



Press Release - Immediate

Tour of Missouri Brings World-Class Professional Cycling to the State

ST. LOUIS, Mo. (October 17, 2006) ---- Missouri Governor Matt Blunt and Lt. Governor Peter Kinder announced today that the state will play host to the inaugural Tour of Missouri professional cycling race, September 11 – 16, 2007.

In its initial year, the Tour of Missouri will be anointed one of the nation's top three stage races behind the prestigious Tour of Georgia and Tour of California races, providing an historic landmark for the sport with three major domestic stage races on American soil.

"Missouri is known as the Show-Me State, and we look forward to showing our state to spectators around the world through the Tour of Missouri," Missouri Gov. Matt Blunt said. "This event has great potential to bring economic benefits to our state and is an opportunity for us to join these world class cyclists to spread the message of the positive benefits of an active and healthy lifestyle."

Lt. Governor Peter Kinder, in his role as Chairman of the Missouri Tourism Commission remarked, "The Tour of Missouri is an exciting way to showcase our beautiful state. The entire state will be surprised and pleased by the size and economic impact this event will have on Missouri and Missouri's tourism industry. This race represents millions of additional dollars each year being pumped into our larger cities and our smaller rural areas."

The Tour of Missouri has been slated as one of only five stage races in the newly-created USA Cycling Pro Tour, which will highlight the top multi-day races in America. The race also will be granted a high-ranking by the Union Cycliste Internationale, the international governing body for the sport of cycling. The race is sanctioned by USA Cycling, the official cycling organization recognized by the USOC.

"It's a distinct pleasure to be involved with the continued evolution of the sport of professional cycling in this country, and Missouri will be a great venue for a world-class event," said Jim Birrell, the race's director and someone who has been involved in staging elite professional cycling races for more than 20 years. "The support of the state has been tremendous, and I'm sure the citizens of Missouri will enjoy this free public event while also enjoying the rolling festival that comes along with it."

The Tour of Missouri will play host to up to 16 major international professional teams, including top U.S.-based pro tour teams as well as some of Europe's top Pro Tour teams.

Fred Rodriquez, a three-time U.S. Professional Champion and a rider with the Belgium-based Davitamon-Lotto team, one of the top squads in the world was in attendance as well and commented, "The Tour of Missouri is situated perfectly for American domestic teams as well as top Americans who have raced much of the season in Europe. For an American, having three major stages in the U.S. for the first time is great news. It shows the growth of cycling as a sport. The Tour of Missouri will provide a great opportunity for Americans looking to prepare for the World Championships at the end of the season."

The mid-September dates follow the USA Professional Cycling Championships in Greenville, S.C. and before the World Championships, which are usually the last week of September. Rodriquez, who attended Tuesday's press conference at the Edward Jones Dome in St. Louis, finished a very respectable 15th in the World Championships in Salzburg, Austria three weeks ago.

The six-day race is expected to start in the western part of the state around Kansas City and finish around St. Louis, according to race organizers, who will begin negotiating with potential start and finish cities immediately.

The race is expected to cover about 600 miles and highlight urban as well as rural parts of the Show Me State.

The State of Missouri is a proud supporter of the Tour of Missouri. Tourism is a \$13.4 billion industry for the state of Missouri, generating more than 37.7 million domestic person trips each year. The professional cycling races in other states like Georgia and California has registered more than \$40 million in quantified economic impact and tourist attraction.

Medalist Sports, Inc. of Tyrone, Ga., just south of Atlanta, in partnership with KOM Sports Marketing, are the premier event management and marketing organization for professional multi-day cycling races in North America. It currently is the event management group for the Amgen Tour of California and Tour de Georgia, as well as the USA Cycling Professional Championships. Medalist's managing partners are Jim Birrell and Chris Aronhalt. KOM is led by Steve Brunner. Combined the three have more than 50 years combined experience organizing top international sporting events, including elite cycling events the Tour de Trump (1989-90), Tour DuPont (1991-96), Tour of Georgia (2003-06), Amgen Tour of California (2006), as well as five Olympics Games, multiple Olympic Trials and three Goodwill Games. Medalist is also the event management group for the USA Cycling Professional Championship held annually in Greenville, S.C.

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