

# PRESSRELEASE

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## For Immediate Release

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## Soap Box Derby

**Michigan City, IN** (March 9, 2004) – It's been called "The Greatest Amateur Racing Event in the World," "The Gravity Grand Prix", and many other expansive euphemisms, but to most of the more than one million youngsters who've participated, it's just the "Soap Box Derby."

Michigan City's Soap Box Derby will be held on May 22, 2004, and there is still time to become part of this youth racing program which has run nationally since 1934.

"There is no entry fee for this race, but we need sponsors for cars," said Johnny Stimley, one of the race sponsors. "This is a great opportunity for local service organizations and car dealerships to advertise their businesses while helping local youth to experience the All American Soap Box Derby."

The goals of the Soap Box Derby program have not changed since it began in 1934. They are to teach youngsters some of the basic skills of workmanship, the spirit of competition and the perseverance to continue a project once it has begun.

The idea of the Soap Box Derby grew out of a photographic assignment of Dayton, Ohio, newsman Myron Scott. He covered a race of boy-built cars in his home community and was so impressed with this event that he acquired a copyright for the idea and began development of a similar program on a national scale.

The first All-American race was held in Dayton in 1934. The following year, the race was moved to Akron because of its central location and hilly terrain. In 1936, Akron civic leaders recognized the need for a permanent track site for the youth racing classic and, through the efforts of the Works Progress Administration (WPA), Derby Downs became a reality.

Each year since, with the exception of during World War II, youngsters from throughout the United States and several foreign countries have come to Akron with the racers they have built and driven

to victory in their home communities. The 67<sup>th</sup> All-American Derby will be held in Akron on Saturday, July 31<sup>st</sup>.

The Stock division will be raced in Michigan City and is designed to give the first-time builder a learning experience. Boys and girls, ages 8 through 17 (weight limit is 125 pounds) compete in simplified cars built from kits purchased from the All-American. These kits assist the Derby novice by providing a step-by-step layout for construction of a basic lean forward style car.

“We need twelve cars for the race,” Stimley said, “and the cars must be ordered by May 1st. It takes only 4-5 hours to assemble the cars, and each team will assemble theirs independently. Trial runs will be held the week prior to the race to help teams evaluate their car’s performance. There will be a weigh-in at Rag Tops Car Museum on the night before the race. Medals will be awarded to all participants, and the top winner will receive a trophy.”

The Michigan City race winner will participate in the national competition in Akron in July.

Order forms for the Soap Box Derby cars are available at Ryan’s Irish Pub, Rag Tops Museum, and the Mayor’s Office. Kits cost \$390 for white cars and \$395 for red or blue cars. Wheels cost \$90. Total costs, including shipping and handling, for white cars is \$505 and for red and blue cars is \$510. For more information on the All-American Soap Box Derby in Michigan City, call Johnny Stimley at 219/861-0309 (nights) or 219/872-0361 (days.)

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