

# Hanford contractors help kick off RiverFest 2001

George Rangel, BHI

Hanford contractors and the *Tri-City Herald* are reaching out to the community by sponsoring the RiverFest 2001 run/walk at Columbia Park on June 16. The event will benefit non-profit organizations in Benton and Franklin counties. Bechtel Hanford President Mike Hughes and representatives of other sponsoring companies kicked off this year's RiverFest in a ceremony at the Playground of Dreams in Columbia Park on May 10.

"The kickoff showcased our sponsors and the community's real colors," said Tami Arntzen, executive director of the Volunteer Center of Benton and Franklin Counties. "It lets us know that support exists from all areas of the community."

The Volunteer Center, its 3,000 volunteers and the 240 agencies it serves in Benton and Franklin counties will benefit from RiverFest's 10-kilometer, 5-kilometer and 1-mile run/walk events along the shores of the Columbia River. Participants will collect pledges for their efforts.

One unique aspect of RiverFest is that participants may earmark their pledges for the organizations of their choice. "As a sponsor, it is appealing to us," Hughes said, "because it allows our employees and everyone else in the community to participate in a fun event to raise money for their favorite charity."

"The proceeds from RiverFest will give an opportunity to provide services to the community with resources and people that might otherwise not be there," said Melissa O'Neil, *Tri-City Herald* promotions and marketing coordinator. "We started this during the 'Year of the River' in 1998 with hopes that RiverFest will become to the Tri-Cities what Bloomsday is to Spokane."

There will be a pasta feed and auction the night before, on June 15, at the Best Western Tower Inn in Richland. The race begins at the east end of Columbia Park in the morning.

RiverFest 2000 generated more than \$32,000 for 23 local non-profit agencies. This year's event is projected to raise even more financial support for the Volunteer Center.

Joining this year's RiverFest cast will be the Benton-Franklin Humane Society's Paws in the Park fundraiser, including exhibit booths, demonstrations and vendors.

"Hanford has shown its support in helping to build a stronger community," said Arntzen. "It's a chance for everyone to get involved to better the place where they live, have some fun and raise some money for worthy causes."

Other sponsors include CH2M HILL Hanford Group, Fluor Hanford, Johnson Controls, the Hanford Environmental Health Foundation and television station KEPR.

For more information, call the Volunteer Center at 582-0631 to have a form mailed to you, or download one from Bechtel's Web site at [www.bhi-erc.com/outreach/projects.htm](http://www.bhi-erc.com/outreach/projects.htm). ♦



**Bechtel Hanford President Mike Hughes speaks for the sponsors of RiverFest 2001 at the kick-off event in Columbia Park. From the left are Shelly Ohman of Johnson Controls; Erin Weber of the Hanford Environmental Health Foundation; Hughes; John Umbarger of Fluor Hanford; and Melissa O'Neil of the *Tri-City Herald*.**