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Virginia Commonwealth Games at Liberty University awarded 2019 State Games of America

Virginia Amateur Sports (VAS), Liberty University and the City of Lynchburg announced today, almost one year ago to the day it was announced that the Virginia Commonwealth Games would be moving to Liberty University and the City of Lynchburg, that Lynchburg, VA has been selected to host the 2019 State Games of America. The National Congress of State Games (NCSG) Board heard presentations from three cities vying to host the event, consisting of more than 30 individual state competitions, during a meeting in Atlantic City in September, where representatives from Virginia Amateur Sports, Liberty, and the City of Lynchburg outlined the benefits of bringing the national event to the hill city.

The Olympic-style event features competition between medal winners from other State Games events throughout the country and will be held in conjunction with the Virginia Commonwealth Games at Liberty University. The State Games of America are held every two years, the 2017 Games will be held in Grand Rapids, MI – August 3-6. This is the first time Virginia has been selected to host the national festival, slated for July 31-Aug. 4, 2019. Like the Virginia Commonwealth Games, the 2019 State Games of America will also be a community effort. Virginia Amateur Sports, Liberty, and the City of Lynchburg will also be working with Lynchburg City Schools, Randolph College, Lynchburg College, local businesses, and the Virginia Tourism Corporation.

"The National Congress of State Games (NCSG) board of directors have announced that Liberty University and the City of Lynchburg have been selected to host the 2019 State Games of America. The NCSG board is excited with the selection of Liberty University and looks forward to the athletes and families having the opportunity to see the wonderful world class Division 1 facilities and the enriched culture that Liberty University and the City of Lynchburg has to offer. The people at Liberty University and the City of Lynchburg are ready and willing to do everything in their power to make these the best games possible," stated Dan Duffy, President of the National Congress of State Games.

"Virginia Amateur Sports, organizers of the Virginia Commonwealth Games is honored and excited to begin planning for the 2019 State Games of America (SGA). The new partnership with Liberty University and the City of Lynchburg and the 27 years of successful State Games history has prepared us to organize this national event. Liberty University's bid to host the 2019 SGA came on the heels of a very successful first year that the Virginia Commonwealth Games at Liberty University were held in Lynchburg. The world class sports facilities at Liberty University, the outstanding community and corporate support, municipality commitment and the local organizing committee's expertise made Lynchburg and Liberty University the ideal choice to host the 2019 SGA," expressed Pete Lampman, President of Virginia Amateur Sports, organizers of the Virginia Commonwealth Games at Liberty University.

Lynchburg Regional Airport is already planning to accommodate visitors for the 2019 State Games of America by adding larger flights into Lynchburg as is done on Liberty's graduation weekend which drew 38,500 individuals in 2016.

"I am extremely pleased about this announcement," said Lynchburg Mayor Joan Foster. "I think it proves that the City of Lynchburg is well-poised to host a national sports event like the State Games and that along with all of the other wonderful tourism assets in this region we can now add sports tourism to the list. I am also grateful for the wonderful partnership with the City of Lynchburg, Liberty University and Virginia Amateur Sports. Everyone working together made this possible. I know my fellow City Council members join me in congratulating each of you for a job well done and we look forward to 2019!"

Jerry Falwell, President of Liberty University stated, "The fact that the State Games of America will be held at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia is a testament to what can happen when organizations work together for the common good. Had it not been for teams of people rolling up their sleeves to accomplish a goal without being concerned about who received the credit, this would have never happened. Congratulations to the teams from the City of Lynchburg, the Commonwealth of Virginia, Virginia Amateur Sports and Liberty University."

Previous State Games of America have had an economic impact of \$25 million on the region where they were held, with as many as 10,000 room nights at area hotels. About 15,000 athletes from 32 different states are expected to participate in the 2019 State Games of America in Lynchburg.

2016 was Liberty's first year as the title sponsor for the Virginia Commonwealth Games, as part of a five-year contract with Virginia Amateur Sports, drawing around 10,000 athletes and counting (the Games conclude in early December) to compete in over 55 Olympic and Pan-American sports. Liberty's championship-caliber athletics facilities were used for numerous competitions, including ice hockey, basketball, indoor soccer, lacrosse, tennis, softball, archery, paintball, all-star baseball, disc golf, 5K road race, and track & field. Liberty offered a top-notch atmosphere for guests, providing housing for about 400 athletes and officials in an Athlete Village on campus. The university also opened its dining and recreational venues for guests. When averaging in money spent on lodging and meals, the economic impact on Lynchburg thus far for the Virginia Commonwealth Games is projected at over \$1.6 million and counting.

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About the Virginia Commonwealth Games at Liberty University: Modeled after the Olympics, the Virginia Commonwealth Games welcomes athletes regardless of age or skill level. The Games embody the values of participation, sportsmanship and healthy living amongst residents of Virginia and surrounding eligible states. The rights holder for the event is Virginia Amateur Sports (VAS). VAS has been organizing the event for 27 years and it is truly a grassroots effort that relies on the dedication of thousands of volunteers and support from local sponsors and organizations across the Commonwealth. VAS is a member of the National Congress of State Games.

About the National Congress of State Games: The National Congress of State Games (NCSG) is a membership organization comprised of 33 Summer State Games and 11 Winter State Games organizations and a member of the United States Olympic Committee's Multi Sports Organizational Council. The mission of the NCSG is to support State Games member organizations in the promotion of health, fitness and character building through Olympic – style competitions and physical activities.

The NCSG is also the rights holder of the State Games of America, an Olympic-style event featuring competition between State Games medal winners (gold, silver, bronze) from across the nation.

For more information on the Games, including images for download, visit: www.CommonwealthGames.org

Member of the National Congress of State Games—learn more at www.stategames.org