

SC Sen. DeMint, AL Speaker Hammett join NASCAR Legend Bobby Allison as Officials for 50th Coca-Cola 600

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Three-time Coca-Cola 600 winner Bobby Allison is Grand Marshal SC U.S. Senator Jim DeMint will wave green flag to start race AL House Speaker Seth Hammett is Honorary Race Director 50th running of Coca-Cola 600 will honor American Armed Forces

CHARLOTTE, N.C.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--May. 20, 2009-- NASCAR legend and three-time winner of the Coca-Cola 600 Bobby Allison will serve as the Grand Marshal for the 50th running of the Coca-Cola 600 at famed Lowe's Motor Speedway. Joining him as race officials for the Memorial Day weekend extravaganza are South Carolina U.S. Senator Jim DeMint as Honorary Starter and Alabama House Speaker Seth Hammett as Honorary Race Director.

A spectacular pre-race show honoring members of America's Armed Forces will precede the Memorial Day weekend Sprint Cup classic, one of the largest sporting events in the nation.

"We are really excited about having three-time Coca-Cola 600 winner Bobby Allison serve as Grand Marshal for this year's race—the 50th running of the Coca-Cola 600," said Coca-Cola Consolidated spokesman Lauren Steele. "In addition, we are honored to have such distinguished public servants and American leaders like Senator Jim DeMint of South Carolina and Alabama Speaker Seth Hammett serve as race officials."

"Again this year, preceding the race there will be a special tribute to our nation's men and women in our Armed Forces," Steele added. "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."

More than 1,500 members of the military will participate in the pre-race show. Soldiers from Fort Bragg will utilize Chinook and Blackhawk helicopters as well as ground artillery to conduct military maneuvers and secure the frontstretch for a special delivery. In addition, more than 100 relatives of active soldiers will unfurl a giant American flag in the shape of the United States.

As race officials, Allison, DeMint and Hammett will be honored at a pre-race event, attend the official drivers meeting, address the crowd of nearly 180,000 fans, participate in the pre-race spectacular and present the trophy in Victory Lane. As Honorary Race Director, Speaker Hammett will ride in the official pace car while Senator DeMint, 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.

Bobby Allison is one of NASCAR's most beloved stars, with 84 total wins, a Winston Cup Championship and three Coca-Cola 600 victories. Named one of the sport's 50 Greatest Drivers in 1998, he also received the Most Popular Driver Award six times.

Jim DeMint was elected to the U.S. Senate from South Carolina in 2004 and has quickly established himself as one of the most effective conservative leaders in Washington. He is a tireless advocate for smaller government, individual liberty, a strong national defense and traditional values. DeMint is a former businessman from Greenville. He is married and has four grown children.

"It is a real honor to serve as Honorary Starter of the Coca-Cola 600," DeMint said. "NASCAR fans are traditionally strong supporters of our military and the values that have made America great. I'm looking forward to this chance to represent the thousands of South Carolinians who will be at Lowe's Motor Speedway for what is sure to be an exciting race."

Seth Hammett has served as Speaker of the Alabama House of Representatives since 1999. An Air Force veteran, Hammett has distinguished himself as a legislator, businessman and educator. He has served as chairman of both the Southern Legislative Conference and the National Speakers Conference. He and his wife live in Andalusia and have two grown children.

"Alabama is NASCAR country and has a long history with this truly American sport," Hammett said. "It is a great honor to serve as a Race Official with Senator DeMint and my friend from Alabama Bobby Allison. It is a great honor to serve as Honorary Race Director for the 50th running of the Coca-Cola 600."

Coca-Cola is the Official Sparkling Beverage of NASCAR and the sponsor of the Coca-Cola 600. The Coca-Cola Racing Family includes top drivers Tony Stewart, Greg Biffle, Jeff Burton, Elliott Sadler, Denny Hamlin, Kevin Harvick, David Ragan, Bobby Labonte, Clint Bowyer, Jamie McMurray, Joey Logano, and Michael Waltrip. Members of the extended racing family include Carl Edwards and Kyle Busch.

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

Coca-Cola Consolidated
Lauren Steele, 704-557-4551
or
Lowe's Motor Speedway
Scott Cooper, 704-455-3209