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MINNESOTA STATE

Athletics

For Immediate Release
Subject: Sign the Puck Initiative

Feb. 1, 2012

Minnesota State Athletics Announces Community Engagement Plan to Support Bonding Appropriation for Verizon Wireless Center

Mankato, Minn. --- Hoping to raise awareness and build support for proposed improvements to the Verizon Wireless Center, Minnesota State has unveiled the “Greater Mankato Carries the Puck” bonding support initiative.

Intended to create a lasting visual impression by offering supporters the chance to "sign off" in their support for the proposed appropriation, the goal is to get more than 1,000 signatures on an oversized 4.5-foot replica puck that will be a key feature of the advocacy group’s presentation during Greater Mankato Day at the Capitol on Wednesday, Feb. 15.

Originally built with funds accrued from a local option sales tax, the Minnesota State men's hockey team christened Verizon Wireless Center in 1995. The proposed \$31-million bonding project will provide for improvements to the arena and expand the event center auditorium.

The initiative will officially kick-off this **Friday, Feb. 3 at 6:30 p.m.** during the **Blue Line Club meeting held at the Red Sky Lounge** prior to the Minnesota State vs. Michigan Tech men's hockey game. MSU President **Richard Davenport**, Head Coach **Troy Jutting**, Director of Athletics **Kevin Buisman**, City Councilman **Mike Laven** and other members of Community Advocacy group, are expected to participate in this ceremonial “first signing” of the puck.

The giant puck is expected to make its way throughout the area over an extended period of time leading up to the capitol visit, offering fans, community ice enthusiasts, and other local citizens an opportunity to make their mark in support of the project. For additional details and to learn more about the bonding project, visit the Great Mankato Growth website at: <http://www.greatermankato.com/gmg-verizonwirelesscenter.php>.

“We are really excited about our opportunity to help rally support for this project. These planned improvements would have a dramatic impact on our program by creating a new modern home for our men’s and women’s teams that will be attractive to both current and prospective student-athletes,” said **Kevin Buisman**, MSU Director of Athletics. “I think it is imperative that we are able to demonstrate local enthusiasm for the bonding proposal and these public signing events offer a unique way to give everyone a chance to participate. It is important that everyone who hopes a better future for our hockey program gets involved and finds a way to demonstrate their support.”