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WCHA Extends Membership Invitations to Five CCHA-Member Schools

Group Consists of University Alaska Fairbanks, Bowling Green State University, Ferris State University, Lake Superior State University, Western Michigan University

MADISON, Wis. – On behalf of the presidents of the six member teams that will comprise Western Collegiate Hockey Association membership following the 2012-13 season, the WCHA today (August 25, 2011) extended invitations to five Central Collegiate Hockey Association (CCHA) member institutions to join the WCHA beginning with the 2013-14 season. Those CCHA institutions that were extended membership invitations are University of Alaska Fairbanks, Bowling Green State University, Ferris State University, Lake Superior State University and Western Michigan University.

As it stands currently, the six teams that will constitute the WCHA following the 2012-13 season are University of Alaska Anchorage, Bemidji State University, Michigan Technological University, Minnesota State University, Mankato, St. Cloud State University and Northern Michigan University, which accepted an offer to join the WCHA beginning in 2013-14 back on July 20.

"On behalf of those presidents who remain committed to the WCHA in 2013-14 and beyond, I am excited to announce that we have unanimously voted to invite these five CCHA members to join our conference," said Dr. Richard Davenport, President of Minnesota State University, Mankato. "These schools bring a proud history and tradition with them from the CCHA that will only serve to enhance the already strong reputation of the WCHA.

"We are committed to creating stability for the conference and believe by inviting these institutions we will create one of the strongest conferences in the nation," added Dr. Davenport. "This is one of the main reasons presidents voted today to invite CCHA member institutions to join our conference. Also, as presidents, we are committed to providing the best college hockey opportunities in the country for our student-athletes."

"This is truly a significant and quite remarkable twist in what has been a period of great consternation and transition in the college hockey world," said WCHA Commissioner Bruce M. McLeod. "On behalf of the WCHA, we couldn't be more excited and pleased to extend these invitations to Alaska Fairbanks, Bowling Green, Ferris State, Lake Superior State and Western Michigan."

The WCHA and CCHA held a joint meeting in Chicago earlier this week, working from an agenda that included the sharing of institutional and hockey program information (including financial, facilities, community support, staffing and travel), scheduling and championship scenarios, and membership and league affiliation (including league size, automatic qualifiers, etc).

"During what were very informative and productive meetings in Chicago, and as we worked our way through the agenda, it became clear that all of these great institutions share a commonality in that every one of them is 100% committed to the sport of collegiate ice hockey," said McLeod, "and that they also share a great deal philosophically both athletically and academically," said McLeod. "From there, the idea of coming together was a natural progression."

"This invitation represents a tremendous opportunity for the remaining members of both leagues," said CCHA Commissioner Fred Pletsch. "Their collective commitment to Division I hockey was evident in Chicago and the synergy created by last Tuesday's meeting will help all involved chart a course that is right for their respective program and provide further stability to college hockey's evolving landscape."

As a condition of this potential membership process moving forward, the WCHA-member presidents set a 30-day response timeline for acceptance. The WCHA and CCHA have also agreed to continue to hold regular talks to address such topics as by-laws, scheduling, tournament scenarios, finances and additional membership.