



For immediate release – Tuesday, April 13, 2004

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Snohomish County starts its engines

Marysville Mayor Dennis Kendall, Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon release proposal for a Northwest NASCAR track

Marysville Mayor Dennis Kendall and Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon today unveiled a “conceptual proposal” to bring a NASCAR track to North Snohomish County – less than a three-hour drive for more than 5 million people living from Seattle to Vancouver, British Columbia.

The proposal identifies two potential locations for the track, which would be built by the International Speedway Corporation (ISC), a publicly-held company that is a leading promoter of motorsports activities in the United States.

Along with an 80,000-seat speedway, the concept that was made public today suggests that additional recreational development and retail/commercial development could be accommodated near either site.

“With the delivery of this proposal to ISC, Marysville and Snohomish County are dropping the green flag in the competition for a Northwest speedway,” Kendall said.

Reardon said, “We recognize that this race is just starting for our communities. But we think that the sites included in our conceptual proposal offer ISC what it needs to build a state-of-the-art motor speedway here. Snohomish County and the City of Marysville are ready to work with ISC, state and federal agencies, and the Tulalip Tribes to coordinate review procedures for these sites.”

The two proposed sites are:

- **Smokey Point** – The site is on approximately 600 acres east of I-5 and is located west of 51st Avenue NE. It has direct access to Smokey Point Boulevard, a major north-south arterial. The site can also be expanded to the west to include an additional 148 acres.

- **Lakewood** – Located within the Lakewood community west of I-5, the site is on approximately 618 acres located south of 156th Street NE and west of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad. Like the Smokey Point location, the Lakewood site is surrounded by hundreds of acres of undeveloped or lightly developed land.

The proposal includes several different ways that a track could be situated on a site. Each alternative accommodates a 150-acre speedway and supporting facilities, for a total of 600 or more acres. There is parking for 20,000 cars.

Although no price tag was included on the proposal, its authors wrote, “The location of any auto-racing facility will require a partnership between ISC, and the state and local governments, as well as actions by the Washington State Legislature in the 2005 session. We are committed to enter into a partnership with ISC to address the financing of a racing facility in Snohomish County, and to seek legislation authorizing such a partnership.”

International Speedway Corporation executives looked at the two sites as recently as this morning. Officials from the Daytona Beach, Florida, company have told groups working to bring a NASCAR facility to the Pacific Northwest that any site would have to be at least 500 acres in size.

The proposal released today says the Smokey Point location has “significant advantages” over the Lakewood site, but that either would meet the needs of an ISC track.

Reardon said that road and other infrastructure improvements will proceed in the vicinity of the two sites regardless of whether NASCAR chooses to build a track there. A decade of steady population growth in North Snohomish County means that expanded roads and on-ramps are already being planned, he said.

Additional development is also coming, Kendall said. While the Lakewood site is currently designated for agriculture, the Smokey Point location is within Marysville’s Urban Growth Boundary. It will be developed for commercial, industrial and residential uses if it is not developed as a speedway and recreational site.

“If a NASCAR track isn’t built here, then the site will probably be home to a big box retail development or hundreds of homes,” Kendall said. “When it comes to impacts, a speedway may well have fewer of them than the alternatives.”

Peak traffic volumes from businesses, factories and homes could be far greater than traffic generated by a NASCAR facility, which plans just four to six races per year, Kendall said.

The Snohomish County Economic Development Council also participated in writing the proposal.

International Speedway Corporation currently owns or operates 12 major motorsports facilities, including Daytona International Speedway in Florida; Talladega Superspeedway in Alabama; Michigan International Speedway in Brooklyn, Michigan; California Speedway in San Bernardino County, California; Homestead-Miami Speedway in Florida; Phoenix International Raceway in Arizona; Richmond International Raceway in Richmond, Virginia.; Darlington Raceway in South Carolina; North Carolina Speedway in Rockingham, North Carolina; Watkins Glen International in New York, Nazareth Speedway in Pennsylvania and Kansas Speedway in Kansas City, Kansas.

Other track interests include an indirect interest in Raceway Associates that owns the Route 66 Raceway and

developed Chicagoland Speedway in Joliet, Illinois, which opened in 2001.

The company also owns and operates MRN Radio, the nation's largest independent sports radio network; DAYTONA USA, the "Ultimate Motorsports Attraction" in Daytona Beach, Florida; Americrown Service Corporation, a provider of catering services, food and beverage concessions, and merchandise sales and Motorsports International, a producer and marketer of motorsports-related merchandise.

ISC and its subsidiaries are predominantly sports-oriented, producing and conducting major motorsports activities in the form of stock car, sports car, motorcycle and go-kart racing events for spectators.

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