News Release

from the largest annual wheelchair sports event in the world

National Veterans Wheelchair Games

Local Veteran Competes in National Veterans Wheelchair Games

Denver, Colo. -- July 7, 2010 -- Craig Wathen, a disabled Army and Coast Guard Veteran from Grand Island, Neb., is competing in the 30th National Veterans Wheelchair Games, being held through July 9 in Denver, Colorado. Attracting nearly 600 athletes each year, the National Veterans Wheelchair Games are the largest annual wheelchair sports event in the world. It is a multi-event sports and rehabilitation program for military service Veterans who use wheelchairs due to spinal cord injuries, amputations, or neurological problems. Wathen, 52, has multiple sclerosis and currently receives care at the VA medical facility in Grand Island, N.Y.

Wathen is competing in the following events:

bowling
table tennis
air guns
archery

Athletes in the Games compete within three divisions – Masters (over age 40), Novice (first-time competitors), and Open (all others). They also compete within classes according to the level of their physical ability, with three quadriplegic-level classes (1A, 1B and 1C), and four paraplegic-level or amputee classes (2, 3, 4 and 5). Wathen competes as a Class 5 in the Open division.

The Games are presented by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Paralyzed Veterans of America, and hosted this year by the VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System (VA ECHS), and the Paralyzed Veterans of America Mountain States Chapter. Funded with help from a host of corporate sponsors, events at the National Veterans Wheelchair Games are a showcase for the benefit of sports rehabilitative programs, and the remarkable athletic abilities and personal achievements of our nation's disabled Veterans.

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Note to Editor: If you would like to interview this Veteran, contact Susan Varcie at (734) 417-6260 or (734) 845-3706 after July 10. For more information about the event, please visit the Games Web site at www.wheelchairgames.va.gov. Information above provided by the Veteran.