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**CivicFest Opens: Minnesotans to Experience Once-in-a-Lifetime Celebration of History and Democracy; Free Admission to First 5,000 Attendees**

*Opening day ceremony includes civic engagement declarations from a local youth and elected officials; state of Minnesota and city of Minneapolis declare Aug. 29 CivicFest Day*

**MINNEAPOLIS SAINT PAUL, Minn. (Aug. 29, 2008)** – CivicFest, a non-partisan celebration of American and Minnesotan history, democracy and the U.S. presidency, today opens its doors to the public after more than 5,000 hours of construction.

Produced by the Minneapolis Saint Paul 2008 Host Committee and held in conjunction with the Republican National Convention, CivicFest is a showcase of more than 35 world-class, museum-quality exhibits, taking place at the Minneapolis Convention Center from Aug. 29 through Sept. 4.

“An event of this magnitude will leave a lasting impression on our community for years to come,” said Cynthia Leshner, president of the Minneapolis Saint Paul 2008 Host Committee. “We’re proud to offer CivicFest as an opportunity for all citizens to participate in the convention experience and take an active role in civic engagement.”

Opening day festivities include a public declaration of civic engagement by a local youth and elected officials, proclamations from the state of Minnesota and city of Minneapolis declaring Friday, Aug. 29 CivicFest Day: A Day to Commit and Engage in Civics, and a ribbon-cutting ceremony opening the doors to CivicFest. The first 5,000 attendees are admitted free.

“During the Republican National Convention, we hope delegates, visitors and locals will share in our commitment to civic involvement by experiencing CivicFest,” said Maria Cino, president and CEO of the 2008 Republican National Convention. “Whether it’s greening their community or volunteering as an electoral judge, we invite all attendees to pledge their civic commitment in the *Declaration of Civic Engagement* book that will be featured at CivicFest.”

CivicFest embodies the civic history and founding roots of our country and welcomes visitors to experience American political history and to pledge their civic commitment, while taking in dozens of educational and entertaining exhibits. A 60- by 20-foot, one-foot-to-one-inch exact scale replica of the White House, full-scale Oval Office replica, Air Force One fuselage, presidential limos, former first ladies’ inaugural ball gowns and more than 150 authentic American flags will all be on display.

**About CivicFest**

CivicFest: A Very Minnesota Celebration is a family-friendly, once-in-a-lifetime interactive and multimedia experience, featuring more than 35 educational and entertaining exhibits, historic memorabilia and artifacts celebrating Minnesota and American history, democracy and the U.S. presidency. CivicFest is being produced by Maxene Fernstrom and Gerard McTernan for the Minneapolis Saint Paul 2008 Host Committee. For more information, visit [www.civicfest.org](http://www.civicfest.org).

**About the Minneapolis Saint Paul 2008 Host Committee**

The Minneapolis Saint Paul 2008 Host Committee is the nonprofit, non-partisan entity 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](http://www.msp2008.com).

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