



For Immediate Release

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**USO Puget Sound's Flagship Event Seeks to Break Record
Support grows for USO's army of volunteers to help target
growing needs of region's military community**

Seattle – The annual USO Puget Sound Area's (USOPSA) 2008 Gala and live auction is set to break last year's fundraising and attendance records, announced today by USOPSA director, Don Leingang. Last year's event raised over \$225,000 to support the USO centers, services and events around the Puget Sound region. The USOPSA 2008 Gala is scheduled for Fri., Oct. 3, 5:30 p.m. at Qwest Field, Wells Fargo Club. In the time-honored tradition of the USO, RCA recording artist, Jake Owen, will donate a special musical performance.

"We recognize the valuable support that the USO provides to our men and women in the Armed Forces and their families," says Victor Odermat, honorary gala chair with wife Mary, and founder and CEO of Brown Bear Car Wash. Odermat added, "Everyday this organization is there around-the-clock to make sure our military members are shown the gratitude and support they deserve. We're very pleased to help sponsor this important event."

One major service the USO provides is troop care packages during deployment. Last year, the USOPSA saw a 37.5 percent increase in troop care packages – 11,000 troop care packages were provided during troop deployments out of the Puget Sound region in 2007 versus 8,000 in 2006.

George Cargill, USOPSA board chairman, and Northwest Market Vice President for TriWest Healthcare Alliance, says TriWest is a longtime supporter of the USO. "The USOPSA effectively connects the greater community to those who serve our country. This region's military community continues to grow and so does the need for support. The USOPSA is positioned to be there with the services and moral support our military members and their families need."

Leingang says the community and business support translates to a "thousand acts of gratitude, like a special homecoming celebration for Army Sgt. Senetenari Polu who was wounded in Iraq." Leingang shared how Sgt. Polu was separated from his unit and missed homecoming celebrations at Ft. Lewis. USO volunteers organized a special homecoming with Polu's family in August at the Sea-Tac USO Center. Over 100 people showed up to express their gratitude for Sgt. Polu's service. "That's the heart and soul of what we do," Leingang says.



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The USOPSA served over 154,000 members of the military in 2007 – 8,000 more people than in 2006. Through their “army of gratitude” of over 250 volunteers giving over 27,000 volunteer hours, the USOPSA provided around-the-clock services and support at the Sea-Tac USO Center, McChord USO Center, the USO Mobile Canteen, and through special programs throughout the Puget Sound region.

In addition to a first-time appearance by country music star Jake Owen, special volunteer and military services awards will be presented, and the USOPSA live auction features highly unique items and adventures.

- **2008 Country Music Awards VIP trip to Nashville sponsored by KMPS Radio**
- **Fly with the Black Jack Squadron**
- **Backstage (10 people) for the Pacific Northwest Ballet performance of George Balanchine’s *Jewels***
- **SWAT TEAM participation in hostage rescue and full-day of tactical training**

Additional highlights of the live auction items include; a meet and greet with the Blue Angels, luxury condo in Cabo San Lucas, Mexico, Seattle Mariners “groundskeeper for the day,” Seahawks tickets and sideline tour, a progressive dinner at the 5 Dick’s Drive-Ins restaurants and limo ride for 10, a luxury weekend and shopping spree at the Four Seasons Hotel, Seattle, and Navy League VIP adventure tour during the Seafair Fleet arrival.

For more background on the work of the USOPSA and information on the 2008 USO Puget Sound Gala and live auction, go to www.usopsa.org

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Nationally recognized, the USO Puget Sound Area has served over 3 million of America’s men and women in uniform and their families for over 40 years. The mission of USO Puget Sound Area is to provide a “home away from home,” family support, and recreation opportunities to the members and families of our Armed Forces. We connect individuals, civic groups and businesses with the region’s military community.



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