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## **Detroit Mayor Bing to join Taylor Mayor Lamarand at World Series opening ceremonies**

Detroit Mayor Dave Bing is a member of the National Basketball Association Hall of Fame.

But Bing will join Taylor Mayor Jeffrey P. Lamarand and other civic leaders for the opening ceremonies of baseball's 30th annual Junior League World Series at Taylor's Heritage Park.

The two mayors will take part in the ceremonial first pitch during the World Series kickoff, starting at 8 p.m. Saturday, August 14.

The Junior League World Series is an international tournament that features the best teams of 13- and 14-year-old baseball players. It's the big brother of the Little League World Series for 12-year-olds, based in Williamsport, Pennsylvania.

Opening ceremonies include all World Series players, coaches, umpires and hundreds of spectators and volunteers. The evening also includes a parade of champions, the playing of national anthems and other patriotic songs, and speeches by dignitaries. The night ends with fireworks sponsored by Taylor Ford.

Admission is free. Heritage Park is located at 12111 Pardee Road.

Junior League World Series founder and Director Greg Bzura wanted to make the 30th annual opening ceremonies extra memorable. He met with Mayor Lamarand, a former high school softball coach and an ardent supporter of the World Series. Lamarand sent an invitation to Mayor Bing – and Bing accepted.

Like Taylor, the Rosedale section of Detroit is part of Michigan Little League District 5.

Bzura also met with District Administrator Sharon Mayer, who agreed to invite leaders from the other eight communities that make up the district: the cities of Flat Rock, Lincoln Park, Melvindale, Romulus and Southgate and the townships of Brownstown, Huron and Redford. Representatives of at least five of the eight communities have confirmed their attendance.

"We've been here 30 years now and we want to make sure the entire Little League area for this tournament is well represented," Bzura said. "We're well aware of where we came from and where we are.

"Dave Bing is a new mayor in Detroit, much like our mayor is a new mayor in Taylor. We hope and believe this event (the World Series) benefits the entire Downriver area. The best way to do that is to welcome the Downriver area and invite them to promote it in their communities."

Bzura has a soft spot in his heart for Bing, a hero from his days with the Detroit Pistons. When Bzura retired from Security Bank and Trust, Bing – then the owner of Bing Steel – was among those that sent a congratulatory letter that helped fill a scrapbook of well wishes. Bing also sent an autographed photo as requested by Bzura's secretary.

While Bzura has never met Bing, "when I received that letter, I felt it was like a personal thing," Bzura said. "When he was elected mayor of Detroit, I was happy for him. I was a fan of his when he was a Piston and I'm still a fan of the Pistons."

Bzura said Bing and Lamarand will be among the dignitaries speaking during opening ceremonies.

Another special guest during opening ceremonies will be Dennis Lewin, chairman of the Little League International Board of Directors.

Lewin, a 1965 graduate of Michigan State University, has been chairman of the board since November 2007. His professional career spanned 30 years with ABC Sports, including 15 years as coordinating producer of ABC's "Wide World of Sports."

Lewin joined the National Football League in March 1997, where he headed the NFL's Broadcast Department and was responsible for construction of the league's playing schedule. He retired from the NFL in 2003 and served as a scheduling consultant for the next three years.

He has been a member of the Little League Board of Directors since his election in 1996. The volunteer board is responsible for managing the property and affairs of Little League.

Little League, founded in 1939, is the world's largest organized youth sports program with nearly 2.7 million participants in all 50 states and more than 80 other countries.

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