

For Immediate Release

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**2009 NORTH TEXAS IRISH FESTIVAL
27th Annual Festival Celebrates “Building For A Better Future”
March 6-7-8 at Fair Park**

Presented by the Southwest Celtic Music Association

DALLAS –The 2009 North Texas Irish Festival, (NTIF) recognizes the influence of the Irish helping build America, past, present and in the future at its 27th annual festival, March 6, 7 and 8 at Fair Park. The NTIF will also continue to stress the need for a “Green” eco-friendly way of living by working with several corporate sponsors featuring products and services designed to protect and preserve the environment.

The annual North Texas Irish Festival, presented by the Southwest Celtic Music Association, (SCMA), is one of the largest Celtic cultural events in the nation and will open its 2009 event beginning Friday night. The NTIF features many of the top Irish musicians and dancers in the world and a number of cultural presentations on eight stages at Fair Park. Again, in 2009 the NTIF will open its festival on Friday night, March 6th, at 6 PM with full festival activities, including performances by national and regional musicians.

The festivities will continue throughout the weekend, including Saturday, March 7 through Sunday, March 8, and feature some of the very finest in Irish and other Celtic entertainment including world famous bands, award-winning dancers, enchanting storytellers, and educational workshops. The festival will also offer a variety of delicious Irish and international food and drink, cultural crafts, and ethnic vendors. More details are posted on the website at www.ntif.org.

NTIF “Building for a Better Future” and Supporting ‘Habitat for Humanity’

In the spirit of the “Building for a Better Future” theme, several volunteers will construct high-profile dog houses which will be sold in a silent auction with the proceeds going to the local Habitat for Humanity organization. The “Cultural Area” will have a display featuring immigrant Irish workers...including their role in building the New Orleans canal where over 6,000 Irish died in the process. Also featured will be the Irish contribution in building the nation’s railroads, and a focus on Irish women, who worked in the textile industry and as domestics.

The North Texas Irish Festival has been a Dallas tradition since 1983. The three-day NTIF is now recognized as the largest single cultural event held in Fair Park and, with an attendance of over 52,000 people, is second only to that of the State Fair of Texas. The Festival has always highlighted the music, dance and culture of Ireland. The five large stages showcase international musicians from the U.S., Canada and Europe, plus a great selection of very popular local and regional entertainers. The NTIF caters to almost every taste, from the high energy Celtic rock bands such as **Seven Nations** and **Needfire** to the very traditional Irish tunes of **Beoga**, **Liz Carroll & John Doyle** and **Líadan**, the all- female band that weaves traditional Irish music and song into a unique blend of old and new. In addition visitors will enjoy the exciting sounds of **Four**

Men and a Dog who bring boogie and blues with their traditional instrumentals and **Slide** with their "Traditional music with an attitude."

Johnny B. Connelly and Jeff Moore will deliver a variety of traditional greats and living legend, **Jimmy Crowley** will perform his own special folk music. The talents of **Máirtín de Cógáin** (pronounced MAR-teen day KOH-gan) are boundless, having garnered recognition as a storyteller (the All-Ireland), singer (front man for the Fuchsia Band), dancer, and actor (most notably in the film *The Wind that Shakes the Barley*). NTIF Favorite **Ed Miller** will return with his historical ballads from Scotland and the **Barra MacNeils** bring their captivating vocal harmonies from Nova Scotia to Dallas.

Equally well represented are the colorful traditional and modern Irish dancers with their hand-embroidered dresses and fast foot-tapping rhythms. Some of the finest dancers in the country are located in the Metroplex in our local schools and they delight our audiences with continuous performances on our dance stage. In addition there will be dance workshops throughout the weekend and everyone is encouraged to get into the spirit of Ireland at the Saturday night Ceili, or Irish dance party.

Performers

Internationally known as a showcase for the best in Celtic entertainment, this year's festival will feature a rich blend of traditional and modern Celtic bands as well as solo artists from Europe, Canada and the US. The NTIF will kickoff its 27th celebration with the best of Irish music from our popular regional bands and full festival activities. A big Friday night of high-energy performances is planned to kick off the Festival this year.

