



Special Olympics

New Mexico

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Fact Sheet

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The Law Enforcement Torch Run® for Special Olympics

The Law Enforcement Torch Run® for Special Olympics is an international series of torch relays run by law enforcement officers, leading up to each state's or nation's Special Olympics Summer Games. Law enforcement officers raise money in conjunction with their Torch Runs for their local Special Olympics Program.

The largest grass-roots fundraiser and public awareness vehicle for Special Olympics, this international event raised more than **\$38.2 million** in 2010 for Special Olympics Programs around the world, more than \$280,000 of which was raised in New Mexico. In the last year, nearly 700 law enforcement officers representing 82 agencies carried the "Flame of Hope" across the state. The New Mexico Torch Run has garnered more than \$2.5 million for the Special Olympics movement since its inception in New Mexico in 1986.

Law enforcement personnel from Federal, Military, Corrections, State, County and Local agencies participate in the Torch Run. Funds are raised through a variety of activities and fundraisers, with the highlight being the 1,600-mile statewide run culminating at the Special Olympics New Mexico Summer Games in Albuquerque in May.

The Law Enforcement Torch Run® for Special Olympics began in 1981 when Wichita, Kansas (USA) Police Chief Richard LaMunyon saw an urgent need to raise funds for and increase awareness of Special Olympics. Along with a fellow officer, he conceived the idea of a Torch Run as a way to partner local law enforcement personnel with the community and Special Olympics. Three years later, the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) lent its support to this growing movement. With the IACP's enthusiastic support and leadership, as well as the involvement of all facets of the law enforcement community - sheriff's associations, police unions, state, county, municipal, military, federal law enforcement, and corrections officers - the Torch Run expanded into seven U.S. states by 1985; 43 states by 1986; and 50 states and 32 nations in 2001. In 2010, more than 85,000 law enforcement officers carried the "Flame of Hope" across 35 nations, raising more than \$38.2 million for Special Olympics. Future plans involve significant expansion in Europe, Africa and South America.

The New Mexico Law Enforcement Torch Run® for Special Olympics is presented by **Wells Fargo**. A Community Partner since the mid 1990's, Wells Fargo continues its statewide involvement with the Torch Run and remains the Torch Run's largest supporter in New Mexico.

Additional community partners include: Mountain States Insurance Group, New Mexico Knights of Columbus, Conoco Phillips, Sprint Communications, Dex Media, 92.3 FM KRST, Wal-Mart, Applebee's, Waste Management, Weck's, VFW Post 7686 (Alamogordo), Otero County Prison Facility, Fraternal Order of Eagles #4101 (Alamogordo), CARQUEST Auto Parts (statewide), FastBucks (Alamogordo), Otero County Processing Center, Pic-Quik (Las Cruces), Otero County Sheriff's Reserve, and Summit Food Service, LLC.

For more information about the Law Enforcement Torch Run® in New Mexico, contact Special Olympics New Mexico by telephone, (505) 856-0342, by fax, (505) 856-0346, or by e-mail, torchrun@sonm.org.

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