

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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LARNED TO GREAT BEND OFFICERS RUN THE STREETS Carry Torch to Support Special Olympics Athletes

Mission, 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 the Larned to Great Bend leg will be ran on Wednesday, June 1. Run will started at 0800 hours in Larned and end at approximately 1200 hours in Great Bend. Run route of approximately 25 miles will be:

- 0800 hours - Start at Schneck Park in Larned
- Staff will run in formation to Broadway (downtown Larned) approximately 2 miles
- Proceed to Hwy 56/156 to Dollar General Store
- Run to Great Bend (there will be a designated stop in Pawnee Rock)
- Continue to Great Bend Zoo
- 1200 hours -- At Zoo, will unload all participants and run/walk with and Family members down Main Street in Great Bend to Rosewood Furniture Store

The public is encouraged to step outside their business or home and encourage the officers as they run. Celebrating their 35th 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.

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 or contact Luke Schulte at 620-408-4450. ###

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