



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Flame of Hope to travel from Ottawa to Emporia Kansas Law Enforcement on 1,600 mile journey for Special Olympics Kansas**

OTTAWA, Kan. – Law enforcement officers from the Ottawa Police Department and Franklin County Sheriff's Office will carry the Special Olympics Kansas Flame of Hope May 30, from the Ottawa to Emporia.

The 60-mile run is part of a 1,600 mile journey for the Flame of Hope across Kansas as part of the ceremonial 2018 Law Enforcement Torch Run (LETR) for Special Olympics Kansas.

Special Olympics Kansas athletes will join with the law enforcement runners and help carry the torch through Ottawa after a short ceremony at 7:45 a.m. at Kansas State Bank North located at 236 North Main in Ottawa.

“Without the support and dedication of law enforcement officers throughout the state we could not do what we do for our athletes,” Special Olympics Kansas spokesperson Heather Waters said. “Law enforcement officers band together with their communities to change attitudes and support Special Olympics athletes with intellectual disabilities. They truly transform lives and we are grateful for all they do.”

Torch Runs are held in Kansas leading up to the annual summer games in Wichita. Law enforcement officers raise money for Special Olympics Kansas throughout the year by participating in these runs as well as events like Polar Plunges, Tip-A-Cop and Cover the Cruiser.

Law enforcement officers will begin the run at the Kansas State Bank North and continue along the following route: South on Main Street to 17 Street; west on 17 Street to Eisenhower Avenue; south on Eisenhower Avenue to Old 50 Highway; west on Old 50 Highway. Arrive in

Williamsburg, approximately 10 a.m.; continue west on Old 50 Highway; arrive at 500 Mechanic, Emporia, approximately 3 p.m.

In 2017 more than 1,300 officers took part in more than 30 runs throughout the state. In total, Kansas LETR participants raised more than \$550,000 for Special Olympics Kansas in 2017.

“Year after year we have the support of men and women of law enforcement who elevate Special Olympics Kansas within their communities,” Special Olympics President/CEO John Lair said. “Every year officers from local agencies, Sheriff Offices, campus police and the Highway Patrol give so much to this event and expect nothing in return.”

At the conclusion of this leg of the torch run the torch will be passed along to Emporia and travel to El Dorado on June 1.

“For more than 30 years, the Law Enforcement Torch Run has been an integral part of the Special Olympics Movement,” Lair said. “What started right here in Kansas has become an annual tradition all around the world.”

#### MEDIA INQUIRIES

Special Olympics Kansas LETR liaison: Luke Schulte [schultel@kssso.org](mailto:schultel@kssso.org)

For more information about the run in Ottawa contact Larabe Alexander at [lalexander@ottawaks.gov](mailto:lalexander@ottawaks.gov) or visit <http://kssso.org/torch-run-letr/torch-runs/>.

#### SPONSORS

Sponsors of the Law Enforcement Torch Run include Amerigroup, Kalmar, Medicalodges, Lee Jeans, Southwest Dairy Farmers, Wichita Community Foundation, Wichita Railway Services LLC and Union Pacific.

#### ABOUT LAW ENFORCEMENT TORCH RUN (LETR)

The Law Enforcement Torch Run began in 1981 with founder Wichita Police Chief Richard LaMunyon and five law enforcement officers carrying the torch for the Special Olympics Kansas Summer Games in Wichita. The LETR has since evolved to a volunteer partnership with Special Olympics to champion acceptance and inclusion. It has become a worldwide community of law enforcement officers rallying to support Special Olympics, the impetus for millions of new friendships around the world, and a series of events including Torch Runs, Polar Plunge fundraisers, and Tip-A-Cop® events. The LETR is the largest grassroots fundraiser for Special Olympics with more than 100,000 law enforcement participants around the world. Visit [LETR.org](http://LETR.org) for more information.

#### ABOUT SPECIAL OLYMPICS KANSAS (SOKS)

Special Olympics Kansas is dedicated to empowering individuals with intellectual disabilities to become physically fit, productive and respected members of society through sports competitions, health and nutrition programs and leadership development.

SOKS is a non-profit organization supported almost entirely by corporate and individual gifts, and events. The generosity of Kansas organizations, individuals and statewide businesses enable the program to continue.

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