



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Lanier Canoe 2003 World Championships Sign Title Sponsor and Welcome All-Star Team of Expert Commentators**

GAINESVILLE, Ga., Aug. 26, 2003 – The Jim Walters Management Company and Cellular World have signed on as title sponsors of the 33<sup>rd</sup> International Canoe Federation Flatwater Racing World Championships this September at the Lake Lanier Olympic Center.

“Hosting an international competition, especially one that has never been to the United States before, is a big deal for our community,” says Jim Walters, CEO of The Jim Walters Management Company. “My company is proud to support a major event like Lanier Canoe 2003 that is going to bring international attention and significant economic benefits to Gainesville and Hall County.”

The Jim Walters Management Company provides management services to some 75 wholly owned consumer finance companies located throughout Georgia, Tennessee and Texas, and owns and manages commercial real estate properties in Georgia, including Regions Plaza, The Center Office Park and The 311 Green Street Building in Gainesville. The company also owns and operates Cellular World at 199 John Morrow Parkway in Gainesville, a wireless telephone services provider.

A team of expert announcers with long ties to canoe/kayak will be on hand to provide commentary, including Olympic gold medalists Greg Barton and Norman Bellingham and renowned U.S. coach Bill Endicott. Both Barton and Bellingham competed in multiple Olympiads and won gold in the 1988 Summer Olympics. Endicott, who provided color commentary for NBC during the 1996 Games, has coached athletes to 57 medals in World Cup, World Championships and Olympic paddling competition – 27 of them gold. Gene Anderson and Tom Smiley, two well-known Gainesville sportscasters, also will be on hand to announce competition events.

The September event will be the first canoe/kayak World Championships ever held in the United States and the major qualifying event for the 2004 Summer Olympic Games in Athens, Greece. It is expected to draw approximately 2,000 spectators a day from the United States and abroad. More than 1,000 athletes and officials from 78 nations will be in attendance, making the event the largest canoe/kayak world championships ever in terms of the number of participating countries.

A number of other official sponsors have been vital to financing and organizing the event, including: A.G. Edwards, BellSouth, Carolina Skiff, Centennial Legacy Foundation, DTNet, Georgia Printing Company, Honda Marine, Jackson Spalding Communications, Northeast Georgia Medical Center and Health System, *The Times* and Up in Cumming.

More information about the 33<sup>rd</sup> International Canoe Federation Flatwater Racing World Championships, including schedule of events, participating nations, team registration, accommodations and transportation is available online at [www.LanierCanoe2003.org](http://www.LanierCanoe2003.org).

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