

Hot off the press news item:

Early this morning (Feb. 22) the joint Minnesota Senate/House bonding conference committee agreed on language for the 2010 bonding bill. As part of that bill, the conference committee allocated funding for the Winter Training Center at Theodore Wirth Park.

Challenge:

Convincing Governor Pawlenty that this is an important allocation of funds that he should support. Act quickly because Governor Pawlenty could line item veto this bill by Monday evening.

What you can do:

Call or email Governor Pawlenty and tell him why you think the Winter Training Center at Theodore Wirth Park is important. Ask him to support funding for this project. Some talking points:

- The City of Lakes Loppet is a national level cross country ski festival that attracts people from across the country.
- High school students from throughout the area train and compete at Theodore Wirth Park.
- Olympic-level athletes train and compete at Theodore Wirth Park.
- This project will help attract national and even international events like the U.S. Junior Olympics, Senior Nationals and the World Masters Championships.
- This project leverages some \$1.2 million in local support, including some \$300,000 in private contributions.
- This project helps address the obesity epidemic among our school children by encouraging outdoor activity throughout the year.

Other things to keep in mind:

The most important criteria for these projects is that they have state-wide impact. Emphasize the state-wide impact of this project. If you live in a far-away place, emphasize that this project is important to you. The State can only pay for infrastructure. This project would fund things like water mains and high-voltage electrical stations. It would not fund things like snow-guns and snowmobiles. Those items would be funded in other ways.

Governor Pawlenty's contact information:

Telephone: (651) 296-3391
Toll Free: (800) 657-3717
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E-mail: tim.pawlenty@state.mn.us

Sample fax or email:

Dear Governor Pawlenty:

I am writing to urge you to support the Winter Training Center at Theodore Wirth Park in Golden Valley.

This project has state-wide significance. The Winter Training Center will allow Minnesota to attract national and international events like:

- The United States Ski Association's (USSA's) Junior Olympics (1,000+ people for 10 days each year)
- USSA's Senior Nationals (1,000+ people for 10 days each year)
- World Masters Championships (1,500 people for 10 days)

These events will have a dramatic economic impact on the Minnesota economy. The 2011 Junior Olympics alone will have about a \$3 million impact – with about \$1 million in hotel stays alone.

Some of the United States' top Olympic skiers – like Minnesota's own Caitlin Compton – train at Wirth Park. With infrastructure improvements, Olympic-level athletes will continue to train and compete in Minnesota – with the chances of Gold Medal performances significantly enhanced.

This project fights obesity among our youth. By providing high level and reliable infrastructure, the Winter Training Center will encourage and inspire regular physical activity in young people from throughout the state and the region.

With \$1.2 million in matching funds, including \$300,000 in direct private contributions, the Winter Training Center leverages significant community support. Moreover, because of this private support, this project is ready for short-term action and the state's investment will yield both immediate jobs in construction and good longer-term jobs in tourism and servicing of the facility (jobs that will be paid for through use fees rather than ongoing tax revenue).

The Winter Training Center is the unique project that pays for itself through economic impact to the state while at the same time fostering other state-wide benefits like long-term jobs, Olympic-level facilities and a reduction in obesity.

I urge you to support this project as part of the upcoming bonding bill.

Sincerely yours,

Your Name