columbia, Puerto Rico, and Great Britain will enter alphabetically as well, under those names.) Family and friends may proceed to the general seating area to wait for the festivities to begin. After registration today, you might want to get something to eat before the Opening Ceremonies begin because the welcome reception (where food will be served) does not take place until around 7:30 p.m.

Colleen Williams, news anchor for NTV from Kearney, Neb., is serving as the mistress of ceremonies this evening. Dady Keys, an employee from the VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System in Omaha, will sing the National Anthem, and the Athlete's Oath will be read by 2007 Spirit of the Games Winner Philemon “Rollin’ Joe” Velasquez. Tamara Lawter, a local veteran and Great Plains PVA Chapter member also from Kearney, will light the Games torch at the conclusion of tonight's event.

Immediately following the formal program, a festive welcome reception will be held next door in the Qwest Center Omaha Hall A.

We look forward to seeing you at tonight's event, where our *Quest for the Best* will finally begin!



VA, PVA Leaders Visit the Games

Secretary of Veterans Affairs James B. Peake, M.D., is in Omaha today visiting with veterans, sponsors and Games staff. "I applaud all of the veterans participating as they strive to achieve their goals during this week of competition," said Peake.

A St. Louis, Mo., native, Peake received his bachelor's degree from West Point Military Academy in 1966 and was commissioned a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army Infantry. Following service in Vietnam with the 101st Airborne Division (where he was awarded the Silver Star, a Bronze Star with "V" device and the Purple Heart with oak leaf cluster), Peake attended medical school at Cornell University and received his medical degree in 1972.

As Secretary of Veterans Affairs, he is the principal advocate for veterans in the U.S. government, ensuring that they receive the care, support, recognition and dignity they deserve for their service to our country.

Randy L. Pleva, Sr., National President of Paralyzed Veterans of America, is here at the Games as well and will also greet the audience at tonight's Opening Ceremonies.

Also a Vietnam War veteran, Pleva joined the Marine Corps in 1971, serving with the Task Force Delta Unit in Southeast Asia. He was discharged in 1974, became employed as a coal miner and United Mine Workers mediator. In 1982, he sustained a spinal cord injury in a coal mining accident. He lives in Tad, W. Va. We are pleased to welcome him back to the Games.

"The National Veterans Wheelchair Games are a mix of camaraderie, competition and courage," Pleva said. "They are rehabilitation at its best for our paralyzed veterans."

Many other VA, Paralyzed Veterans and community leaders are attending the Games this week as special guests, sponsors and volunteers. Thank you all for coming!



The Hon. James B. Peake, M.D., Secretary of Veterans Affairs



Randy L. Pleva, Sr., National President, Paralyzed Veterans of America

Welcome Reception

Questing for the Best Food? Perfect for a July event, the theme of this year's athlete reception after the gala Opening Ceremonies this evening is



backyard barbeque. Beginning around 7:30 p.m., all athletes, coaches, family and friends will head to Exhibit Hall A,

adjacent to the arena where the Opening Ceremonies are taking place. Be ready to enjoy some musical entertainment and to feast on hamburgers and chicken (from Omaha Steaks) and all the traditional side dishes. Food will be served family style, so there will be no waiting at individual food stations or buffet lines. Enjoy the relaxed and festive atmosphere as we begin the 2008 Games just right. Pass the ketchup!

Team Assignments

If you are playing basketball, quad rugby, power soccer or softball, teams are being decided today. At tonight's welcome reception, team lists will be placed on the tables. It is very important that you find out which team you are on so you can report to the appropriate venue at the correct time. The first games for softball are tomorrow at 8 a.m., and the other team sports also begin tomorrow. So pick up those team rosters as soon as you can to learn where you're supposed to be – and when!

Games Kick-off Today!

Be sure to stop by the Games Kick-off this morning from 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. directly outside the Qwest Center Omaha on the west side, north end. (In case of rain, the Kick-off will take place on basketball court #1 in Exhibit Hall B of the Qwest Center Omaha.) This is a perfect place to go after you register and enjoy the Sports, Recreation and Fitness Expo.

The Kick-off has become a Wheelchair Games favorite as our athletes join local officials to demonstrate the technical skills involved in the competitive game of wheelchair basketball for the local community. Several local media personalities are expected to join in the festivities and try the sport for themselves. Mike Kelly, a well-respected media personality, will serve as master of ceremonies; Dave Weber, Channel 6 TV anchor, will provide the play-by-play; and Mayor Mike Fahey will officially welcome Games athletes, families, sponsors and staff to the event. Local team mascots, including the Creighton University Blue Jay and Harry Husker from University of Nebraska-Lincoln, will also be in attendance.

