

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## United States Olympic Committee Announces New U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Training Sites in Oklahoma

*Oklahoma River, Oklahoma City – Rowing & Canoe/Kayak  
University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond – Volleyball, Archery, Paralympic Sports*

(Oklahoma City – July 28, 2009) – Standing before a large crowd at the Oklahoma River near downtown Oklahoma City, Acting Chief Executive Officer of the United States Olympic Committee (USOC), **Stephanie Streeter**, today announced the designation of two U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Training Sites in Oklahoma. City officials from Oklahoma City and Edmond, Okla., and citizens from throughout the area listened as the USOC named the Oklahoma River south of downtown Oklahoma City, in partnership with the Oklahoma City Boathouse Foundation, as an official U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Training Site for rowing and canoe/kayak. The University of Central Oklahoma in Edmond, Okla., already a Paralympic site, added the Olympic designation to become an official site for volleyball, archery and Paralympic sports.



“This is an exciting announcement for the USOC and for Oklahoma City and the University of Central Oklahoma as together we are expanding opportunities for our nation’s athletes to train in world class facilities,” Streeter said. “The communities of Oklahoma City and Edmond have demonstrated a deep commitment to the Olympic Movement. The Oklahoma River, including the new boathouses, finish line tower and proposed whitewater center, will attract top events and athletes as well as enhance a vibrant downtown. And, UCO will expand upon years of dedication to Paralympic sport when Olympians, Paralympians and hopefuls make their home in Edmond. These new programs and facilities will provide a welcome home for current and future members of Team USA as they train to make their dreams a reality.”

The Oklahoma River designation includes the river’s 2000-meter race course and National High Performance Center, both projects of the OKC Boathouse Foundation (OKCBF). The University of Central Oklahoma Olympic Training Site will include archery and volleyball, as well as Paralympic sports.

“As a community, we believe in the value of the Olympic Movement for our country,” said Olympic gold medal winning gymnast **Bart Conner**. “We hosted the United States Olympic Festival in 1989 and we have never hesitated to support United States Olympic and Paralympic athletes and the values they stand for – excellence, discipline, the spirit of fair play. I am so proud of what we have achieved through MAPS to transform our community and put us in a position to receive Olympic Training Site designations. The future is bright and today’s announcement is only the beginning of great things to come.”

The mission of the U.S. Olympic Training Sites is to deliver additional resources, services and facilities for athletes and National Governing Bodies (NGBs) while providing an elite athlete training environment that positively impacts performance. With the addition of the Oklahoma River and UCO designations, the USOC now partners with 10 different Sites as part of a national training system of world class facilities across the United States. In 2008, more than 1,000 U.S. National Team athletes trained at the Sites, which boasted 139 members of the 2008 U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Teams who came away with 12 medals.

### **OKLAHOMA RIVER**

“We are becoming an increasingly significant player in the national and international sports world because of the Oklahoma River and the support of community-minded corporations like Devon Energy,

Chesapeake Energy and OG&E,” commented Oklahoma City **Mayor Mick Cornett**. “Today’s announcement by the USOC further validates the public and private investments we have made in the Oklahoma River are returning great dividends to our community. We are well on our way to developing the premier sports and recreational center in the country for kayaking, rowing and canoeing. The proposed whitewater sports and recreational center will offer our citizens and athletes an incredible experience.”

The Oklahoma River has been the site of numerous national and international competitions hosted by the OKC Boathouse Foundation (OKCBF), including the USA Rowing World Challenge in 2007 and the 2008 U.S. Olympic Team Trials – Canoe/Kayak for flatwater sprint. The National Governing Bodies of USRowing and USA Canoe/Kayak have both named the Oklahoma River as a national training site. The OKCBF’s National High Performance Center hosted the USRowing Men’s Under 23 National Team Selection Camp in June.

OKCBF Executive Director **Mike Knopp** sees the further development of boathouses and a planned finish line tower as taking the Oklahoma River “to the next level.”

“Construction of the Devon Boathouse, home of Oklahoma City University rowing, is well underway and it will be a focal point of the National High Performance Center,” Knopp said. “The planned Chesapeake Finish Line Tower will meet international racing standards, taking our course to the next level. After that, we need to finish out the venue – truly make it an international sports complex with timing and lighting infrastructure and modern grandstands.”

“We have earned the confidence of the U.S. Olympic Committee and international athletes who’ve already trained and raced here,” Knopp said. “We look forward to giving Olympians, Paralympians and hopefuls a world-class facility and a place where they can train and compete alongside the best from around the world. We are excited about the Oklahoma River’s future and what it can mean to our city and the U.S. Olympic Movement.”

#### **UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL OKLAHOMA**

“Central is committed to providing an opportunity-rich environment to enable people to become productive, creative, ethical and engaged citizens and leaders, and this designation as an official U.S. Olympic Training Site exemplifies that commitment,” said University of Central Oklahoma (UCO) President **W. Roger Webb**. “We couldn’t be more proud to serve the community and the country as a partner with the United States Olympic Committee.”

UCO’s involvement in Paralympic sports began in 2000, when it hosted the first annual Endeavor Games for athletes with physical disabilities. The disabled sporting event continued to grow and in 2004 a sitting volleyball demonstration was held by the U.S. Men’s National Sitting Volleyball Team. The following year at the 6th annual Endeavor Games, USA Volleyball announced UCO as the official site of Men’s National Sitting Volleyball Team, making the university an official U.S. Paralympic Training Site.

Since 2005, UCO has continued to build on its success as a national training site. The university hosts the men’s and women’s sitting volleyball teams. There are currently nine resident athletes who live and train on the campus in the sports of sitting volleyball, track & field and archery.

UCO resident athletes brought the Training Site international glory, having a successful run at the 2008 Paralympic Games in Beijing. The U.S. Women’s Sitting Volleyball Team won the silver medal after falling to the host-nation China. Katrin Greene, a German track athlete, won gold in the 200 meter sprint in Beijing. T.J. Pemberton, a Guthrie native and Paralympic archer, finished fourth in the men’s individual compound open competition.

“With a successful run at the 2008 Paralympic Games and the new Olympic designation, UCO looks forward to continuing to contribute to the U.S. Olympic Movement,” said **Katrina Shaklee**, Director of Sports and Recreation at the UCO Wellness Center. “UCO is devoted to expanding its Paralympic and Olympic services and venues for the elite athletes in training.”

UCO was recently named the official training site for the U.S. Powerlifting Team. The university will also host the Disabled Volleyball World Championships in July 2010.

### **About the U.S. Olympic Committee**

The United States Olympic Committee (USOC) is recognized by the International Olympic Committee as the sole entity in the United States whose mission involves training, entering and underwriting the full expenses for the U.S. teams in the Olympic, Paralympic, Pan American and Parapan American Games. In addition to being the steward of the U.S. Olympic Movement, the USOC is the moving force for support of sports in the United States that are on the program of the Olympic, Paralympic, Pan American and Parapan American Games.

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### **HELFPUL LINKS**

U.S. Olympic Training Sites: [www.teamusa.org](http://www.teamusa.org)  
Oklahoma River: [www.oklahomariver.us](http://www.oklahomariver.us)  
University of Central Oklahoma: [www.ucowellnesscenter.com](http://www.ucowellnesscenter.com).

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