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Mayors Open the Aurora Paddlesports Festival

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Aurora, IL – Mayor Tom Weisner will open the second annual “**AURORA PADDLESPORTS FESTIVAL**” on Friday evening June 11, by cutting a ribbon to the boat launch and taking a canoe ride on Mastodon Lake in beautiful Phillips Park. Mayor Weisner will be joined by Oswego Mayor Brian LeClerq, other local VIP’s and a troop of Boy Scouts who are attending the Festival to earn a Canoeing Merit Badge. The Mayors will take a ride in a 26 foot long replica of a fur trade era canoe.

“I think the Scouts and the historic canoe point to the breadth and depth of paddlesports.” said Gary Mechanic of Aurora, the Festival Coordinator. It’s history, safe adventure for kids, an environmentally friendly sport, healthy exercise, an way to see local nature and of course, it’s fun.”

The purpose of the Aurora Paddlesports Festival is to introduce the general public to the wide variety of human powered boats, paddling clubs, and the local paddlesport retailers. Phillips Park’s man-made “Mastodon Lake” will provide a clean, safe place to try out canoes and kayaks or take a class on how to paddle, while the expansive lawn next to the lake will fill with paddle craft dealers, paddling club displays, exhibits and demonstrations.

Sponsored by the IPC, the Chicago Area Sea Kayaking Association and the City of Aurora, the Paddlesports Festival will offer two hour introductory lessons in canoeing and kayaking taught by American Canoe Association certified instructors. Visitors can also test paddle the latest boat designs from well-known canoe and kayak manufacturers. The **AURORA PADDLESPORTS FESTIVAL** will feature Illinois paddling clubs booths as well as exhibits by statewide and local river and nature conservation organizations.

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The **AURORA PADDLESPORTS FESTIVAL** will also include Illinois' first local paddling film fest. **The Prairie Paddling Film Fest** will bring Illinois best paddling filmmakers to the Festival with on-going films and live presentations by the film-makers. The one hour film presentations on both days are free to the public.

Seniors will have priority seating in the 26 foot long fur trade era "voyageur" canoe which will provide free rides on Mastodon Lake throughout the Festival. The voyageur rides are sponsored by Law Elder Law of Aurora.

So bring the family and friends to the Aurora Paddlesports Festival to try out a boat, take a lesson and meet the friendly paddlers, instructors and retailers of Illinois' paddlesport community.

Festival hours: Saturday, June 12, 9am to 6pm, Sunday, June 13, 9am to 5pm. Free Festival admission, fees for lessons and test paddling. Children 6 years and up are welcome to paddle with an adult.

Founded in 1963, the Illinois Paddling Council is dedicated to promoting the safe enjoyment of all phases of canoeing and kayaking in Illinois. For more information visit www.illinoispadding.org

The Chicago Area Sea Kayaking Association promotes all kinds of paddling in all kinds of kayaks in all kinds of water with all kinds of interesting people. Visit www.caska.org

Established in 1899, Phillips Park is the crown jewel of Aurora's parks and the flagship park for the city and its visitors. The Park includes a zoo, golf course, aquatic center, formal gardens and a visitor center displaying prehistoric mastodon bones that were found on the site.

For more information visit www.aurora-il.org.

WHAT: Opening ceremony of the Aurora Paddlesports Festival.

WHO: City of Aurora Mayor Tom Weisner, Village of Oswego Mayor Brian LeClerq

WHEN: 7pm on Friday, June 11, 2010

WHERE: The Mastodon Lake Boat Dock in Phillips Park, Aurora, Illinois

EVENT FACTS: Mayor Tom Weisner will be joined by Oswego Mayor Brian LeClerq, a troop of Aurora Boy Scouts and Festival organizers and volunteers as he cuts a ribbon to open the 2nd Annual Aurora Paddlesports Festival. The Mayor's will then board a 26' long replica of a fur trade era canoe and take a brief canoe ride on Mastodon Lake.

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