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**For Immediate Release**

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***Branson, Missouri to Host 2012  
National Ice Carving Competition  
Preliminary to 2014 Olympics,  
Competitors to Vie for U.S. National Championship***

BRANSON, MO. – The *Titanic* Museum Attraction in Branson, Missouri is the site chosen to host the 2012 National Ice Carving Competition, a preliminary for competitors to end up in the city of Sochi, Russia, the host city for the XXII Olympic Winter Games in 2014. The two-day event will be held on Sat., Feb. 4, and Sun., Feb. 5, 2012.



“We are very excited to have the *Titanic* in Branson host the 2012 NICA U.S. Nationals.

This two-day ice carving competition brings the nation’s best ice carvers together for a chance at the title of NICA U.S. Nationals Champion. This will be one of our premier stops on NICA’s International Tour Champions Ice Carving Competition Circuit, currently the largest circuit in the world,” said Jeff Petercsak, Executive Director, National Ice Carving Association.

The NICA US National Championship is one of the toughest competitions in the world, crowning three premier champions from this event; Speed Carving Champion, Professional Division US Champion, and US National Champion.



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“Since 1991, the National Ice Carving Championships have been the premier event in the United States that crowns NICA’s National Champion. You must qualify at this event by placing first, second, or third at any NICA sanctioned competition or scoring a bronze medal in your lifetime to compete,” remarked Ross Summers, President/CEO of the Branson/Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce and CVB. “This two-day event boasts a large prize purse of \$25,000!”

The Master Division will carve two blocks of ice on Saturday and one block of ice on Sunday. The Professional Division will carve one block of ice on Saturday and two blocks of ice on Sunday. Dimensions of each block of ice are 40x20x10 inches and each ice block weighs in at 300 pounds. Carvers will use a large array of tools such as chainsaws, chisels, blowtorches, hot irons, knives, drills, and much more.



Each carver is evaluated by a panel of NICA (National Ice Carving Association) judges on the following categories: First impression; Utilization of ice; Technical skill (features, textures or effects); Attention to detail; Appearance; Structural technique; Proportion and symmetry; Design & composition; Creativity (technique, topic, theme); and Artistic impression.

2010 Nationals were held in Fairbanks, Alaska. In 2008 and 2009, the Nationals were held in Chicago/Downers Grove, Ill. During the 2010 Olympics in Richmond, BC, Canada, the USA NICA carvers won 1st and 5th places in the Ice Division.

“The *Titanic* Museum has been a great supporter of NICA competitions in the past and we are very excited that the city of Branson was chosen to host our National Championships. It is where the best ice sculptors in the country compete and where one, and only one, competitor will be crowned the 2012 National Champion,” stated Stephan Koch, 2011 NICA President.

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For additional information about Branson’s more than 100 live shows, theme park, pristine lakes, golf courses, family attractions, shopping and other features, or to order a free Branson Vacation Guide, call the Branson/Lakes Area Convention & Visitors Bureau at 800-214-3661 or visit our website at [www.ExploreBranson.com](http://www.ExploreBranson.com).

### **Titanic-World’s Largest Museum Attraction**

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