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The beginning and future of the Nebraska State Games and the Nebraska Sports Council:

I received a note from Dave MImarik, Executive Director, Nebraska Sports Council asking if I would write a letter about my recollections of the beginning and the future of the Nebraska Sports Council and the Cornhusker State Games. This brings back many fond memories of how and why the Games started, and I will share some of them with you.

In 1983 a friend of mine was appointed as the Executive Director of the newly formed Oklahoma State Games. He called me and suggested that we should look into the program for Nebraska. It had been started in several other states and was an event similar to the World Olympics only held at the state level.

I did some research of how the games were held in New Jersey, Florida and New York. I then contacted Mr. Jerry McGinn, The Nebraska State Director of Sports. Jerry suggested that we get in touch with Dr. Richard Hammer, who had some experience with national youth sport events.

The three of us met for lunch in Lincoln and the decision was made to start the Nebraska Sports Council, with the Cornhusker State Games as the first event. We put together a Board of Directors. I was elected to serve as the first president of the Council, and I wrote the first constitution and Bylaws for the organization.

We had a large group of volunteers who came on board to assist with the various sports and to work on startup funding. We met with then Governor Robert Kerry, who assisted with fund raising and who without his assistance we maybe never would have gotten the games up and running.

The first games were held in Lincoln, Nebraska and special guests at the opening ceremonies were Mr. Robert Helmick, President of the United States Olympic Committee and a member of the International Olympic Committee. Robert Kerry, Nebraska State Governor and movie actress, Debbie Winger.

As to the future of the Nebraska Sports Council and the Cornhusker State Games!

The future of the Sports Council is secure with Dave MImarik, and his staff working so very hard in the office and across the state. They continue to introduce new events and work to bring in new sponsors to keep the games going. The Sports Council and the Cornhusker State Games will continue to get bigger and better, and will continue to serve the citizens of Nebraska from border to border.

O.W. "Bill" Smith