

TN Governor Bredesen and AZ Senator McCain Named Race Officials for 2007 Coca-Cola 600

May 17, 2007

-- Tennessee Governor Phil Bredesen named Grand Marshal -- Arizona Senator John McCain named Honorary Starter -- Patriotic pre-race show will honor America's Armed Forces -- LeAnn Rimes to sing National Anthem

CHARLOTTE, N.C., May 17, 2007 /PRNewswire-FirstCall via COMTEX News Network/ -- Some big name national leaders will share the stage at the 2007 Coca-Cola 600, including Tennessee Governor Phil Bredesen, Arizona Senator John McCain, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs General Peter Pace, and country music star LeAnn Rimes.

Governor Phil Bredesen (D-TN) has been named Grand Marshal for the Memorial Day weekend NEXTEL Cup event at the famed Lowe's Motor Speedway. U.S. Senator and former POW John McCain (R-AZ) will serve as Honorary Starter and General Peter Pace will review thousands of troops on hand for the patriotic pre-race show.

"We are honored to have such distinguished American leaders like Governor Bredesen and Senator McCain serve as race officials for this year's Coca-Cola 600," said Coca-Cola Consolidated spokesman Lauren Steele. "All of us at Coca-Cola join NASCAR fans across the nation in expressing our thanks and support for the members of the United States Armed Forces who are serving to protect our freedoms in Iraq, Afghanistan and throughout the world. It is only appropriate on Memorial Day weekend that we pay a special tribute to America's military."

As race officials, Bredesen and McCain will attend the official drivers meeting, address the crowd of nearly 200,000 fans, participate in the pre-race spectacular and present the trophy in Victory Lane. As Grand Marshal, Bredesen will ride in the official pace car while McCain, as Honorary Starter, will wave the green flag over the 43-car field to start the longest NASCAR race and one of the largest sporting events in the world.

Bredesen was first elected Tennessee's governor in 2002 and was re-elected by a landslide margin in 2006. As Governor, he has restored fiscal stability to Tennessee state government and kept Tennesseans' tax burden low, while making education Tennessee's number one priority. Bredesen served as mayor of Nashville from 1991-99 and under his leadership, Nashville experienced record economic growth. He also recruited the NFL Tennessee Titans and NHL Nashville Predators to the capital city.

"It's a great privilege for me to accept this invitation as Grand Marshall of the 2007 Coca Cola 600," said Bredesen. "I know I'll be sharing the excitement of this prestigious event with the hundreds of Tennessee NASCAR fans making the trip to Charlotte. I'm also honored to join Senator McCain as we pay tribute to our troops on this Memorial Day weekend."

McCain has served in the United States Senate from Arizona since 1987. He is a Navy veteran and American military hero, spending more than five years in a Vietnamese prison as a prisoner of war. In the US Senate he has been a staunch supporter of America's Armed Forces and he is currently seeking the Republican presidential nomination.

"Our country should never forget the tremendous sacrifices that brave young Americans are making abroad for our safety at home, and the people of NASCAR, Coca-Cola and North Carolina are doing an extraordinary job of celebrating great competition while maintaining focus on events and sacrifices that are significant to our country," said McCain. "I'm honored to have a role in this event and I'm really looking forward to race day."

Thousands of active duty forces from nearby Fort Bragg will participate in the patriotic pre-race spectacular, where they will be greeted by the nation's top military leader, Joint Chiefs Chairman General Peter Pace.

In addition, Grammy and Country Music Award winner LeAnn Rimes will sing the National Anthem before the May 27 race.

Coca-Cola is the Official Soft Drink of NASCAR and the sponsor of the Coca-Cola 600. The Coca-Cola Racing Family includes top drivers Greg Biffle, Jeff Burton, Carl Edwards, Denny Hamlin, Kevin Harvick, Dale Jarrett, Bobby Labonte, Mark Martin, Jamie McMurray, Kyle Petty, Tony Stewart and Michael Waltrip.

Tickets for the Coca-Cola 600 can be obtained by calling the speedway ticket office at 1-800-455-FANS or online at www.lowesmotorspeedway.com.

SOURCE Coca-Cola Bottling Co. Consolidated

Lauren Steele
Coca-Cola Consolidated
+1-704-557-4551
or
Jerry Gappens
Lowe's Motor Speedway
+1-704-455-3209
Lydia Lenker
for Governor Bredesen
+1-615-741-3763
or
Tucker Bounds
for Senator McCain
+1-703-650-5633