

PRESS RELEASE

LOCAL SPORTS EVENTS RECEIVE READY, SET, GO! GRANTS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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STEVENS POINT, Wis. (January 31, 2008) -- The Stevens Point Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (SPACVB) today announced that the 2008 USA Softball "Bound 4 Beijing" Tour and the Amateur Softball Association (ASA) Men's Major National Fast Pitch Tournament have received *Ready, Set, Go! Grants* totaling \$8,250.

"Not only will these grants provide for the success of these events, they also provide the foundation to allow the Stevens Point Softball Association to bring in other events like this and will help advance our Association in sponsorship and support of local events and facilities like Zenoff Park," Mike Disher, President of the Stevens Point Softball Association.

"These grants help ensure these events will occur here, providing a positive economic impact on our communities," Sara Brish, Director of Sales & Marketing for the SPACVB.

The Stevens Point Area Softball Association and the SPACVB received \$7,500 to help cover the \$15,000 bid fee associated with the 2008 USA Softball "Bound 4 Beijing" Tour. The tour is one of 40 stops in the United States for Team USA Women's Fast Pitch Softball Team, before heading to the 2008 Olympics Games. The event, June 17, 2008, will feature an exhibition game against the Midwest's Collegiate All-stars and a post-game autograph session. In 2004, Stevens Point hosted the 2004 USA Softball "Aiming for Athens" Tour, where over 3,000 softball enthusiasts watched the team play.

The Stevens Point Area Softball Association and the SPACVB received \$750 to assist with bid fees for the ASA Men's Major National Fast Pitch Tournament. The tournament, July 31 through August 3, 2008, at Zenoff Park Softball Complex, will welcome over 900 participants and spectators.

This is the first time this event will be held in Stevens Point, although similar ASA divisional, regional and national tournaments have been held locally.

The *Ready, Set, Go! Grant* Program was designed to aid communities in attracting sports and competitive events, by offsetting some of the financial commitments associated with bringing events to a community. Developed by the Wisconsin Department of Tourism, the Wisconsin Sports Development Corporation and the Wisconsin Association of Convention and Visitor's Bureaus, it recognizes the growth potential of the sports marketing niche as an economic driver in the state, to generate visitor spending from

sports tourism in Wisconsin. Since its inception, in 2006, a total of 36 *Ready, Set, Go! Grants* have been awarded providing \$300,287.00.

The Stevens Point Area Convention and Visitors Bureau is an economic and community development organization whose purpose is to expand Portage County's economy by attracting conventions, sporting events and leisure tourists to Portage County. Millions of dollars from visitor spending and increased tax revenues can be generated to increase commerce, sustain jobs and to create a desirable destination. The CVB provides visitors with state and local information including travel guides, maps and brochures. To receive more information on the Stevens Point Area Convention and Visitors Bureau and their services visit www.stevenspointarea.com or stop by the Visitor Information Center located at 340 N. Division Street, Stevens Point.

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