

## AKKA WORLD KANNADA CONFERENCE 2008

PRESS RELEASE DATED AUGUST 15, 2008:

With only a couple of weeks left for the fifth AKKA Kannada world Sammelana to be held in Chicago from August 29<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup>, hectic preparations are under way in Chicago. The excitement is in the air and red carpets will be rolled for the Hon'ble Chief minister Yeddiyurappa and other dignitaries accompanying him along with the Business delegation and artists.

When we selected the conference theme as "Showcasing the Heritage and Talent of World Kannadigas", we did not dream that we will be blessed with the presence of this many artists, businessmen and entrepreneurs to be present at the conference. This perhaps will be one of the largest gathering of this many talented people hailing from Karnataka assembled on foreign soil. We wish we had a five day Conference rather than the three day Conference to enjoy and be intellectually invigorated with such an assembly of talent and wisdom.

For the first time, we will have an exposition of Karnataka's glorious history and present day achievements artistically decorated right next to the main auditorium. The visual displays and videos will certainly be an eye opener to young and old alike. We will have a surprise item in the exposition which is being finalized.

For classical music lovers, we will have a treat of both Carnatic music by the likes of violin maestros Mysore Nagaraj and Dr., Mysore Manjunath, Kasaravalli sisters and Hindustani classical music by Pandit Parameswar Bhat, Omkarnath Havaldar along with a number of other musicians. For light music lovers, we have an array of Sugama Sangeetha artists both from Karnataka and all across North America.

The literary field is filled with literary giants like Mattur Krishna Murthy, S.L. Byrappa, Chandrasekar Khambara, Jayanth Kaikini, Veerabadrappa, Shatavadani Ganesh and other well known literary figures. We will have talks, discussions and interaction with the attendees so that every one can feast on Kannada literature. A number of books and CDs will be released at the conference. A collection of poems by one of our own member Nagabhushan Moolky will be released.

Yakshagana is ever popular with Kannadigas in North America. This rare art will be performed by two groups; Arpita Hegde, Sundar Rao and Sri Panjaje's troupe. In the dance arena, we have a number of different varieties of classical dances, fusion dances, and group dances including one from Smt Seeta Chappar's group from Darwad.

For drama fans, there will be a number of dramas, most of them light hearted. 'Jokumaraswamy' from Director Nagabharna's troupe and other hilarious

comedies like 'Desi Dilemma', 'Mayavi Sarovara', 'Dandy Man Returns', Jeevana Sanjeevana and others. In addition, we will have one man acts by reputed personalities.

Hasya Loka is another favorite of the Kannadigas here. With professionals like Krishne Gowda, Gundu Rao, Putthu Rao delivering side splitting monologs and mimicry Dayanand showing his talent, audience will surely have a time of their lives.

Vidyaranya Kannada Kuta (VKK) as a host has planned interesting opening and closing ceremonies. The fashion show, also by VKK is very unique in that it is based on tribal fashions with exclusively designed costumes and more than fifty participants.

There are three major programs planned for the three evenings. On Friday, August 29<sup>th</sup>, audience will be treated to the music of Prof. B.V. Rajasekar's folk songs group. This will be followed by a remarkable dance ballet by Kasturi Dance academy of St. Louis. On Saturday evening, the stars of Kannada film industry will descend to entertain the audience. For the first time, AKKA has assembled an array of stars like Ramesh Arvind, Puneet Rajkumar, Upendra, Priyanka, Puja Gandhi, Tara, Srinath, Master Danush Jagadish and several others. Ever popular Guru Kiran will provide the music direction and conduct the three hour extravaganza. We will also have the Film Chamber President Jayamala with a number of directors. The finale on Sunday night will be provided by the great singer C. Aswath who is bringing his extremely popular show "Kannadve Satya" to North America for the first time.

It is not all just fun and dance. There will be some serious business with a few dedicated forums. The business forum has put together a great program covering transportation sector (air, rail and ground), medical tourism, the hospitality industry, entrepreneurial opportunities, etc. The list of speakers include Sam Pitroda, Nagaraj, Dr. Vivek Jawali, etc. A luncheon is being planned with the Hon'ble Chief minister with the Business forum attendees. The women's forum has a number of interesting topics with discussion and demonstrations. A number of women who are experts in their field have been invited to speak and share their expertise. Mental and physical fitness, doll making for dassera, dancing and other interesting activities will be part of the women's forum.

The spiritual forum has Dr. Omkar conducting a few sessions on Yogasanas and pranayams. There are a number of speeches and question and answer sessions with eminent speakers such as Swami Sukhabodananda, Swami Nirbhayananda, Tumkur Swamiji, etc.

For the physicians, an elaborate Continuing Medical Education (CME) seminar has been worked out. We have some of the most eminent doctors from US and India delivering lectures on topics of current interest. As an extension of the

CME, we have planned two lectures on the environment which is universally debated. This session is open to the general attendees. We hope this session will make significant contribution in raising the awareness of the Kannadigas both in North America and Karnataka. AKKA intends to carry this message forward to make a significant contribution to Karnataka in the coming years.

The vendor booth registration has been very encouraging. We will have close to a hundred booths selling wares and services from Karnataka and North America. The vendor booth area decorations will be eye catching.

The charitable wing of the conference has planned to raise funds for two non profit organizations. It may be recalled that AKKAWKC2006 in Baltimore raised \$70,000 for the Shankara Eye Foundation which was increased to \$100,000 by AKKA's contribution to facilitate construction of the SEF hospital in Bangalore which will provide free or highly subsidized cost service to villagers around Bangalore.

We thank the Karnataka government for their excellent support for organizing this year's Sammelana and we look forward to the delegation so that we can extend our hospitality to them and showcase what Kannadigas here are doing to retain and spread Kannada language and culture. We also would like to thank the American Consulate in Chennai for expeditiously issuing visas to visitors and artists participating in the conference.

For the information of our visitors from Karnataka, please note that there is a registration fees of Rs 7000 to attend the event which will provide you registration to all programs except CME and the business forum. This includes dinner on Friday as well as breakfast, lunch and dinner on Saturday and Sunday. Registrants have to make their own accommodation arrangements. Hotels are listed on the website and travel agents can also help you get reservations at reduced rates. There are a number of hotels right across the convention center. Please attend in large numbers and enjoy the show. We will make every effort to see that everyone carries back memories of an exciting experience to be treasured for a lifetime. AKKA is waiting with warm and extended arms to welcome Kanndigas all over.

For latest information on the conference, please visit AKKA website - [www.akkaonline.org](http://www.akkaonline.org)

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