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Press Release

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A Bright Future Ahead for Professional Soccer in the City of Modesto

Modesto, CA, September 10, 2024 – The City of Modesto has been chosen as a promising location in the Central Valley for professional soccer. The City Council approved a Letter of Intent (LOI) between the City and the United Soccer League (USL), committing to exclusively negotiate the potential of bringing professional men's and women's soccer teams to Modesto and the surrounding region over the next year.

During the negotiation period, the City will evaluate the viability of supporting professional soccer teams and explore opportunities to enhance entertainment options for the community. This initial phase of discussion will address various factors, including funding and the location of a stadium with an entertainment district, which has yet to be determined.

"We are incredibly excited about the potential opportunity to bring both USL men's and women's teams to Modesto," says Justin Papadakis, USL Deputy Chief Executive Officer. "The City has a rich soccer culture and a passionate community that aligns with the USL's vision of growing the sport at all levels. We are committed to working closely with the City of Modesto to explore how we can contribute to the community's vibrant future through professional soccer. We believe this partnership can elevate Modesto's sports landscape, provide new entertainment options, and drive significant economic and community benefits."

The USL was founded in 1986 and is the largest and fastest growing pre-professional and professional soccer organization in the country. Since 2012, the USL has significantly grown from 11 clubs to 44 professional clubs and over 150 pre-professional clubs spanning 42 states, in over 200 U.S. markets and over 20,000 players.

Modesto could be next in line to be part of one of the most widely accessible soccer leagues in the United States.

“I am always cheering for our city,” says Mayor Sue Zwahlen, who was born and raised in Modesto. “Whether you’re a soccer fan, an athlete, a sports spectator, or someone looking for a local event to take your family to, we’re excited for this opportunity to score a goal with the USL and give residents something to cheer for too.”

The City of Modesto and the USL will be hosting a media briefing on September 12, 2024, to share this news with the community.

Media briefing details:

Date: September 12, 2024

Time: 09:30 am

Location: In front of City Hall at 1010 10th Street

Agenda for the media briefing:

1. Opening Remarks, Sonya Severo
2. Announcement, Mayor Sue Zwahlen
3. Justin Papadakis, USL
4. Joe Lopez, City Manager
5. Heath Pearce, Former US Men’s National Team Soccer player and from Modesto
6. Closing statement, Mayor Sue Zwahlen

End