



**AMERICA VOTES FOR
INDEPENDENCE, KANSAS; MIDLAND, MICHIGAN; AND OJAI, CALIFORNIA
AS THE TOP THREE FINALISTS IN USTA'S FIRST-EVER SEARCH
FOR AMERICA'S "BEST TENNIS TOWN"**

**Winner to be announced at the 2009 US Open,
and will receive a \$100,000 grant for community tennis programming**

WHITE PLAINS, N.Y., July 28, 2009 – The USTA announced today that Independence, KS; Midland, MI; and Ojai, CA have been selected as the top three finalists, as determined by nationwide voting, in its first-ever search to determine America's "Best Tennis Town."

The ultimate winner of the "Best Tennis Town" search will be announced during the 2009 US Open, which will be held from August 29 through September 13 at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in New York City. In addition to the title, the winner of America's "Best Tennis Town" will receive a \$100,000 grant from the USTA to be used for community-wide tennis programming or facility enhancements. The 2nd and 3rd prize winners will receive \$50,000 and \$25,000, respectively, to be used towards the same purposes.

The search for America's "Best Tennis Town" is the USTA's first-ever nationwide search to identify the local area—from small, rural towns to large, urban metro areas and everywhere in between—that best exemplifies the passion, excitement, spirit and impact that tennis brings to the local level.

Tennis towns from all over the country submitted their entries for consideration on www.besttennistown.com between May 1 and July 1, 2009, and after carefully reviewing each submission, a panel of judges selected ten communities as finalists for the 2009 "Best Tennis Town" title.

Independence, KS; Midland, MI; and Ojai, CA were among the 10 finalist cities, from an initial group of 56 entrants, which tennis fans around the country could vote for at www.besttennistown.com from July 16 through July 26. They selected, in alphabetical order:

- **Independence, KS** – With a population of just 9,846, Independence still annually attracts nearly 200 kids to play in its summer recreation programs; the Independence girl's team has won an unprecedented 17 consecutive league titles and three Kansas state team titles since 2001.
- **Midland, MI** – More than 10,000 local players take to the courts in Midland (population 41,685) every year; the Midland Community Tennis Center hosts more than 20 tennis tournaments a year.
- **Ojai, CA** - Home of one of the oldest (since 1896) amateur tennis tournaments in the country -- *The Ojai*; 64 tennis courts are available for its 8,202 residents.

These three communities beat out, in the nationwide voting, Baton Rouge, LA; Cary, NC; Grand Junction, CO; Hickory, NC; Las Vegas, NV; Springfield, MO; and Tempe, AZ, each of which will receive \$2,000 worth of tennis equipment for community use as runners-up.

"The USTA is excited to see the dedication and commitment to tennis that these towns have demonstrated in their communities," said Kurt Kamperman, Chief Executive, Community Tennis, USTA. "All three proved worthy of the honor and are great ambassadors for the sport."

The top three finalists will travel to New York City, where the winner will be revealed during a ceremony at the 2009 US Open on September 6th. The winner will take home the 2009 “Best Tennis Town” title, an accompanying trophy and \$100,000 to be used for community-wide tennis programming or facility enhancements.

For more information on The Best Tennis Town please visit www.besttennistown.com/.

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The USTA is the national governing body for the sport of tennis in the U.S. and the leader in promoting and developing the growth of tennis at every level -- from local communities to the highest level of the professional game. A not-for-profit organization with 730,000 members, it invests 100% of its proceeds in growing the game. It owns and operates the US Open, the highest attended annual sporting event in the world, and launched the Olympus US Open Series linking 10 summer tournaments to the US Open. In addition, it owns the 94 Pro Circuit events throughout the U.S., is a minority owner and promotional partner of World TeamTennis, and selects the teams for the Davis Cup, Fed Cup, Olympic and Paralympic Games. The USTA philanthropic entity, USTA Serves, provides grants and scholarships and through tennis, helps underserved youth and people with disabilities to improve academics, build character and strive for excellence. For more information on the USTA, log on to usta.com.

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