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SPORTS COMMISSION CELEBRATES 20 YEARS

Organization's 20 year record impacts sports marketing and entertainment in Greater Kansas City

Kansas City, MO. – The Greater Kansas City Sports Commission and Foundation is celebrating its revitalized efforts this year with an aggressive array of planned events and activities. – [Events Schedule](#)

President Kevin Gray was the first paid staff member of the organization in 1989 after civic leaders decided to hire someone to lead the organization fresh from the 50th Anniversary Celebration of the 1988 NCAA Men's Final 4. (Kansas City has hosted more NCAA Final Fours than any other city in the United States.) The goals were to promote and support the growing business of sports in the region. Since then, the organization's planning has focused on attracting events, enhancing facilities and maintaining the region's major league status. *1

"It's all about working hard to create economic impact and improve the quality of life for our region with a diverse slate of activities for our citizens," says Gray. "As we reflect back to a few short years ago and given the current economic situation, we are so fortunate that our community rallied to support our efforts on the new arena and retaining the Chiefs and Royals."

The organization was a founding and charter member of the National Association of Sports Commissions in 1992 that fosters and promotes amateur sports and serves as a vehicle for the exchange of information pertinent to the Sports Commission industry. "The Kansas City Sports Commission has been very innovative and aggressive in building their local organization," said Don Schumacher, executive director of the National Association of Sports Commissions based in Cincinnati. "Over the last 20 years, they have built one of the finest Sports Commissions in the United States."

The Sports Commission's involvement in cultivating, supporting and attracting sports entertainment in and to the area was enhanced through their work on the Sprint Center, National Collegiate Basketball Hall of Fame, retaining the Chiefs and Royals and Kansas Speedway. "They were most helpful early on in working with me to rally the private sector for support of a new arena, along with strong efforts in support of the NABC dating back to 1997," said former Mayor Kay Barnes. "I can attest first-hand, having attended many of the meetings they helped organize and lead that, if they had not played such an integral role in supporting the effort every step of the way, we might not be where we are at today."

The organization has played a vital role in our region's success on varying levels. From its advocacy of youth programs including support for girls and women in sports by founding WIN for KC in 1994 – to the

Boys and Girls Clubs and RBI community partnerships – to its impact on local business, the Sports Commission’s value has been significant. The entrepreneurial and innovative SportKC/e-commerce initiative, founded in 2004, has helped raise hundreds of thousands of dollars for local Kansas City charities. “This was our first year using the Kansas City Sports Commission Web site for our 5K and our proceeds nearly doubled,” said Meg Duggan, Executive Director of Parkinson Foundation of the Heartland.

Johnson County civic leader and former member of board, Fred Logan, knew there were serious facilities issues confronting the area when he joined in 1996. “We had lost a few things and the Sports Commission remained steadfast in promoting civic pride, along with economic development needed to stress greater Kansas City as a major league area attraction,” says Logan. Their influence in developing a promotional destination emphasis for the area, has helped create economic impact in excess of \$750 million to the bi-state region over the last 20 years. *2

Touting the history of college basketball has been a strategy of the re-vitalized efforts because of what the sport has meant to this city and the heartland. “The Sports Commission was very aggressive in wanting us to take advantage of the rich history of college basketball in this region,” said Jim Haney, executive director of the National Association of Basketball Coaches (NABC). “They worked tirelessly for a decade to help make our dream become a reality.”

The Kansas City sports scene has a rich heritage ingrained in the fabric of national amateur sports who have made their home here over the years. The original Big 8 Conference emerged from a period of unprecedented success in 1996 when it became the Big 12 Conference. The Big 8 was headquartered in Kansas City for 50 years and the Kansas City Sports Commission has treated this relationship in many respects like a franchise because of the prestige, history and major championship opportunities. “We have found the Kansas City Sports Commission to be very responsive to the needs of our championships and of hosting NCAA events. They demonstrated a willingness to help lead discussion about facility needs for our championships and hosting opportunities,” said Dan Beebe, Big 12 Conference Commissioner.

The organization was established in a 10 x 10 converted closet at the Mid-America Lumberman’s Association in Westport and then moved to the non-profit campus at 1100 Pennsylvania in 1995. “Thanks to the great support we have received from so many over the years, we have certainly come a long way to where we now reside in the historic home on Quality Hill, over-looking both downtown Kansas City, Kansas and Kansas City, Missouri, Gray said. “At the end of the day, one thing that has not, and will not change is that if we make a determination that a project is good for our metropolitan area, we will more than likely be supportive and work to help make it happen.”

Greater Kansas City Sports Commission and Foundation: The privately funded non-profit organization now has 10 associates and is dedicated to: fostering and creating amateur sports by promoting the overall benefits of sport to the youth and general public. In addition, they strive to enhance the economic development and quality of life of Greater Kansas City. You may also visit: SportKC.org for additional information.

#1 The organization has undergone seven strategic planning sessions since 1989 and the most recent plan is available upon request.

#2 A complete list of all special events hosted over the last 20 years is available upon request.

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