



REGIONAL SKATE DRIVE UNDERWAY FOR FREE PUBLIC SKATING AT BUSHNELL PARK

---NEWS AND COMMUNITY RELEASE---

(October 19, 2011)--- A regional skate drive is underway to keep the “free” in free public skating at Bushnell Park as *iQuilt Presents Hartford Winterfest* gets ready to open on Friday, November 25th. This season, the rink will be bigger and the skating season will be longer as people from all around come to enjoy ice skating, skating shows, historic Bushnell Park, and the City of Hartford as a choice destination for family fun and entertainment.

“Last year, 20,000 people enjoyed our free outdoor public ice skating in Bushnell Park and our ice shows. We expect even more families this year. That’s why we are collecting 1,000 gently used figure skates and hockey skates so that our city and suburban families can once again experience the thrill of ice skating and the beauty of historic Downtown Hartford,” said Hartford Mayor Pedro E. Segarra.

Joining Mayor Segarra at today’s news conference for the skate drive were Bob Crawford of Champions Skating and Manager of the Bushnell Park Ice Rink and Simsbury First Selectman Mary Glassman.

The event was held at the atrium at Hartford 21 (outside the XL Center Box Office) because it is one of the skate drop off sites. A big bin with the *iQuilt Presents Hartford Winterfest* logo will remain there for the convenience of CT Whale fans, XL Center event enthusiasts and folks who live and work in Downtown Hartford.

Other drop off sites:

- City Hall Atrium
- Bushnell Memorial and Performing Arts Center Lobby
- Champions Skating Rinks in Simsbury, Cromwell, and Bolton

A letter has gone out from Mayor Segarra, First Selectman Glassman, West Hartford Mayor Scott Slifka and Mr. Crawford asking leaders of neighboring towns for their generous donations of gently used ice skates.

Other announcements at today’s news conference:

- 1) The skating season has been extended (again)---through President’s Day (Feb 20)
- 2) Public skating hours are now 11-9 every day (still having ice shows Friday and Saturday evenings from 6 to 7).
- 3) DPW crews have already started preparing the grounds
- 4) November 1st, construction starts on the rink

Here is the growing list of generous sponsors:

- Northeast Utilities/CL&P (naming sponsor)
- Travelers (zamboni sponsor)

Prudential
United Technologies
Mohegan Sun/CT Sun
Aetna
The Hartford
United Healthcare
Phoenix
Bank of America
Webster Bank
Hartford Business Improvement District
CBT
Robinson and Cole
LAZ Parking and Bracewell and Giuliani have already committed to the skate drive

The *iQuilt Partnership* is proud to present this year's event calling it a natural connection with *iQuilt's* mission to better connect our open spaces with our Arts, Heritage, and Cultural venues. *iQuilt Presents Hartford Winterfest* thanks all of the above sponsors and encourages more to share in this unique experience. Special thanks also the Greater Hartford Arts Council and the MetroHartford Alliance for their ongoing fundraising efforts to reach the goal of \$400,000.

“Ice skating in Bushnell Park adds to the vibrancy of our Downtown and helps showcase our city as a choice destination for family fun--- year round,” said Mayor Segarra.

iQuilt Presents Hartford Winterfest starts at 4pm November 25th with a short procession from the Carousel to the skating rink that will include some entertainment and Hartford and holiday flair. After the ribbon cutting, the rink will be open for free public skating. Then there will be an ice show that evening (as well as every Friday and Saturday night from 6-7pm) followed by more public skating.

This year the rink will be 90' x 80'. Last year, it was 90' x 40'. That means 140 people will be able to skate at once instead of just 70. Once again, ice time will be 45 minute intervals and the wrist-band system will be used. Public skating hours are 11am-9pm.