

# National Veterans Wheelchair Games



## HOT SHEET

**Monday, July 3, 2006**

**Here Come the Veterans!**

NOTE TO EDITORS: The 26<sup>th</sup> National Veterans Wheelchair Games begin today at the Egan Convention Center and downtown Anchorage, with Opening Ceremonies this evening at Sullivan Arena. More than 500 veteran athletes with disabilities (including more than 30 recently injured in Iraq) register today for largest annual wheelchair sports competition in the world! The Games, a great patriotic, sports, and health/fitness story, run through Saturday, July 8, 2006. For more information or to arrange for interviews or media opportunities, call the National Veterans Wheelchair Games Media Center (at the Hilton) at (907) 257-6768; or (970) 257-6769. For continuing updates throughout the week, visit the Games Web site at [www.wheelchairgames.org](http://www.wheelchairgames.org).

### **2006 GAMES REGISTRATION AND DISABLED SPORTS, RECREATION AND FITNESS EXPO**

**9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.**

**Egan Convention Center**

This is a large gathering of suppliers of products and services related to the health, well-being, sports and recreational needs of people with disabilities. Wheelchair athletes from across the United States, Puerto Rico and Great Britain register here for the Games today. This is the only time the event has been held in Alaska in its 26-year history.

### **GAMES KICK-OFF**

**11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**

**Town Square**

The Kick-off includes a welcome to the city by Anchorage Mayor Mark Begich, and a wheelchair quad rugby exhibition by talented Games competitors as well as able-bodied visitors from local news organizations. Wayne Miller, one of the veteran participants and a combat-wounded Vietnam veteran, will sing the National Anthem. Great photo and interview opportunities as an air horn is sounded, calling for the Games to begin. Great time for early Games photos and interviews.

### **OPENING CEREMONIES**

**6:30 p.m.**

**Sullivan Arena**

The spectacular Opening Ceremonies begins with a parade of the athletes, identified by state or national flags representing 46 of the United States, Puerto Rico and Great Britain. Speakers include VA Under Secretary for Health Dr. Jonathan Perlin and PVA National President Randy L. Pleva, Jr. Special treats are Alaska Native dancers, balladeer "Hobo Jim," and country star Luke Stricklin, who leads the national anthem with the athletes' children. A Vietnam veterans motorcycle club and wheelchair honor guard will present the colors. Later, the torch comes in by dog sled! A welcome reception follows. This is a colorful, festive event, perfect for early Games coverage. **Great time for early interviews. Let the Games Begin!**

###