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**AAU JUNIOR OLYMPIC GAMES DELIVER GOLD
AND MORE FOR HAMPTON ROADS THIS SUMMER**
--Economic impact projected to reach \$50 million--

(Hampton Roads, VA) -- The Amateur Athletic Union Junior Olympic Games return to Hampton Roads this summer and are more than just fun and, well, games. The summer pilgrimage of more than 45,000 participants, including 15,000 athletes and their families and coaches to the competition, delivers a healthy bottom line for the Hampton Roads Sports Commission and its five participating cities. With an economic impact forecast to approach \$50 million, the Games offer a sound investment in both tourism and youth sports.

Set for July 29 to August 7, 2010, athletes, expected from 50 states, compete in one of the largest amateur multi-sport youth events in the country. Held annually throughout the United States, Hampton Roads last hosted the games in 2006 and is one of five cities in a ten-year rotation to host the games through 2016. Other sites include Des Moines, IA; Detroit, MI; Houston, TX; and New Orleans, LA.

The AAU Junior Olympic Games are slated for venues in Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Chesapeake and Virginia Beach. The events, 20 in all, range from team sports including basketball, beach tennis, jump rope, beach volleyball, wrestling and field hockey to individual competitions such as gymnastics, weightlifting, swimming, table tennis and track and field events. By utilizing existing venues and stadiums throughout the region, host duties require less investment from the region and contribute to a higher net overall economic impact.

Young athletes are competing at a premier level with hopes of moving on to Olympic and/or professional teams as well as continuing to hone their skills against others outside their traditional field of competition. But these athletes don't go it alone. They travel with their families as well as their coaches and/or respective teammates," which delivers hotel room night, food/beverage and retail revenue to the host cities. Many families also opt to explore local attractions and enjoy a mini-vacation coupled with the trip. All of this spells gold for host cities.

"It delivers a major economic punch to the market plus it has the added benefit of putting us in the national spotlight for hosting this level of competition," says Jack Ankersen, Hampton Roads Sports Commission executive director.

In 2006 the economic impact, compiled by SportsImpact, Inc., included 13,169 hotel rooms
(more)

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nights during the ten-day competition. Similarly, food/beverage and retail receipts also received a boost. And with all signs indicating that the 2010 competition will be even larger, the economic impact could easily reach \$50 million.

This year a core group of community corporate partners again helps ensure the success of the competition. To date, event sponsors include Geico, McDonalds Restaurants of Southeast Virginia and Northeastern North Carolina, Busch Gardens Williamsburg, and Electronic Systems. A limited number of corporate sponsorship packages are still available with a variety of sponsorship benefits. For more information on sponsorship of the 2010 AAU Junior Olympic Games, contact Becky Bump at #757 228-5815 or becky@specialassignment.biz.

Originally begun in 1967 with just 523 athletes and coaches, the Amateur Athletic Union Junior Olympic Games have blossomed to support nearly 15,000 athletes who compete regularly around the country and have representatives from all 50 states in the union. Under the direction of the Hampton Roads Sports Commission, the region first hosted the AAU Junior Olympic Games in 1998 and steps into the national spotlight for the fourth time in 2010 following 2001 and 2006 hosting duties. The Junior Olympic Games are just one component of the Amateur Athletic Union which collectively boasts more than a half million participants, 50,000 volunteers and 30,000 events per year.

For more information on the 2010 Hampton Roads AAU Junior Olympic Games, call the Hampton Roads Sports Commission at #757/664-2573 or click on www.AAUJROGames.org or www.hamptonroadssports.org

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