



SaintPAUL
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Saint Paul Marks One Year Count Down to 2008 U.S. Figure Skating Championships

Saint Paul, MN (January 19, 2007) The countdown is on for skating enthusiasts in Saint Paul as the city looks forward to January 20-27, 2008 when it will host the U.S. Figure Skating Championships. The nation's most prestigious skating event crowns 12 new champions at the senior, junior and novice levels in the categories of ladies, men's, pairs and ice dancing events.

The U.S. Championships attract more than 1,500 figure skating athletes, coaches and officials in addition to thousands of fans. The event fills 7,000 room nights at area hotels, resulting in an economic impact of up to \$30 million.

Saint Paul is an ice skating hotbed, as in addition to the Saint Paul Figure Skating Club, it is home to the NHL Minnesota Wild, which plays at Xcel Energy Center, site of the 2008 U.S. Figure Skating Championships. This is the first time Saint Paul will host the event, although Minneapolis hosted the 1991 U.S. Figure Skating Championships and the 1998 World Figure Skating Championships.

Saint Paulites don't just tolerate winter - they embrace it. They celebrate with a myriad of winter sporting events and festivals including America's oldest and largest winter festival, the Saint Paul Winter Carnival, which dates back to 1886. The 2008 Winter Carnival will be held from January 25-February 3, overlapping with the U.S. Figure Skating Championships and carnival officials plan to tie in to the figure skating theme with ice sculptures and a dramatic ice or snow spectacle. Past carnival ice structures have included ice mazes, giant snow slides and even castles. Figure skating contestants and champions will be invited to participate in the parades or other carnival events.

The city also creates a magical Winter Wonderland in neighboring Rice Park which is aglow with millions of twinkle lights. A giant, 75-foot decorated tree and the Wells Fargo WinterSkate Ice Rink filled with skaters of all ages create a Rockefeller Center ambiance.

Past U.S. Figure Skating champions include two-time Olympic medalist Michelle Kwan, Olympic medalist Timothy Goebel and three-time U.S. Champion and Minnetonka, MN native Jill Trenary. The 2008 Championships are expected to draw top skaters such as Kimmie Meisner, Emily Hughes, Sasha Cohen and Johnny Wier. But Saint Paul will also be proudly watching local talent, including Saint Paul native Eliot Halverson, the 2007 Midwestern Sectional and Upper Great Lakes Regional Junior Champion and Kirstin Olson of Savage, MN, the 2006 Upper Great Lakes Regional Junior Champion. Also

competing will be Duluth's Angie Lien in the Ladies Senior category and Alex Olson of Minnetonka in the Men's Novice category.

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Tickets

Tickets for All-Event Packages are on sale from \$495-\$895. Package ticket holders may also purchase tickets to the Sunday Exhibition of Champions which range from \$45-\$75. To order tickets call 651-989-5151 or visit www.saintpaul2008.com. Group discounts are available for most events. For information on group tickets, call 651-312-3486. To learn more about Saint Paul's entertainment, attractions, restaurants or hotels visit www.visitsaintpaul.com or call 800-627-6101.

About Xcel Energy Center

The Xcel Energy Center opened in 2000 as the home for the NHL Minnesota Wild Hockey team. A unique multi-purpose sports and entertainment facility located in the heart of downtown Saint Paul, Xcel Energy Center has been widely recognized by industry leaders as one of the best arenas for acoustics, sightlines and the overall entertainment experience. Regarded as "America's most intimate arena," the Center has hosted many major sporting events including the 2004 and 2005 Campbell's International Figure Skating Classic, 2004 NHL All-Star Weekend, 2004 IIHF World Cup of Hockey, 2003 NHL Stanley Cup Playoffs and the 2002 NCAA Men's Frozen Four. For more information on Xcel Energy Center, visit www.xcelenergycenter.com.

About U.S. Figure Skating

U.S. Figure Skating is the national governing body for the sport of figure skating in the United States as recognized by the United States Olympic Committee and the International Skating Union. U.S. Figure Skating is comprised of more than 585 member clubs representing nearly 160,000 members. U.S. Figure Skating is charged with the development of the sport on all levels within the United States, including athletes, officials, sanctioning of events and exhibitions and establishing the rules and guidelines by which the sport is governed.

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