

MEDIA RELEASE

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For immediate release

Major sport event visitors spent \$43.8 million in Saskatchewan during 2009

Statistics in a report released today by Sask Sport Inc. identify a clear economic benefit of amateur sporting events to the Saskatchewan economy. The report, *Estimated Visitor Expenditures of Regional, National and International Sporting Events*, indicates that expenditures at 47 major amateur sporting events in Saskatchewan in 2009 topped \$43.8 million. The report's figures do not include estimated visitor spending from community sporting events held each year, such as tournaments, bonspiels, sports days and provincial championships, only those major events supported through Sask Sport Inc.'s Hosting Grant Program.

2009 saw the highest estimated visitor spending through amateur sporting events since tracking began in 2000. Since that time, the total estimated visitor expenditure impact has exceeded \$192 million, with 410 amateur sporting events held thus far. The large amount of visitor spending in 2009 is the result of a number of high-profile events, including the World Junior Hockey Championships, the ISF World Softball Championships and the BMO Canadian Figure Skating Championships. These three events alone account for \$21.8 million in visitor expenditures.

Expenditures within the report are conservative estimates from the *Travel Survey of Residents of Canada in 2008* (Statistics Canada) and have been based upon average per person per trip expenditures in Saskatoon and Regina and the five Saskatchewan tourism regions for all trip types. Locals attending or participating in the events are not included in the estimated visitor expenditures as they are not bringing new dollars to the hosting communities.

"Not only does sport provide a boost to our province by promoting healthy lifestyles and building community pride, but it also makes a significant impact to our economy," said Audra Young, President of Sask Sport Inc. "These statistics indicate that sport is an important aspect of economic growth, and provides a legacy of volunteers, facilities and programs that have helped create one of the best amateur sport systems in the country."

"The impressive, record figures for 2009 are cause for celebration," said Dr. Lynda Haverstock, President/CEO of Tourism Saskatchewan. "Sports tourism is a critical part of our province's complex and dynamic tourism sector. Tourism Saskatchewan appreciates the extraordinary dedication and efforts that go into building talent, supporting athletes and teams, and organizing competitions and events that bring profile and revenue to communities. A healthy sports tourism industry benefits us all."

Full copies of the report can be found on the Sask Sport Inc. website at <http://www.sasksport.sk.ca/events.php> or by clicking on the Sport Tourism/Events link under the Capacity menu.

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