



**The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Community Center of Utah
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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***THE CENTER DECLARES UTAH PRIDE 2006 LARGEST,
MOST SUCCESSFUL ON RECORD***

June 13, 2006 - Salt Lake City, UT – The GLBT Community Center of Utah (The Center) has announced preliminary numbers indicating Utah Pride 2006 to be the largest and most successful Utah Pride on record. An estimated 20,000 people attended the festival events held on June 4 (a 33% increase over 2005).

Although estimates in previous years have placed the attendance at the festival as high as 50,000, local organizers and police doubt that this is logistically possible. In 2005, when admission fees were introduced, organizers were able to obtain accurate counts for the first time. Other indicators, such as parade participation, food and beverage sales, and overall traffic density also support the claim that the 2006 Utah Pride celebration is the largest held to date.

“I think weather and an aggressive marketing campaign made a big difference this year,” said Jere Keys, Coordinator of Utah Pride. “I also think a lot of people came out for the festival because they were upset about what was going on in Washington D.C. and at LDS Church Headquarters around the Federal Marriage Amendment. For many, simply attending Pride is a show of support for the GLBT community and in the same light an act of political support for queer equality.”

Although it will be several weeks before all expenses are paid and accounts are reconciled, organizers believe that this year’s event will again be profitable. Much of any profit generated will be donated back to the community or used by The Center to improve and grow Utah Pride in future years.

For instance, Utah Pride will be writing a check for \$3,000 to Team Salt Lake City. These funds, plus an additional donation from The Center, were collected in the large rainbow flag which is carried at the end of the Pride Parade. Team Salt Lake City is the coalition of athletes and supporters planning to travel to Chicago next month to participate in the 2006 Gay Games.

Additionally, when the final numbers are verified, The Center will also make donations to this year's Pride community partners: Equality Utah, the Utah Bear Alliance, and sWerve. These donations will be determined as a percentage of the profits based on the total number volunteer hours each community organization supplied in support of Utah Pride.

“The part that is really fantastic,” said Keys, “is that now we can explore some of the things people have been asking for that have been out of our reach when Pride was struggling to break even. For instance, we can start talking to entertainers with more nationally recognized names, or we can explore options that would move the Festival to a larger and more accommodating space, or even expand to a two day Festival.”

By the numbers –

- Attendance at Damn These Heels Film Festival (all locations): approx. 260
- Attendance at Grand Marshal Reception: approx. 300
- Attendance at Pride Interfaith Service: approx. 200-300
- Attendance at Dyke March: approx. 500
- Attendance at Pride Dance: approx. 1,200
- Floats/entries in the Pride Parade: over 70
- Vendors/exhibitors at the Pride Festival: 102 (in 140 booth spaces)
- Members in the Circle of Pride program: 53
- Sponsors of Utah Pride 2006: 22

“I firmly believe Utah Pride 2006 was a festival we can be proud of,” said Valerie Larabee, Executive Director of The Center. “Sure, we had hiccups (i.e., a shortage of water and volunteers) that we will need to address for upcoming festivals, but most of the challenges we encountered can be traced back to the phenomenal attendance growth this year and that’s not a bad thing!

It takes a sea of volunteers to bring Utah Pride to life each year. It also takes months of planning and organizing informed by the valuable feedback from all involved and the community at large. Beginning today, an online survey is available at www.utahpride.org. This survey will help collect thoughts and opinions about the 2006 Utah Pride Festival which will be useful in planning future Pride celebrations.

“I’m thrilled with the team of people who made Utah Pride 2006 happen and I’d encourage anyone interested to volunteer with us next year!” said Larabee. “We can’t make it happen without you!”

Utah Pride is a program of the GLBT Community Center of Utah. The GLBT Community Center of Utah is a nonprofit corporation, founded in 1992, whose mission is to be a catalyst for personal growth, acceptance and equality for GLBT people in Utah.

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