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NEWS RELEASE

American Red Cross, Michigan International Speedway Host Annual Spirit of America Drive

More than 1200 Blood Donors Expected at Event

Lansing, MI, August 14 – The American Red Cross and Michigan International Speedway will be hosting the 8th Annual Spirit of America Blood Drive Friday, September 11 at the Speedway in Brooklyn, Michigan.

Since its inception in 2002, the Spirit of America Blood Drive has grown into one of the largest 9-11 blood drives in the nation with more than 1,100 pints of blood collected just last year. In the past seven years, more than 4,900 units of blood have been collected at the Spirit of America Drive, potentially saving up to 14,000 lives.

“We are so proud that this event, dedicated to the victims and survivors of the 2001 terrorist attacks, continues to grow,” said Sharon Jaksa, CEO of the Great Lakes Blood Services Region. “The tremendous support we receive from Michigan International Speedway, volunteers, blood donors and the community, help us collect hundreds of pints of blood each year to help our hospitals serve their patients in need.”

The American Red Cross encourages all eligible donors to make an appointment at this year’s blood drive. The 2009 Spirit of America Blood Drive is by appointment only and there are approximately 100 openings left. To donate, call **800-YOU-GAVE** or visit **SpiritofAmericaBloodDrive.com**. With each donation, donors receive a Spirit of America gift bag, lunch in the Champions Club courtesy of Culver’s, and a track tour, which features Unity Field, a display of 3,000 American flags honoring the victims of 9-11. Donors will also have the opportunity to take part in a special Richard Petty Driving Experience Ride-Along.

“The Spirit of America Drive is so much more than a blood drive,” said Michigan International Speedway Director of Guest Services and Spirit of America founder Tim Booth. “This is an opportunity for individuals to pay tribute to our nation’s heroes and be a hero themselves.”

Be the Match Registry, a National Marrow Donor program, and Gift of Life Michigan will also be on hand to provide all visitors the opportunity to sign up for their services free of charge.

About the American Red Cross

The Great Lakes Region serves 65 counties, and needs to collect about 700 units of blood a day to meet patient needs in about 70 hospitals in the region. In addition to providing blood to our community, the American Red Cross also provides relief to victims of disaster, trains millions in lifesaving skills, serves as a communication link between U.S. military members and their families, and assists victims of international disasters or conflicts.

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