

## **Review and Current Status of the Prairie Rose State Games**

Prepared for Legislative Council

Governor George Sinner initiated the Prairie Rose State Games when, in 1985 he asked the Parks and Recreation Department and a group of interested volunteers to develop a plan for a state games in North Dakota. This plan was completed in 1986, and after review, was implemented for the first Prairie Rose State Games scheduled for 1987. Part of the plan called for this initial group of volunteers to develop a private nonprofit association to run the games, which was established prior to the first games in 1987. The new association, known as North Dakota State Games Inc., has operated since 1986 in cooperation with the Parks and Recreation Department and local park districts to put on the state games annually.

The premise of the games was for the Parks and Recreation Department to develop the program and turn it over to North Dakota State Games Inc. to manage independently, which has been slowly happening for the past 22 years. Initially, the Parks and Recreation Department dedicated two FTE status employees and substantial financial resources to the games. Then, in the mid 1990s, the park districts in Bismarck, Fargo, Minot and Grand Forks began contracting with North Dakota State Games Inc. to take the lead in planning, managing and fundraising for the games in their respective cities. North Dakota State Games Inc. continued to contact with the Parks and Recreation Department to provide a level of general coordination of the Prairie Rose State Games in maintaining the records of the program and other functions done through a central office. North Dakota Parks and Recreation continues to slowly transition this event to North Dakota State Games Inc., but still provides limited staffing and in-kind assistance.

Annually, the program budget for the the day Prairie Rose State Games ranges from \$125,000 - \$150,000, of which one third is raised in cash sponsorships, one third in in-kind sponsorships, and one third in user fees. The local park district does this fund raising and bears the financial liability of the event. During the past five years each host city generated more revenue than the games expenses.

In the 22 years since the first annual Prairie Rose State Games, over 105,000 participants have taken part in over 50 events to make the Prairie Rose State Games one of the largest per-capita state games competitions in the United States. Success of the Prairie Rose State Games is most often attributed to participation by athletes, volunteers, contributors and organizers. Today the Prairie Rose State Games is still providing the benefit of physical activity and incentive for athletes to develop their athletic abilities through participation and friendly competition. Its purpose – to instill the awareness of personal fitness in North Dakota residents – is just as important today as it was in 1987.

Submitted this 4<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2008  
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– Liaison to the Prairie Rose State Games–