

Local law enforcement officials will leave their police cars at the station and trade their uniforms for sneakers as they start running and biking, carrying the Flame of Hope. This isn't a training camp; it's the 25th Anniversary of the Law Enforcement Torch Run, a movement initiated by officers to raise funds for and awareness of the 350 hometown Special Olympics athletes. That eternal flame burns with even more vigor today as Special Olympics Wisconsin celebrates the 25th anniversary of the Law Enforcement Torch Run.

Collectively, nearly 120 Wisconsin communities will run a total of 2,200 miles on this intrastate relay. Local law enforcement will converge in Stevens Point with hundreds of officers from across the state today at the State Summer Games Opening Ceremonies. Together, the officers will run the Final Leg of the Torch Run carrying a torch ignited with the Flame of Hope, light the caldron, and kick off the state event. Throughout the weekend, 2,000 athletes will participate in soccer, athletics, aquatics, and powerlifting competitions.

The Torch Run is the largest grass-roots fundraising program and public awareness vehicle for Special Olympics. Law enforcement officers from the 50 United States, 12 Canadian provinces and territories and 40 countries carry the Flame of Hope in honor of Special Olympics athletes. Wisconsin's Law Enforcement Torch Run is the fifth highest grossing program in the world, raising nearly \$2.3 million in 2010 with more than 1,000 registered participants representing 170 law enforcement agencies.