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### **VANCOUVER USA REGIONAL TOURISM OFFICE CREATES LOCAL SPORTS COMMISSION**

**VANCOUVER, Wash.** – In its ongoing mission to create positive economic growth throughout Clark County, the board of directors of the Vancouver USA Regional Tourism Office voted to create a new sports commission that will serve as a catalyst for attracting and promoting sports events and tournaments in Clark County, Wash. The newly formed Vancouver USA Regional Sports Commission will serve as a special advisory committee to the board.

“Our numerous sports facilities, parks and natural venues are becoming well-known among event organizers throughout the Northwest as well as the entire U.S.,” said Kim Bennett, President and CEO of Vancouver USA Regional Tourism Office. “By lending us their expertise and connections, the new commission members will be invaluable resources for our board and staff and will help better position Clark County as a go-to region for sporting events of all kinds.”

The Sports Commission will ultimately be comprised of 20 to 30 members from across Clark County, including representation from:

- Colleges, universities and high school athletic programs
- Private and public sports venues and facilities
- Parks and recreation organizations
- Sport associations and clubs
- Athletic suppliers and vendors
- Sports medicine organizations
- Tournament directors
- Sports officials
- Sports media
- Tourism and hospitality professionals
- Private businesses and retailers

Additionally, at least two members of the Tourism Office’s board of directors will sit on the commission.

Initial members of the Sports Commission include Brian McClary, Heathman Lodge; Charles Guthrie, Clark College, Peter Mayer, Vancouver-Clark County Parks and Recreation; Alison Hite, SpringHill Suites by Marriott; Dave Sobolik, Fit Right Northwest; and Kim Bennett, Vancouver USA Regional Tourism Office.

"All across the nation, communities are realizing the massive economic and public relations impact sports can have on a community. Here in Clark County we have the people and places necessary to realize that potential. We can build on the successes of marathons, regional youth tournaments, and equestrian events to make sports a major force in economic development and revitalization for the County," said Steve Stuart, Clark County Commissioner.

The primary goals and objectives of the Sports Commission include, but are not limited to:

- Providing and coordinating resources in the community that will enhance the success of sports events/tournaments.
- Serving as information resources when developing contacts and knowledge in the state, Pacific Northwest and throughout the U.S.
- Prospecting sports events/tournaments and bid opportunities that fit the resources available in Clark County.
- Providing education and information to the general public on the benefits of investing in sports competitions and venues.
- Providing a forum for the continued recognition of sports as a positive force in improving the quality of life in the Clark County area.

Vancouver and surrounding Clark County are home to a growing number of major national and regional sports events that attract thousands of visitors to the region every year. Most notably, the NAIA Cross Country National Championships have been held in Vancouver since 2009 and it was just recently announced that the city has been selected to host the National Championships in 2012; the fourth consecutive year. Vancouver also has served as the host city for:

- The Little League Girls Softball Western Region Tournament, which has been held for eight consecutive years at the Fort Vancouver Little League Field.
- The Washington State Horse Expo held at the Clark County Event Center.
- Adidas Clash at the Border soccer tournament held at sports fields in Camas, just east of Vancouver.
- The U.S. Rowing Northwest Junior District Championships held at Vancouver Lake.
- The Vancouver USA Marathon.

The initial members of the Sports Commission are expected to meet in February. Parties interested in serving on the Sports Commission are encouraged to contact the Vancouver USA Regional Sports Commission at [sports@vancouverusasports.com](mailto:sports@vancouverusasports.com) for additional information.

#### **About Vancouver USA Regional Tourism Office**

Vancouver USA Regional Tourism Office (formerly Southwest Washington Convention & Visitors Bureau) is an economic development organization responsible for competitively marketing Vancouver and the surrounding area as a destination for meetings, conventions, and group and leisure travelers. The organization's mission is to promote Vancouver and Clark County by increasing convention and visitor business. For more information call (360) 750-1553, or visit [www.VisitVancouverUSA.com](http://www.VisitVancouverUSA.com).

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