

West Virginia Governor Joe Manchin Named Starter of 2006 Coca-Cola 600

May 17, 2006

- Edward Powell, USO President, will give race command
- "American Idol" host Ryan Seacrest to participate in pre-race activities
- Carrie Underwood to give pre-race concert

CHARLOTTE, N.C., May 17 /PRNewswire/ -- West Virginia Governor Joe Manchin will serve as the Honorary Starter for the Coca-Cola 600 NASCAR NEXTEL Cup Series race on Sunday evening, May 28, at Lowe's Motor Speedway.

Among his duties, Manchin will wave the green flag to start the Memorial Day weekend classic-the longest NASCAR race and one of the largest sporting events in the world. Manchin will also attend the driver's meeting, address the crowd of nearly 200,000 fans, participate in the pre-race spectacular and join in the trophy presentation.

Manchin, elected in 2004, is West Virginia's 34th Governor. As a member of the legislature from 1982-1996, he earned a reputation for standing up for West Virginians to improve schools, protect veterans and senior citizens, and create jobs. Under his leadership as West Virginia's Secretary of State from 2000-2004, the office became known for providing excellent customer service. In addition, its SHARES program promoted democracy to all schoolchildren and registered 42,000 high school students to vote.

"The state of West Virginia has the highest number of veterans per capita in the nation so we are particularly honored to have Governor Manchin join us in Charlotte as Honorary Starter on Memorial Day. The Governor is a strong leader who cares about improving the lives of all West Virginians," said Lauren Steele, spokesman for Coca-Cola Consolidated.

"It's a privilege to 'Go Racing' with NASCAR as the honorary starter for the 2006 Coca Cola 600 at Lowe's Motor Speedway," Governor Manchin said. "Like many West Virginians, I am a huge race fan so I'm particularly excited to be part of this great American tradition. The Coca-Cola 600 is one of NASCAR's longest and most challenging races so there will be plenty of racing excitement at the track on Memorial Day. It should be a great day to go racing!"

In addition to Governor Manchin, Edward Powell, President and CEO of the USO will give the command 'Gentlemen, start your engines.' "American Idol" host, Ryan Seacrest, will join the pre-race activities and driver introductions. A pre-race concert will be given by country music star, Carrie Underwood.

Coca-Cola is the Official Soft Drink of NASCAR and the sponsor of the Coca-Cola 600. The Coca-Cola Racing Family includes top drivers Greg Biffle, Jeff Burton, Carl Edwards, Kevin Harvick, Dale Jarrett, Bobby Labonte, Mark Martin, Jamie McMurray, Kyle Petty, Elliot Sadler, Tony Stewart and Michael Waltrip.

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

-0- 05/17/2006

/NOTE TO EDITORS: A downloadable image of Governor Manchin is available on the web at www.wvgov.org/

/CONTACT: Lauren C. Steele of Coca-Cola Consolidated, +1-704-557-4551; or Lara Ramsburg of Governor Manchin's Office, +1-304-558-2000/

/Web site: <http://www.cokeconsolidated.com>
<http://www.lowesmotorspeedway.com> /

(COKE) □

CO: Coca-Cola Bottling Co. Consolidated; Lowe's Motor Speedway; Lowe's; Coca Cola 600 NASCAR NEXTEL Cup Series; Coca-Cola Consolidated

ST: North Carolina

IN: FOD ENT SPT MUS

SU: □

CT-LA □

-- CLW040 --

0960 05/17/2006 12:30 EDT <http://www.prnewswire.com>