

# NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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## LYON CO/EMPORIA OFFICERS RUN THE STREETS Carry Torch to Support Special Olympics Athletes

Emporia, Kan.- It is expected that 1,150 officers from over 97 agencies will carry the “Flame of Hope” throughout 52 counties in Kansas as they travel to the annual Special Olympics Summer Games held in Wichita. The Law Enforcement Torch Run (LETR) is a series of statewide runs which will travel approximately 1,276 miles throughout the state. Law Enforcement Officers, along with Dustin Gunter, member of Royal Valley Panthers Special Olympics in Hoyt, Most Inspirational Athlete of 2015, will light the cauldron to officially open the Summer Games in front of over 3,000 athletes, coaches and fans of Special Olympics Kansas on June 3rd.

Locally, Lyon Co/Emporia Officers will receive the torch on Wednesday, June 1, at BETO Junction from Ottawa/Franklin Co and Topeka/Shawnee Co Officers at approximately 1400 hours. They will run the torch 27 miles to Emporia. On Thursday, June 2, a ceremony will be held at ESU at 0900 hours ending 80 miles later in El Dorado. Schedule:

- 1400 hours on Wed June 1, receive torch at BETO Junction
- 1400-1700 hours run torch on Old Hwy 50 to Emporia, ending at Emporia Police Dept.
- 0900 hours Thursday June 2, start at 12<sup>th</sup> & Commercial, ESU. Special Olympics athletes will walk with Law Enforcement from 12<sup>th</sup> Ave to 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. KVOE Radio Station General Manager will present an envelope with Donations collected from “Ron’s” ride as he ceremonially will bike ride with Law Enforcement to Olpe.
- Continue bike ride/run on Ks Hwy 99 to 54 Hwy West to El Dorado
- 1800 hours Arrive at El Dorado Riverview Park

The public is encouraged to step outside their business or home and encourage the officers as they run. Celebrating their 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the Law Enforcement Torch Run began in Wichita, Kansas in 1981 with six runners and has grown to an international program involving thousands of Law Enforcement personnel, raising millions of dollars annually to benefit Special Olympics programs in the United States and abroad.

The Torch Run is the largest grassroots fundraiser and public awareness vehicle for Special Olympics Kansas. Officers volunteer hundreds of hours each year and in 2015 raised \$543,582.96 in support of Special Olympics Kansas programs. This remarkable feat was accomplished by holding events and fundraising through the torch run, special event fundraisers (i.e. Polar Plunge, Truck Convoy), sponsorships and donations.

For more info about the local run contact John Koelsch, [jkoelsch@lyoncounty.org](mailto:jkoelsch@lyoncounty.org) or 620.344.0383. Gary Steed, Executive Director of the Kansas Commission of Peace Officers’ Standard and Training, is the Honorary Chair of the LETR. Kalmar Industries and Amerigroup Foundation are Guardians of the Flame Sponsors. You can support the Torch Run by making a secure donation online at [www.kansastorchrun.org](http://www.kansastorchrun.org) or contact Luke Schulte at 620-408-4450.

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