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HOST COMMITTEE AND CITIES DECLARE REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION A SUCCESS AS 45,000 VISITORS TAKE IN THE SIGHTS, SOUNDS AND CULTURE OF MINNEAPOLIS SAINT PAUL

More than 8 Billion Media Impressions Calculated So Far

MINNEAPOLIS SAINT PAUL, MINN. (September 5, 2008) – The Minneapolis Saint Paul 2008 Host Committee, Saint Paul Mayor Chris Coleman, Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak and Bloomington Mayor Gene Winstead declared the 2008 Republican National Convention a success as tens of thousands of people enjoyed all that Minneapolis, Saint Paul and the surrounding suburbs have to offer. So far, national and international media exposure has produced more than 8 billion media impressions, the equivalent of a \$330 million ad campaign.*

“We truly rolled out the red carpet for tens of thousands of delegates, media and visitors during the 2008 Republican National Convention and the reviews have been spectacular,” said Jeff Larson, CEO of the Minneapolis Saint Paul 2008 Host Committee. “As we’ve said all along, the exposure from this Convention is truly priceless. The coverage we’ve received so far is the equivalent of purchasing 122 Super Bowl ads.”

While the Convention was held September 1-4 at the Xcel Energy Center, official events began with the grand opening of CivicFest: A Very Minnesota Celebration at the Minneapolis Convention Center on Friday, August 29. The pre-Convention weekend brought many events including spark24, a 24-hour marathon of cultural performances; a media party that showcased the Minneapolis riverfront, the Guthrie Theater and the Mill City Museum; and a delegate party held in CivicFest – an interactive show featuring 35 world-class exhibits celebrating Minnesota and American history, democracy and the U.S. presidency.

“This Convention provided an amazing opportunity for us to show the world that this is a great place to live, work and start a business,” Coleman said. “We are confident that people will leave here with a positive impression and that they will want to come back.”

More than 45,000 people, including 15,000 media from around the world, came to Minneapolis Saint Paul for the Convention. From MSNBC doing 'round-the-clock coverage in Rice Park to "The Daily Show with Jon Stewart" broadcasting from the Minnesota History Theatre, images of Minneapolis Saint Paul were seen around the globe.

"Minneapolis Saint Paul showed the thousands of visitors to the 2008 Republican National Convention that our state is beautiful, cultural, hospitable and smart," Rybak said. "The community truly rallied to put on hundreds of events to show off our best face and they showed the world what it means to be Minnesota Nice."

Convention goers also ventured beyond Minneapolis Saint Paul to shop at Mall of America as well as visit attractions in the surrounding suburbs.

"We have welcomed thousands of people to Bloomington and the Mall of America has been full of activity since last week," Winstead said. "This has been an amazing boost to our city's economy and we are thrilled with the results."

Here are just a few facts and figures:

- From CNN to Italian TV, 15,000 journalists from around the globe came to Minneapolis Saint Paul to set up shop in and around the Saint Paul RiverCentre to cover the Convention.
- Approximately 16,000 rooms in nearly 100 hotels were booked in Minneapolis, Saint Paul, Bloomington and the surrounding suburbs.
- Hotel occupancy rates in downtown Minneapolis ranged from 90 percent to 95 percent compared to 50 percent to 60 percent during the same period over the last few years. Hotel occupancy rates in Saint Paul also were 90 percent to 95 percent compared to 70 percent.
- 25,000 "Wish You Were Here" postcards were mailed to Convention attendees' friends and families, compliments of the Xcel Energy Center.
- Approximately 100 local entertainment acts performed at more than 60 venues during spark24, a 24-hour marathon of free entertainment that showcased the best of the world-class arts scene of Minneapolis Saint Paul. Around 1,000 people came to watch live bands from 2-6 a.m.
- About 10,000 people attended the Media Party, held August 30 on the Mississippi Riverfront between the Guthrie Theater and the Mill City Museum. Attendees dined on food prepared by local restaurants and caterers including: 2,300 ears of corn, 2,000 kobe beef sliders, 1,500 shrimp shooters and 16,000 hand-passed hors d'oeuvres. In addition, Pentair distributed 4,000 environmentally friendly water bottles.
- More than 9,000 people attended the Delegate party, held August 31 inside CivicFest: A Very Minnesota Celebration, at the Minneapolis Convention Center and saw exhibits about Minnesota business and innovation.
- Hundreds of people logged more than 700 miles running, biking and swimming in the More to Tri Fitness Challenge – a three-day "triathlon" that showcased Minneapolis Saint Paul's urban green landscape and highlighted the cities' commitment to healthy and active lifestyles.

- Nearly 2,000 people utilized bikes that were provided by Bikes Belong, a bicycle industry trade association dedicated to bicycle advocacy, to experience the city. In total, bicyclists logged about 13,000 miles and burned 400,000 calories. Their efforts also had a carbon footprint reduction of 4.5 metric tons.
- More than 344 buses transported delegates and visitors using 26 routes to various locations. More than 847 cabs participated in reciprocity between Minneapolis and Saint Paul.
- Area destination marketing organizations filled 1,400 volunteer positions with 600 destination experts at 50+ hotels to welcome visitors, provide directions and pass out information about the cities. Volunteers distributed 25,000 official 2008 RNC Minneapolis Saint Paul maps.
- More than 1,000 people logged on to Minneapolis' wireless network this week, taking advantage of Minneapolis' Free Wireless Wednesday and the USI Wireless and MySpace kiosks along Nicollet Mall.
- 70,000 welcome buttons were distributed and worn by volunteers, hotel staff, restaurant staff, Convention staff and airport greeters. Six hundred welcome banners were posted throughout Minneapolis Saint Paul.
- 45,000 visitors were personally greeted at MSP International Airport by Minnesota volunteers.
- 65,000 snack boxes were provided by General Mills and distributed at MSP International Airport and hotels.
- In addition to 3,000 Minneapolis Saint Paul press kits and 5,000 Xcel Energy Center RNC 2008 lapel pins, more than 150 pounds of Frango mints, nearly 100 pounds of Jelly Bellies and about 110 pounds of peanuts were distributed to the media by the Host Committee Media Resource Center during the four-day Convention.

*Media values are estimates based on calculations from a standard formula used to calculate impressions and ad equivalency. This formula takes the circulation total and multiplies that number by 2.5 to come up with the media impressions. That number is then multiplied by .04 to get an estimated ad equivalency.

About The Minneapolis Saint Paul 2008 Host Committee

The Minneapolis Saint Paul 2008 Host Committee is a non-partisan, 501c3 nonprofit charged with promoting the commerce, image and prestige of Minneapolis, Saint Paul and the entire region in preparation for the 2008 Republican National Convention. The Host Committee is made up of community leaders who are committed to educating people and businesses to come to Minnesota to work, live, play, visit and invest. For more information, visit www.msp2008.com.

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