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Onondaga County to Host 2010 PowerSox U.S. National Snowshoe Championships
Event to Celebrate 10th Anniversary at Highland Forest Park

SYRACUSE, NEW YORK— Together, the Syracuse Convention & Visitors Bureau (SCVB) and Onondaga County Parks are thrilled to announce that another national sporting event will be coming to Onondaga County in 2010.

The United States Snowshoe Association (USSSA) will be bringing the 2010 PowerSox U.S. National Snowshoe Championships to Highland Forest Park, March 5-7, 2010. The Park's well-known Skyline Lodge will serve as the primary venue for the weekend's events. The Championship will return to New York State, the State of the USSSA's origin, to celebrate USSSA's Tenth Annual National Championship.

"The U.S. Snowshoe Association is looking forward to seeing its snowshoe friends from across the country at what will prove to be the biggest and grandest U.S. National Snowshoe Championships event ever," said Mark Elmore, USSSA sports director. "2010 isn't just an Olympic year! It's the USSSA's 10th Anniversary National Championship and you won't want to miss this one!"

More than 300 winter sports enthusiasts from across the country and Canada are expected to take to the trails of Highland Forest Park over the course of the two-day National Championship events, resulting in an estimated \$292,000 economic impact, according to the SCVB.

"Hosting the 2010 U.S. National Snowshoe Championships at Highland Forest is another terrific opportunity to highlight the first-rate parks system we have in our community," said Onondaga County Executive Joanie Mahoney. "I want to offer a warm welcome to all participants for what are sure to be competitive races."

In order to compete in the Junior Boys/Girls 5km National Championship events or the Senior Men's and Women's 10km National Championship events, athletes must pre-qualify at one of 20 regional qualifying events previously held at locations across the United States.

According to USSSA guidelines, *Juniors* are athletes who do not turn 20 years of age in 2010, while *Seniors* are athletes who are 20 years of age and older and are then broken into age groups of five year increments. (i.e. 20-24, 25-29, etc.)

To date, the youngest athlete to compete at the USSSA National Championship was 8-years-old and the oldest, 80-years-old.

The public is welcome to participate in the 2010 PowerSox U.S. National Snowshoe Championships, as there are several events that do not require USSSA membership or pre-qualification.

“We encourage people of all ages and abilities to participate in “open” events, as it is a great way to be introduced to the sport of snowshoeing,” said Elmore. “Loaner snowshoes will be available for those who do not own their own.”

2010 PowerSox U.S. National Snowshoe Championships events include:

- Junior Boys and Girls 5km, Senior Men’s and Women’s 10km races (**Pre-Qualification Necessary**)
- “Open” events (**No Qualification Necessary**) will include: a Citizen’s 5km Snowshoe Run/Walk, a Kid’s Kilo for boys and girls 12 and younger, a 4 x 2.5km Snowshoe Team Relay for Junior Boys/Girls (19 and younger), Open Men/Women (20-39 years of age), and Masters Men/Women (40+ years of age)

Four National Snowshoe Champions will be crowned and 16 berths on the U.S. National Snowshoe team are up for grabs including: the Top 5 overall Senior Men, the Top 5 overall Senior women, the Top 3 overall Junior boys and the Top 3 overall Junior Girls.

“Highland Forest is a fantastic venue choice for the USSSA,” said SCVB President David Holder. “We’re already looking forward to welcoming snowshoe competitors and their families with our superior Central New York service and hospitality.”

For more information, contact Communications Manager, Danica Bryant at 315-470-1903.

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About the Syracuse Convention & Visitors Bureau

The mission of the Syracuse Convention & Visitors Bureau is to strengthen the positive awareness of the City of Syracuse and Onondaga County as a convention and visitor destination, to increase revenues and stimulate economic development and growth for the community. For more information, visit www.VisitSyracuse.org.



About Highland Forest

Highland Forest, a 2,800 acre Onondaga County Park, is located at 1254 Highland Forest Road, four miles east of Fabius. Highland Forest features classic groomed runs and top-notch snowshoe trails. Skyline Lodge, home base for the 2010 Championships, offers ski and snowshoe rentals, displays on the history of "The Adirondacks of Central New York" and spectacular views of southern Onondaga County. For more information, visit www.OnondagaCountyParks.com.



About United States Snowshoe Association

The United States Snowshoe Association, Inc. (USSSA) was formed in 1977 by George and Candace Bosworth and is headquartered in Corinth, NY. It's a membership based organization that also focuses on Winter Safety Education. It was formed to serve as the governing body for the sport of Snowshoe Racing in the U.S. For more than 20 years, the USSSA has governed the Sport at the NY Empire State Winter Games held annually in Lake Placid, NY. Currently, the USSSA is striving for inclusion in the Winter Olympic Games program. Visit www.snowshoeracing.com.