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### **VISIT MANKATO LAUNCHES MANKATO SPORTS COMMISSION**

**MANKATO, MN** – Visit Mankato is excited to announce the launch of the Mankato Sports Commission. In general the Mankato Sports Commission will serve as a department within Visit Mankato to boost sports tourism in the community. It will be volunteer lead and will provide leadership, guidance and expertise that enables the attraction, support and administration of high quality sporting and competitive events in the area.

“The Mankato Sports Commission gives us the opportunity to step up our game in Mankato,” said Josh Anderson, Events Sales Director for Visit Mankato. “Not only do we want to continue to develop and maintain relationships with the local sporting groups, but we also want to attract new events and develop our own community events that we can grow and count on from year to year. More events mean more people sleeping, eating and shopping in Mankato and more cash flow to our businesses.”

Sports Commissions are starting up all around the country as communities catch on to the power of the sports economy. Not only do businesses see the benefits of traffic from all the athletes, officials, families and spectators, but so do the local sporting groups. Sometimes it takes one or two great local tournaments to support a large portion of an organization’s annual budget.

Part of the Sports Commission’s job will be to find out what is needed for our local sporting groups to be able to put on great tournaments and keep their athletes in town. Currently our community is leaking opportunities as many local youth are forced to travel outside of the community and pay for time to practice on a court or indoor ice rink. Some sports can’t even think of hosting a tournament locally because they do not have the proper facilities to do so.

The Sports Commission will serve as a sounding board for these sporting groups, help prioritize community needs, and advocate for facility enhancements and development based on demand and feasibility. Recent feasibility studies will be taken into account in addition to continued

conversations with community members. The Mankato Sports Commission does not have the capacity to actually build or manage facilities.

Even though greater Mankato experienced a great year again in 2013, there are still a lot of opportunities to fill the calendar with quality events. Being in Minnesota and not having adequate indoor facilities for large tournaments, the community sees a slow period for tournaments and events during the cooler months. This period typically lasts from November to March. This means that a lot of events are piled on top of each other during the summer. The Mankato Sports Commission will work hard to fill out the calendar year round as it looks for events to either attract, support or start up on their own.

The Mankato Sports Commission is made up of Visit Mankato staff along with several community volunteers. To find out more about the Mankato Sports Commission or about bringing a tournament or event to greater Mankato contact Josh at [janderson@visitmankatomn.com](mailto:janderson@visitmankatomn.com) or 507.385.6663.

#### **About Visit Mankato:**

Visit Mankato, LLC, the local Convention & Visitors Bureau, is a Limited Liability Corporation of Greater Mankato Growth, Inc. Visit Mankato leads the development of the visitor economy in Mankato by actively promoting Mankato as a premier destination for conventions, tournaments and tourism. These activities bring a steady flow of visitors and business activity to Mankato that benefits local residents and future visitors. The work of Visit Mankato helps strengthen the hospitality industry which provides jobs, a diverse tax base and amenities for everyone to enjoy. [www.visitmankatomn.com](http://www.visitmankatomn.com)