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**United States Ski and Snowboard Association Awards
2011 Junior Olympics to the Twin Cities**

The United States Ski and Snowboard Association (USSA) Cross Country Junior Olympics will be held in the Twin Cities in 2011. The event will take place at historic Theodore Wirth Park, part of the Minneapolis Park & Recreation system. The City of Lakes Nordic Ski Foundation (CoLNSF) and its talented team of volunteers will produce the event.

"We are thrilled to be affiliated with the Junior Olympics and to host this prestigious event," said John Munger, executive director of the Nordic Ski Foundation. "The Foundation has been developing these trails [in Theodore Wirth Park] and supporting youth cross country skiing in Minneapolis for years. JOs [the 2011 Junior Olympics] gives us an opportunity to show off our unique urban trail system to the best young skiers from across the country. With JOs happening in a large metropolitan area for the first time, we expect the 2011 event to be truly unique."

USSA has produced the Junior Olympics as the premier junior championship cross country skiing tournament for the past 30 years. The vast majority of US Olympic and World Cup cross country skiers have participated in the USSA Junior Olympic program.

"The Junior Olympic event is a tremendous development tool for U.S. Skiing and is often the first chance for top junior athletes to gain the attention of collegiate and U.S. Ski Team coaches," commented John Farra, USSA's Nordic Director. "We're really excited about having JOs in the Twin Cities. Theodore Wirth looks like a great venue – and having the event in a major metropolitan area is a big deal for the sport!"

The City of Lakes Nordic Ski Foundation is based in Minneapolis with a mission of supporting and promoting cross country skiing in the Minneapolis area, especially among inner-city youth. The Foundation hosts the City of Lakes Loppet in early February as well as running and triathlon events throughout the summer and fall months. The Foundation leverages those events to run youth programming in Minneapolis. More than 350 Minneapolis kids learn to ski through Foundation youth programming each year.

Many volunteers will be needed to help make this event a success. For more information, contact the Loppet hotline at 612-604-5332 or e-mail info@cityoflakesloppet.com.