



## **Athlete Profile (Local)**

### **Jim Toelle – Let the Games Begin!**

Jim Toelle, 63, is an Army veteran and a native Nebraskan. Born in West Point, he later moved to Fremont and graduated from Fremont Bergan High School. This is Toelle's first year participating in the National Veterans Wheelchair Games and he has been eagerly looking forward to competing in several different sports at the event this year. Since the 2008 Games are being held in Omaha, July 25-29, 2008, he won't have to travel very far to get there.

Toelle is already getting ready for the competition and has signed up for the air guns and nine-ball events as well as a motorized wheelchair rally taking place at the Henry Doorly Zoo. He is training for the events with fellow members of the Great Plains Chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of America, one of the co-hosts of this year's event along with the VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System in Omaha. Toelle credits the president of the local chapter with encouraging him to register for and participate in the Games.

A long time sports lover, Toelle enjoys a variety of sports with slow pitch softball being one of his favorites. He was a member of an Army slow pitch softball team while serving in the military. His goals for the National Veterans Wheelchair Games are similar to those of any athlete. "I expect to have a great time, meet new friends and enjoy a great learning experience," he said.

While serving in the Army from 1965-68, Toelle was stationed in Germany for two years. His military occupation was a communications specialist. After leaving the service, he has worked for more than 27 years at the Hormel Packing House in Fremont. In 1989, he was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. It is because of the condition that Toelle will compete from a wheelchair at the Games.

Although he's never participated in the National Veterans Wheelchair Games before, Jim Toelle decided to do it this year because he knows he will not only have fun and make many new friends, but will help the public understand what a person with a disability can really do. "To educate the public, individuals with disabilities should be viewed for their potential," he said. "I enjoy competing and being around people and have really been looking forward to the Games in Omaha this July."