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## SAFETY FIRST PRIORITY DURING THE RENO RIVER FESTIVAL *May 12-14, 2006 at the Truckee River Whitewater Park*

**RENO, Nev. (Spring 2006)** – For this year's 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Reno River Festival, May 12-14, safety is a No. 1 priority. Event organizers and city representatives are making sure that kayakers, rafters, tubers and swimmers put safety first and take necessary precautions when playing or sporting at the Truckee River Whitewater Park, especially with the increased runoff from an incredible snow season.

"Safety is key and we are taking every precaution to ensure that everyone has a fun, safe weekend during this year's Reno River Festival," said Deanna Ashby, executive director of marketing for the Reno-Sparks Convention and Visitors Authority (RSCVA). "Locals and visitors need to remember that the Truckee River is a natural river, one with increased water levels and flow, and we want to encourage the Reno-Sparks community and its visitors to take the appropriate safety measures to ensure that everyone remains safe in and around our river."

In an effort to educate the public on how to play safely on the Truckee River, the following are some precautionary measures everyone should follow:

- **Wear a properly fitted life jacket and helmet.** This will keep water users afloat and prevent possible head injuries or drowning if caught in the open river.
- **Use course-appropriate water equipment and know how to control it.** Kayaks intended for use on water similar to the Truckee River Whitewater course are shorter and "rockered" to allow quick maneuvering and reaction to whitewater's unpredictability. All rafters and boaters need to know how to stop a raft at any time and to land it on shore. Additionally, tubers should make sure valve stems are covered and any other flotation devices are safely equipped.
- **Choose a skill-appropriate playground.** Whitewater is rated from I to VI, with I being the easiest. The Truckee River is rated class II to III or higher, depending on the runoff. Playing in water that requires more skill than one may possess can be dangerous and should not be attempted.
- **Never play in the water alone.** Although the Truckee River Whitewater Park is in an urban area, everyone needs to ensure the safety of all parties. Playing in water alone can leave you stranded and in need of help. Instead, join a group of friends or a paddling club and assign experienced people who will watch out for the whole group.

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- **Tie everything down, except yourself.** Never tie yourself into a kayak, inner tube or raft. This could lead to severe injuries and drowning. Wallets should be placed in a waterproof bag and other belongings should be secured to the floatation device to avoid loss.
- **Wear proper clothing.** Wear appropriate clothing, made of mostly synthetic materials like nylon, rayon, spandex or polyester blends. These materials dry faster than cotton and keep water enthusiasts warmer while helping to avoid hypothermia.
- **Take a paddling clinic or class.** Before venturing out on to unpredictable waters, make sure you are properly educated on the techniques, equipment and safety procedures used in kayaking, rafting and other water sports. Knowing and understanding how the water works is essential for safety. Free clinics on a variety of kayaking skills are available during the Reno River Festival.
- **Be aware of changing water and weather conditions.** Increase awareness of the water and weather and avoid dangerous and undesirable conditions. Always avoid dams with hydraulic reversals, bridge piers, barbed wire and downed trees or other obstacles. Also be aware of water temperature and how quickly the snow melt can incapacitate a swimmer.
- **Know what to do when capsized or in undesirable circumstances.** Always remain calm. Stay upstream of the raft to avoid getting caught between it and another obstacle while keeping feet downriver and hands across your chest. Swim to shore and do not try to stand up in strong currents.

Following these safety guidelines will keep Reno River Festival attendees safe while enjoying the variety of activities scheduled to take place on the banks of the Truckee River.

For information on the 2006 Reno River Festival, visit [www.RenoRiverFestival.com](http://www.RenoRiverFestival.com). For more information about Reno-Tahoe, America's Adventure Place or to book a trip, logon to [www.VisitRenoTahoe.com](http://www.VisitRenoTahoe.com) or call 800-FOR-RENO (800-367-7366).

*The Reno River Festival is held at the \$1.5 million Truckee River Whitewater Park, located in the heart of Reno's booming downtown business and arts district. The park, with rapids rated class 2 and 3, is both Nevada's and the region's first whitewater park and kayak slalom racing course, totaling 2,600 feet in length and featuring north and south channels that surround an outdoor amphitheater and park. There are 11 "drop pools" and specially-placed boulders for kayaking maneuvers, a slalom racing course, and 7,000 tons of smooth flat rocks along the shores for easy river access and spectator seating.*

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