



NEWS RELEASE

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS
NATIONAL OFFICE — 1200 GRAND BLVD., KANSAS CITY, MO 64106
PHONE (816) 595-8000 FAX (816) 595-8200 www.NAIA.org

City of Independence to Host the 2015 and 2016 NAIA Division I Women's Basketball National Championships

Events will run during the same days as the Division I Men's Basketball National Championship

Story by City of Independence and NAIA National Office

INDEPENDENCE, Mo. – April 9, 2014 – The Independence Tourism Department and the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) are excited to announce that the Division I Women's Basketball National Championship is coming home to the Kansas City area. The City of Independence, Mo., will serve as the official host of the 2015 and 2016 national championships, with assistance from William Woods University (Mo.).

The championship events will be held at the Independence Events Center in Independence, Mo., from March 18 – 24, 2015 and March 16 – 22, 2016, which will be the 35th and 36th annual events, respectively.

The NAIA has sponsored the 32-team, single-elimination championship tournament since 1981, when its inaugural championship was held in Kansas City, Mo. The City of Fountains was home to this event from 1981-83 and again from 1986-89. Currently, 102 institutions sponsor the sport of Division I women's basketball. For a complete list of participating schools, go to NAIA.org and click on women's basketball.

"We are extremely excited to bring the Division I Women's Basketball National Championship to the Independence Events Center!" said Jim Carr, NAIA President and CEO. "We are very happy to be able to provide an atmosphere where these student-athletes and administrators will have a great championship experience, and where fans can come to Kansas City for NAIA basketball for both genders."

The NAIA national office is headquartered in Kansas City, Mo., with the Buffalo Funds-NAIA Division I Men's Basketball National Championship taking place at Municipal Auditorium in downtown Kansas City. The 78th and 79th annual men's events will take place at the same time as the women's basketball championships in 2015 and 2016. Independence is roughly 15 miles from the site of the Division I men's basketball championship.

"The storied NAIA men's basketball tournament has been a tradition in the Kansas City area for more than 75 years," said Cori Day, Director of Independence Tourism. "We are happy to welcome the NAIA women's basketball championship home for 2015 and 2016."

William Woods will receive the automatic "host berth" in the field of 32 teams for the 2015 and 2016 events. The Owls are members of the American Midwest Conference and sponsor 13 varsity sports.

"We were very excited and honored when we were approached by the Independence Tourism Department to serve as the host school for the NAIA Women's Basketball National Championship," said Jason Vittone, Athletic Director of William Woods University. "William Woods is looking forward to building a strong relationship with the city of Independence and the NAIA."

The Independence Events Center (IEC) has hosted numerous national, collegiate and youth championships: MSHSAA (Missouri State High School Activities Association), Collegiate Club Hockey (University of Missouri vs. University of Kansas) Skate KC Figure Skating Competition. The IEC also serves as the home of the Missouri Mavericks of the Central Hockey League and the Missouri Comets of the Major Indoor Soccer League.



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It was recently announced that the Heartland Figure Skating Club and the Kansas City Figure Skating Club were awarded the 2016 Southwestern Regional Championships that will take place at the Independence Events Center.

"The Independence Events Center is an impressive facility," added Vittone. "It will make for a fantastic venue for the National Championship. This is certainly a great opportunity for our university. We look forward to assisting the Independence Tourism Department to make this a memorable experience for all the visiting teams and fans."

Previous host cities for the NAIA Division I Women's Basketball National Championships have included most recently Frankfort, Ky., and Jackson, Tenn. The 2014 national champion Oklahoma City Stars captured its seventh title on March 25 after a 80-76 victory against Freed-Hardeman (Tenn.). The Stars now are tied for the most all-time national championships.

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About National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA):

The National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA), headquartered in Kansas City, Mo., is a governing body of small athletics programs that are dedicated to character-driven intercollegiate athletics. NAIA members provide more than 60,000 student-athletes with opportunities to play college sports, earn \$500 million in scholarships and compete in 23 national championships. Since 1937, the NAIA has administered programs and championships in proper balance with the overall college educational experience.

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About the Independence Events Center:

The Independence Events Center is a multi-purpose arena located off of I-70 and minutes away from downtown Kansas City. The state-of-the-art arena features 5,800 fixed seats, contemporary amenities and easily transforms to host a wide variety of sporting events including hockey, basketball, indoor soccer, youth wrestling and exhibition figure skating events. Since opening in 2009, the events has hosted hundreds of events and is home to the Central Hockey League's 2013 – 14 Bud Poile Governors' Cup Regular Season Champions the Missouri Mavericks and indoors soccer's 2013 – 14 Champions the Missouri Comets. The facility also hosts other events including concerts, graduations, trade shows exhibition and non-professional sporting events and features second sheet of ice dedicated to year-round ice sports and recreation. The Independence Events Center is located at 19100 E. Valley View Parkway, Independence, MO 64055

www.IndependenceEventsCenter.com

About Independence, Missouri:

Independence, Missouri was built on the pride of the people that call it home, including President Harry S Truman. Its residents are down-to-earth, hard-working folks who are proud of their history, excited about their future, and welcome visitors with friendly hospitality.

A town rich in history and honest values, Independence is also the starting point of the Westward movement. Just 20 minutes from downtown Kansas City, it has a population of 117,000 with a small-town feel. Sophisticated dining, shopping and an emerging arts scene provides a contemporary atmosphere for the 16 heritage attractions and outdoor sporting activities.

www.visitindependence.com

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