Regular NTIF top names like local bands, **Brothers 3**, **Beyond the Pale**, and the **Trinity River Whalers** will return for 2009. Other popular local and regional entertainers including; **Jigsaw**, **Jiggernaut** and the **Irish Rogues** will also be performing on the eight stages throughout the weekend. Also, returning this year are **Clandestine** and **Bourrée Texane** and performing for the first time is **Fánaí** with Dan Possamuto. In addition, performances by area dance groups will include the well-known Emerald School of Dance, the Shandon School of Irish Dance, the McTeggart Irish Dancers, and the Maguire Academy.

Cultural

In addition to the musical and dance performances, the festival brings a wide variety of exhibitors, workshops, plays and demonstrations. The popular "**Scottish Village**" will return again this year where local Scottish clans will feature demonstrations and explanations as to the strong connection between the Irish and Scots in their music, ancestry and culture. "**Urchin Street**" sponsored by **Wells Fargo** will offer a special place where the younger Celts can find entertainment, education, play and fun, including music, dance, storytelling, theater, magic and mystery. Many special activities and giveaways will be part of expanded Urchin Street programs this year.

Hours, Admission and Location

Gates open on Friday evening, March 6 at 6 p.m. with the last performance til 10:30 p.m., Saturday, March 7 from 10:30 a.m., last performance til 11 p.m. and Sunday, March 8 from 11:30 a.m., last performance til 7 p.m. Adult tickets are Free until 7 pm Friday night and \$10 after, \$15 for Saturday or Sunday, or \$30 for a 3-day weekend pass. *Children 14 and under* are admitted free. Members of the SCMA, Students (with ID) and Senior Citizens receive a \$2 discount at the gate. **Discount one-day tickets will be available beginning February 2, 2009 at all Metroplex Tom Thumb stores.** The event will take place in Fair Park's Centennial, Food and Fiber,

Creative Arts and the Embarcadero Buildings as well as covered areas adjacent to these buildings. Parking is available in and around Fair Park and DART, the official transportation provider of the NTIF, is available from many locations throughout the Metroplex. The public can call **972-943-4616** or visit www.ntif.org for more information or to volunteer to work at the festival.

Please note that there will be no access to Fair Park from Parry Avenue due to DART rail construction. The alternative is to take Grand Avenue and enter gate 5 or take Haskell Avenue and enter at gate 2. Detailed directions and parking tips are available on the home page of our website at www.ntif.org.

About the Southwest Celtic Music Association

The Southwest Celtic Music Association (SCMA) is the producing organization for the North Texas Irish Festival (NTIF). Over 600 volunteers will help in organization, promotion and execution of this year's festival. The first such festival was held on March 5, 1983 at the legendary Nick Farrelly's Lounge on Oak Lawn and was billed as the First Texas Céili. This event was so popular that it has continued every year since on the first weekend in March as the North Texas Irish Festival. Shortly after the first festival, the all-volunteer Southwest Celtic Music Association was formed to promote the study, performance and preservation of traditional Celtic music, dance and culture. In 1984, the event was moved to Fair Park and its name changed to the North Texas Irish Festival. The Southwest Celtic Music Association is a 501(c) 3 corporation headquartered in Dallas, Texas and serves a five-state regional area. The organization maintains a web site at www.scmatrix.org.

Sponsors

The North Texas Irish Festival is produced and sponsored by the Southwest Celtic Music Association. Generous sponsors include, Wells Fargo, North Texas Tollway Authority, Guinness, Coors Light, George Killian's Irish Red, Harp, Smithwick's, Coca Cola, Tom Thumb, the Radisson Hotel @ Mockingbird Station, Sullivan-Perkins and DART. Media support is provided by CBS Radio stations; KLUV, KLLI, KRLD, KVIL, KJKK and KOAI, NBC 5, and Quick,

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