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## RENO RIVER FESTIVAL ENCOURAGES SAFE PRACTICES DURING 8<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL FESTIVAL MAY 6 – 8

**RENO, Nev. (May 4, 2011)** – While top whitewater athletes prepare to return to the Truckee River for the 8<sup>th</sup> annual Reno River Festival and as the summer months quickly approach sending water levels soaring, event producers encourage the community to practice water safety while enjoying activities in and around the Truckee River Whitewater Park.

“We’re expecting the highest water levels since the flood of 1997 this weekend, which is why we’re encouraging all visitors to the River to practice great caution and be aware of their surroundings at all times,” said Jim Bauserman, the festival’s owner. “These are extremely powerful water flows and while we want everyone to have a good time, we also want to keep them as safe as possible while playing in the Truckee River this weekend and for the rest of the summer.”

The Reno River Festival recommends the following safety guidelines while enjoying the Truckee River Whitewater Park this weekend or any other time this summer. Please note that these are suggestions only:

**Wear a properly fitted life jacket and helmet.** This keeps swimmers and boaters afloat and helps prevent possible injury or drowning if caught in the open river.

**Use course-appropriate water equipment and know how to control it.** All rafters and kayakers should know how to stop a raft or kayak at any time and know how to bring it to shore should it become capsized or overturned. Additionally, tubers are encouraged not to use the river while the water is high and still cold from recent snow melt. Tubes and body boards are better suited when the water is lower and warmer.

**Choose a skill-appropriate playground.** Whitewater is rated from I to VI, with I being the least difficult. The Truckee River is rated class II to III or higher, depending on water flow and a boater’s location. Playing in water that requires more skill than one may possess can be dangerous and should not be attempted. Doing so not only puts oneself in danger, but it also endangers rescue and emergency response teams.

**Never play in the water alone.** Although the Truckee River Whitewater Park is located in an urban area it is still a natural river. Swimmers need to keep track of each other in addition to minding their own well being. Playing in water alone can leave swimmers stranded and in need of help. To ensure safety, join a group of friends or a paddling club and appoint someone to be in charge in the event that something unexpected happens.

**Tie everything down, except yourself.** Never tie yourself into a kayak, inner tube or raft. This can lead to severe injuries or drowning. Wallets and other valuables should be placed in a waterproof bag and other belongings should be secured to the floatation device to avoid loss.



**Wear proper clothing.** Wear appropriate clothing, composed mainly of synthetic materials such as nylon, rayon, spandex or polyester blends. These materials dry faster than cotton and keep water enthusiasts warmer while helping to avoid hypothermia. The Truckee River is very cold during the early season and contact should be avoided without proper clothing and equipment.

**Take a paddling clinic or class.** Before venturing into unfamiliar territory, make sure you are properly educated on techniques, equipment and safety procedures used in kayaking, rafting and other water sports. Knowing and understanding how the water works is essential for safety and to having an enjoyable experience.

**Be aware of changing water and weather conditions and unforeseen obstacles.** Increase awareness of the water and weather to avoid dangerous and undesirable conditions. Always avoid dams with hydraulic reversals, bridge piers, barbed wire and downed trees or other obstacles. Also, to avoid capsizing, keep your weight low and balanced over the centerline of the boat and do not lean shoulders outside the edge of the boat. Be aware of water temperature and how quickly snow melt can incapacitate a swimmer upon exposure while swimming.

**Know what to do when capsized or in undesirable circumstances.** Always remain calm. Stay upstream of the obstacle to avoid getting caught between it and other dangers while pointing feet downriver and keeping hands across the chest. Swim to shore when the opportunity presents itself and do not try to stand up in strong currents.

Whether it's kayaks, cameras, costumed running or cans of beer, the Reno River Festival offers a little something for everyone in 2011, ranging from a free concert from The English Beat and the 2nd annual Humans in Motion short film contest to the 4th annual Run Amuck relay mud run, four classes of whitewater competitions and free Yoga in the Park. Registration for all events is now open at [www.RenoRiverFestival.com/registration](http://www.RenoRiverFestival.com/registration).

For more details about the 8<sup>th</sup> annual Reno River Festival or the Run Amuck, visit [www.RenoRiverFestival.com](http://www.RenoRiverFestival.com) or call 775-784-9400 x 119.

*The 8<sup>th</sup> annual Reno River Festival is held at the Truckee River Whitewater Park at Wingfield located in the heart of downtown Reno's Old Southwest, named one of "Best Neighborhoods in America" by Men's Journal magazine and recognized by Travel + Leisure as one of "America's Coolest River Walks." Hosting top whitewater athletes from around the world May 6-8, 2011, the city's \$1.5-million Whitewater Park is within steps of the downtown Reno gaming and entertainment corridor including dining options ranging from five-star to those open until 5 a.m., entertainment venues, museums, theaters, hiking and biking trails and a selection of renowned hotel-casinos offering fully customizable weekend getaway packages. The 8<sup>th</sup> annual Reno River Festival is presented by Reno River Festival LLC and Dolan Automotive Group.*

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