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



Veterans History Project

Only you can tell your story in your own way. So why not be a part of an important national effort – the Veterans History Project (VHP)? Make an appointment at the VHP registration table today. Interviews will

take place Saturday, July 26 through Monday, July 28, between the hours of 8 a.m. until 5 p.m.; and on Tuesday, July 29 from 8 a.m. – 2 p.m. in Show Office B (near Exhibit Hall B) in the Qwest Center Omaha. This project is meant to honor you, our nation's veterans, by creating a lasting legacy of your military experience. We need your story. Share it with us and help make history come alive! Your interview will be recorded on a DVD. One copy will be given to the Library of Congress, and another given to you. What happens next? You and your story become part of our nation's official historical records. Sign up today and when your interview is completed, you'll receive a VHP tote bag and a one-of-a-kind VHP Challenge coin.



Daily Bulletin Board

The Games **Wheelchair Repair Shop** is located at the Hilton Hotel, Hill Room on the 2nd floor and is open from 8 a.m. - 8 p.m. July 25 - 29. There will be a wheelchair repair presence at every venue and at departure time, all day on Wednesday, July 30. Phone number: (402) 205-6087

Durable Medical Equipment (DME) is located at the Hilton Hotel in St. Nicholas Ballroom, Hilton Garden Hotel in the Haze Room and at the Hampton Inn in Meeting Room A. DME hours of operation:

Friday, July 25	6 a.m. - 10 p.m.
Saturday, July 26 thru Monday, July 28	On Call (402) 205-6051
Tuesday, July 29	6 a.m. - 10 p.m.
Wednesday, July 30	6 a.m. - Noon



Transportation leaves from in front of the Qwest Center Omaha on 10th Street on a regular schedule to the event sites. Specifics for each event are below:

Saturday July 26th

For Archery with 8 a.m. event start	Loading starts at 6:30 a.m. and continues on a regular schedule through 7:30 a.m.
For Sled Hockey with 1 p.m. event start	Loading starts at 11 a.m., and continues on a regular schedule through 12:15 p.m.

Hospitality — Friendly staff and volunteers at the 28th National Veterans Wheelchair Games hospitality desks look forward to having you stop by for information about Omaha, and discovering all the things to do and see in the local area. Hospitality desks at the Hilton and Hilton Garden Inn hotels will be open as follows:

Friday July 25	7 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Monday July 28	Noon - 9:30 p.m.
Tuesday July 29	7 a.m. - 6 p.m. 9 p.m. - Midnight

The hours for the hospitality desk at the Qwest Center Omaha are:

Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday July 25-28	7 a.m. - 8 p.m.
Tuesday July 29	7a.m. - 6 p.m.



2008 Spirit of the Games Award

Celebrate the Spirit of the Games!

Each year, one athlete is selected at the National Veterans Wheelchair Games to receive the Spirit of the Games Award. This very special award is given to a veteran who clearly demonstrates not only athletic competence, but also sportsmanship and strength of character. You will undoubtedly meet athletes this week who meet these qualifications. If so, please nominate them for the 2008 Spirit of the Games Award. Nomination forms and ballot boxes will be available starting tomorrow, and will be located at the main hospitality desk and also at the Qwest Center Omaha in Exhibit Hall A, where meals are being served. All ballots are due by 8 a.m. Monday, July 28.



Our Chef's Selections for...

**Friday,
July 25, 2008**

During Registration and Expo today, concessions in Hall A and Hall B will be open for cash purchases.

Please see "Welcome Reception" on page 2 for information on this evening's opening events.

Meals

Meal services begin with breakfast on Saturday, July 26 and end with lunch on Tuesday, July 29 at the Qwest Center Omaha in Exhibit Hall A.

Exhibit Hall A is located on the first floor of the Qwest Center Omaha.



Meals will be served cafeteria style, with hot and cold entrees as well as à la carte items such as salads, grilled sandwiches,

and an assortment of desserts and beverages. Athletes and others receiving complimentary meals will use their meal voucher provided during registration. Family members and guests may pay cash for each meal, and will not be required to purchase a meal pass for the entire week.

You may also choose to use your meal voucher at the concession stands in the event areas of Halls A, B and C.

Hall A Meal Hours: Saturday, July 26 through Tuesday, July 29 (unless otherwise noted):

Breakfast:	5:30 - 9 a.m.
Lunch:	10:30 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Dinner:	4 - 7 p.m.

Purchase your Closing Banquet tickets during Registration today at Stop #3 Booth 318. The cost is \$15 for athletes and qualified coaches, \$25 for all others.



Quest for the Best!

Daily Schedule for...

