PARALYMPIC GOLD MEDALIST TO LEAD ILLINOIS STATE FAIR TWILIGHT PARADE

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. - Governor Pat Quinn has selected a member of the United State’s gold medal-winning paralympic sled hockey team as grand marshal of this year’s Illinois State Fair Twilight Parade.

Kevin McKee, a long-time member of the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago hockey team - the RIC Blackhawks - has skated on Team USA’s international squad since 2010 and was selected last March to compete in the 2014 Paralympic Winter Games in Sochi, Russia, where he and his teammates captured first place.

"Kevin McKee represents the spirit of Illinois - optimism, passion, and a drive to succeed regardless of life’s obstacles," Governor Quinn said. "We heartily welcome Kevin as our Grand Marshal, and encourage people across Illinois to turn out Thursday night for a rousing start to the 2014 Illinois State Fair."

"It is an honor to have been asked to be the grand marshal of this parade," McKee said. "I feel blessed
to be able to share this day with so many other very talented people."

McKee, who was born with a spinal deformity, is an avid sports enthusiast. He played tennis in high school and wheelchair basketball in college. Since earning a roster spot on Team USA’s National Sled Hockey Team, he has scored 30 points, including 16 goals, in 30 games, numbers that would impress even his idol, Patrick Kane of NHL’s Chicago Blackhawks.

"Kevin is a true hero," State Fair Manager Amy Bliefnick said. "His accomplishments in the face of adversity should serve as an example to us all. I invite fairgoers everywhere to join me in celebrating Kevin’s gold medal at the Twilight Parade and hope his experience as grand marshal will be a memorable one."

The Twilight Parade begins Thursday, Aug. 7, at 6 p.m. at the corner of 9th Street and North Grand Avenue and ends inside the Illinois State Fairgrounds. For more information, please visit http://www.illinoisstatefair.info/.

For additional information on the events, please call the Illinois State Fair Press Office at 217/782-6998.

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