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## Autumn Classic softball tournament to boost region's economy this weekend

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 October 10th, 2013

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SAN DIEGO -- More than 100 teams will come to San Diego this weekend to compete in the largest adult softball tournament on the West Coast — the 30th annual Autumn Classic.

Teams will be coming from as far away as Vancouver, Philadelphia, Chicago, Fort Lauderdale, Minneapolis, Seattle, Portland and all throughout California.

Tournament organizers say the event will bring an estimated \$1 million to the region's economy - an economic boon for area restaurants and hotels.

"This weekend nearly 2,000 people will converge on San Diego for one of the most competitive softball tournaments in the world," said Roman Jimenez, co-director of this year's event. "We will be playing at 17 different fields from Escondido to Chula Vista and playing over 350 games, beginning at 8 am on Saturday and going until 8 pm Sunday night."

"The players will be renting cars, buying gas, eating in our restaurants, drinking in our bars, tipping their servers and staying in over 1,000 hotel rooms, and paying taxes on all of that," co-director Dani Goodlett said. "The money these players leave behind makes an important economic impact for our local restaurants, our hoteliers and our Port."

While the Autumn Classic is now a massive event with a significant positive impact on the local economy, it wasn't always so.

"In 1983 our tournament had the most humble of beginnings," Jimenez said. "We had just four teams, all of them local, and the whole event played out on just one field that was little more than a sandlot. As our reputation grew, players started taking a chance and trusting us."

The entire tournament staff, from Jimenez and Goodlett who work on the tournament year-round to the folks who just work on game days, are all volunteers and there are no paid staff.

"We are extremely proud that our event has achieved the level of success we have over the years, especially when you consider that nobody involved the event makes any money from it," Goodlett said.

"It's take a small army of volunteers to make a tournament this size happen," Goodlett said. "We start our preparations for the next tournament as soon as the last one is done, and in the weeks leading up to the event, literally dozens of volunteers spend thousands of hours on tournament logistics. It's quite an operation."

Events for the tournament began on Tuesday, Oct. 8 when the San Diego City Council declared the day officially "Autumn Classic Day in San Diego."

Players began arriving on Wednesday, and on Friday, Oct. 11 most of the players will attend the Stone Brewery registration party at The San Diego LGBT Community Center in Hillcrest from 6-9 pm. At this event, Interim Mayor Todd Gloria will present tournament officials a formal declaration and welcome the players to America's Finest City and encourage them to experience the region's hospitality.

### Tournament format

Each team will play two "round robin" games against random opponents and based on their win/loss record and offensive/defensive skill, will be seeded into a double elimination tournament.

On Championship Sunday, teams will battle it out with each win advancing them closer to the prize. Sunday night and in addition to trophies and other prizes, the winners will get the bragging rights of having taken the title in one of the largest sporting events in the world.

### About the Autumn Classic

The Autumn Classic is produced annually by America's Finest City Softball League (AFCSL), San Diego's league by and for the LGBT community. With 41 teams in 2013 and more than 600 players, AFCSL is not only the largest softball league in the area, it's also the oldest, having been founded in 1981 and running continuously since then. For more information visit ARCL's [webside](#) and click on the Autumn Classic link.

ENLARGE



Interim Mayor Todd Gloria presenting tournament officials with a proclamation.

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