Friday, July 25

9 a.m. – 4 p.m.	Games Registration & Health and Fitness Expo	Qwest Center Omaha, Hall C
11:30 a.m.	Games Kick-off	Qwest Center Omaha (outside)
1 – 2 p.m.	Coaches Meeting	Qwest Center Omaha, Ballrooms A&B
2:30 – 3 p.m.	Novice Athlete Meeting	Qwest Center Omaha, Ballrooms A&B
6 – 7 p.m.	Opening Ceremonies	Qwest Center Omaha, Main Arena
7:30 – 9:30 p.m.	Welcome Reception	Qwest Center Omaha, Hall A

Saturday, July 26

7:30 – 8:30 a.m.	Late Registration	Qwest Center Omaha, Room 212
8 a.m.	Archery All plus Standing	Northwest High School
	Nine-Ball IA, IB, IC	Qwest Center Omaha, Halls B&C
	Softball Games 1, 2	Qwest Center Omaha, Halls B&C
8:30 a.m.	Handcycling	Qwest Center Omaha (outside)
10 a.m.	Air Guns	Qwest Center Omaha, Ballrooms A&B
	Softball Games 3, 4	Qwest Center Omaha, Halls B&C
1 p.m.	Air Guns	Qwest Center Omaha, Ballrooms A&B
	Power Soccer Games 1, 2	Qwest Center Omaha, Hall B
	Quad Rugby Game 1	Qwest Center Omaha, Hall B
	Slalom II, III	Qwest Center Omaha, Hall A
	Sled Hockey Exhibition	Tranquility Ice Plex
	Table Tennis IV, V & Standing	Qwest Center Omaha, Halls B&C
3 p.m.	Air Guns	Qwest Center Omaha, Ballrooms A&B
	Power Soccer Games 3, 4	Qwest Center Omaha, Hall B
	Quad Rugby Game 2	Qwest Center Omaha, Hall B
	Slalom IV, V	Qwest Center Omaha, Hall A
	Table Tennis II, III	Qwest Center Omaha, Halls B&C
7 p.m.	Air Guns	Qwest Center Omaha, Ballrooms A&B
	Basketball Games 1, 2, 3	Qwest Center Omaha, Hall B
	Table Tennis IA, IB, IC	Qwest Center Omaha, Halls B&C
8:30 p.m.	Basketball Games 4, 5, 6	Qwest Center Omaha, Hall B



Great news! HP is once again sponsoring an iCafé (internet café) at the Games. Located at the north end of the Qwest Center Omaha's grand hallway, it features computer stations and two plug-in ports for personal laptops. It is open from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily, except for Tuesday July 29 when it closes at 2 p.m. *Thank you, HP!*

Want to connect via **WiFi**? Two "hot-spots" are available in the Qwest Center Omaha, one at the grand hallway south end and the other near the entrance to the concert hall.

Take advantage of these opportunities to check your e-mail, send messages about your athletic achievements and log onto the Games' Web site for the latest information.

NVWG Web site

www.wheelchairgames.va.gov

Would you like your friends and family back home to be able to see what you are doing this week? Tell them to log onto the National Veterans Wheelchair Games' Web site to check out the daily editions of the *Quest Dispatch* (on the Games' main home page).



Did you lose something? Did you find something? Lost and Found is located in the Games Command Center in Room 211 of the

Qwest Center Omaha and is available from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m.



Medical Details

Medical suites are available at the **Hilton Hotel in Rooms 4034 and 4038** and **Hilton Garden Inn in Room 214**. They will be open Friday, July 25 and will close Wednesday, July 30 at 8 a.m. Medical assistance will be available at all times (with the exception of the Opening Ceremonies) during the duration of the Games.



For those athletes staying at the Homewood Suites, Courtyard by Marriott or the Hampton Inn, medical assistance will be available daily starting Friday, July 25 from Midnight – 8 a.m. If an athlete has a medical emergency during this time, the hotel operator should be contacted. The operator will take the veteran's name and room number, and communicate with the physician or nurse on call. If medical assistance is needed at other times during his or her stay, the veteran should go to the medical suites located at the Hilton or Hilton Garden Inn hotels, or at the Qwest Center Omaha.

The medical suite at the **Qwest Center Omaha, in Show Office C**, will be open daily at 6 a.m. and will remain open until the last event in that location has ended. In the case of a life-threatening emergency, please have the hotel operator call 911.

Only registered athletes or registered volunteers on duty may be treated by Games' medical staff. A list of local emergency clinics and hospitals will be available for family members who need medical assistance.

Weather
Omaha's average temperatures for July are highs of 87° and lows of 66°. They also average 3.5 inches of rain for the month.