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AT&T Real Yellow Pages to Sponsor IMS Centennial Era Balloon Festival

INDIANAPOLIS – AT&T Real Yellow Pages is taking its partnership with the Indianapolis Motor Speedway to greater heights with presenting sponsorship of the Centennial Era Balloon Festival, Indianapolis Motor Speedway and AT&T Real Yellow Pages officials announced March 9.

The Centennial Era Balloon Festival presented by AT&T Real Yellow Pages is set for Friday, May 1 through Sunday, May 3 and will feature many colorful hot-air balloons, including the AT&T Real Yellow Pages Balloon.

"AT&T Real Yellow Pages has been a great hospitality client of IMS for years, and I am excited about this partnership as we celebrate one of the Speedway's oldest and most family-friendly forms of racing," said Joie Chitwood, IMS President and Chief Operating Officer. "The sight of balloons lit up at night and launching from the Speedway's infield will be an unforgettable experience for IMS fans of all ages."

The Balloon Festival kicks off the first season of competitive events during the Speedway's three-year Centennial Era - honoring the 100th birthday of the facility in 2009 and the 100th anniversary of the inaugural Indianapolis 500 Mile Race in 2011.

"AT&T Real Yellow Pages is honored to be the presenting sponsor for the Centennial Era Balloon Festival," said Rhonda Bieda, Indiana area marketing manager for AT&T Advertising Solutions. "AT&T has a long, proud tradition of supporting the communities in which we live, work and play. I can't think of a better way to continue that tradition."

The Centennial Era Balloon Festival presented by AT&T Real Yellow Pages is an appropriate start to the 2009 racing season, as the first competitive event of any kind at IMS was a gas-filled balloon race on June 5, 1909, a full two months before the famed 2.5-mile IMS oval was completed.

The AT&T Real Yellow Pages Balloon and other entries are scheduled to participate in three ascensions and two evening "glows" May 1-3, with all activities taking place or originating within the vast IMS infield.

The Friday morning ascension will be for media, and the Saturday and Sunday ascensions will be "hare and hound" competitive balloon races. There will also be Friday and Saturday evening "glows," in which the public is welcome to walk among the balloons and get to know the pilots and crews.

A detailed schedule of Centennial Era Balloon Festival presented by AT&T Real Yellow Pages events will be released shortly.