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## **IOWA TO PLAY N. ILLINOIS IN CHICAGO IN 2012**

IOWA CITY, IA -- Iowa and Northern Illinois have agreed to open the 2012 football season at Chicago's historic Soldier Field, revisiting the scene of the hugely-successful 2007 Labor Day Weekend contest that produced a sellout crowd of 61,500.

The 2012 contest, scheduled for Saturday, Sept. 1, will also be held on Labor Day Weekend. Northern Illinois will be the home team.

University of Iowa Athletics Director, Gary Barta, had the following comment.

"We've been interested in returning to Soldier Field from the moment we finished our last experience there. Our coaches, student-athletes and fans all enjoyed that game. Northern Illinois and Soldier Field have been terrific partners. We were pleased to find an opening that allowed us to play the game again on Labor Day Weekend and still offer seven home games in Kinnick that same season. This is a great opportunity."

In the first NCAA Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) game played at the lakefront facility since its renovation in 2003, the 2007 Northern Illinois-Iowa game produced a sell-out crowd and a huge influx of college football fans to the city for Labor Day Weekend. Fans enjoyed collegiate-style tailgating in the Soldier Field parking lots prior to the game, while Iowa and Northern Illinois alumni gathered in huge groups and held gatherings throughout the city on Friday night and prior to the game on Saturday.

"We're very excited to be able to play host to Iowa at Soldier Field to open the 2012 season," said NIU Associate Vice President and Director of Athletics Jeff Compher. "Given the overwhelming success of the 2007 game, the benefit of playing a game in Chicago, this was a win-win-win situation.

"Both Iowa and Northern Illinois have huge followings and thousands of alumni in Chicago, many of whom are accustomed to attending football games at Soldier Field," Compher said. "In addition, playing in an NFL stadium provides our student-athletes with a great and unique game-day experience while showcasing both programs in front of the third-largest media market in the country."

The 2007 Soldier Field game between Iowa and Northern Illinois, the first game NIU hosted at the facility, was declared a sellout six weeks prior to the game as tickets were sold in just five months. Northern Illinois will also play Wisconsin at Soldier Field on Sept. 17, 2011.

Northern Illinois and Iowa will meet for the eighth time with the Hawkeyes claiming all seven previous meetings, including a 16-3 victory over NIU at Soldier Field on Sept. 1, 2007.