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American Royal Annual Meeting Includes Update on Plans to Replace Kemper Arena, Officer Elections and Financials

March 8, 2012 - Kansas City – An update on the plan to replace Kemper Arena with a new Agricultural Events Center, officer elections and positive financials were the centerpiece the American Royal’s annual Board of Governors’ meeting that took place March 7 at Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce’s offices in Union Station.

“We have engaged a creative team of public finance professionals who are developing a financial plan to make this project a reality. Every past building project for the American Royal has been a public private partnership with the City of Kansas City, and we look to continue that approach. We have also engaged a leading national economic consulting firm to refresh past analyses of the American Royal's economic impact and the opportunities for growth that a new facility would support. I will not presume to preempt their work, but based on past studies we expect to reaffirm that the Royal is responsible for bringing tens of thousands of people to Kansas City and contributes tens of millions of dollars to the Kansas City economy year upon year,” said Brant Laue, the newly elected Chairman of the Board of Directors.

The positive status of the 2011 American Royal financials was also a topic of discussion at the meeting. “We are pleased to announce that we expect a positive net income for the year of over $150,000 after making a sizeable contribution back to our American Royal Foundation. We continue to emphasize that the American Royal is a community-based, not-for-profit organization which promotes agriculture and agrarian values in the Greater Kansas City Area. You might describe it as the Agriculture Chamber of Commerce and our Foundation is in integral part of that effort,” said David Fowler, outgoing Chairman of the Board of Directors and incoming 2012 Chairman of the Board of Governors.

The official elections results were as follows:

American Royal Officers of the Board of Directors
Chairman: Brant Laue, Armstrong Teasdale LLP/Laue Ranch
Chair-elect: Cynthia Savage, Raphael Hotel Group
Corporate Secretary: Richard Norden, Fairbanks Scales, Inc
Treasurer: John Mitchell, Treat American Food Services
Vice Chair of Agricultural Center Campaign: Mariner Kemper, UMB

Plans for the 2012 American Royal Pro Rodeo were also unveiled. “Our Rodeo, which has been honored as one of the top five large indoor rodeos in America and also received the Remuda Award for the nation's best Rodeo livestock, will return for 2012 to its traditional home at the American Royal Complex, and will again feature the nation's top cowboys, cowgirls, and stock. The Rodeo is an important part of the American Royal tradition, and is Kansas City's annual opportunity to 'go cowboy',” Laue said.

The American Royal World Series of Barbecue® will also be returning for the 33rd year. This year brings a new event that adds significantly to the cultural phenomenon of “Kansas City Barbecue.” “We will be the home of the National Barbecue Hall of Fame at the American Royal and plan on installing three new inductees this year at our event. We also plan on having a more permanent presence for this hall of fame in our new proposed facility,” said Bob Petersen, President & CEO of the American Royal.

Laue concluded with, “Kansas City and the American Royal have been great partners for 113 years, and we look forward to securing their future together in the coming year. It is my hope that many generations to come can share our enthusiasm and optimism for Kansas City's agricultural past, present, and future.”

The American Royal Association is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) corporation that has been a Kansas City
tradition since 1899. Each year more than 270,000 people attend events at the American Royal Complex. In 2011, the Royal was able to give $1.4 million in scholarship and educational awards. In addition to its educational mission, the American Royal generates some $70 million of economic impact, $4.4 million in local tax revenues, and supports 450 jobs. For further information, see www.americanroyal.com

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