

January 20, 2006

British Columbia-Canada Place

As we start this New Year, I wanted to take this opportunity to share with all of you what will be a very exciting time for me. This week, I am travelling to Italy and other parts of Europe to show the rest of the world all British Columbia has to offer – we are leading the country in job growth and job creation, we have the highest level of investor confidence of all Canadian provinces, and at the end of next month, the eyes of the world will look to us as Vancouver is presented with the Olympic flag in Torino.

As host of the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, we are presented with a unique opportunity to accelerate economic growth, attract new business investment and to create sport and cultural legacies across our province. British Columbia-Canada Place (www.bccanadaplace.ca) is the first phase of our government's international strategy to maximize the benefits of the 2010 Winter Games. I will officially open this high profile, multi-media meeting place in Torino, Italy on Sunday, January 22 and it will stay open until the end of the 2006 Paralympics in mid-March.

British Columbia-Canada Place offers a venue for BC and Canadian companies, and communities, to meet with prospective partners and customers. It provides an opportunity to build relationships and make contacts with key international markets. It is a marketing and exhibition showcase for B.C. businesses, communities and people, to a global audience. More than 80 B.C. companies will be in Torino to take advantage of the facility.

Through the BC Winter Games Secretariat, my Ministry has also created a number of other vehicles to help British Columbia communities and businesses tell their stories to the world during the 2006 Olympic and Paralympic Games, including:

- *British Columbia-Canada Times* – a 40-page newspaper that will be distributed at British Columbia-Canada Place in Torino (it is also available online at www.bccanadaplace.ca). The newspaper tells B.C.'s story of a modern, diverse economy and showcases us as one of the best places to live, play, work and invest. It includes stories from every region of the province.
- *BC Stories* – we have gathered video news stories that feature interesting people, businesses, travel destinations, cultural events and new innovations from around B.C. These “BC Stories” will be packaged and provided to international media.
- *BC Explorer* - BC Explorer is a state-of-the-art interactive exhibit designed to showcase our province at British Columbia-Canada Place in Torino. Explorer's unique interface allows users to literally fly-through the province and touch down in various cities and other interesting locations, so users have an opportunity to take part in a virtual experience of the province.

Following my short stay in Italy, I will travel to Davos, Switzerland to attend the World Economic Forum. This will be another opportunity for me show economic leaders from across the world all that British Columbia has to offer: our close proximity to Asian markets, our nation-leading job creation record, low corporate income tax rates and our high return on investment.

My Ministry is working to ensure all British Columbians are taking advantage of the current opportunities we have with both our economic state and opportunities as host of the 2010 Olympics. We have created a website as the procurement engine for the 2010 Winter Games, www.2010commercecentre.gov.bc.ca. If your business hasn't registered yet, it should. Companies from around the province can register online to receive notice of bids and contract opportunities for the upcoming 2010 Olympics.

We are presented with a unique opportunity during the Torino Games to celebrate the Olympic Spirit across our province in advance of 2010. I encourage all of you to join us in celebrating what is sure to be a truly incredible experience for all British Columbians. Please email me your thoughts, ideas or feedback – I am always interested in hearing from you.

Colin Hansen
Minister of Economic Development
and Minister Responsible for the Asia-Pacific Initiative and the Olympics