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**YUKON GOVERNMENT PARTNERS WITH WHITEHORSE CHAMBER, YUKON BUSINESS AND CANADA WINTER GAMES IN 'RAISING OUR GAME' FOR 2007**

WHITEHORSE – The Yukon government has partnered with the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce and the Whitehorse 2007 Canada Winter Games Host Society on a sports business opportunity development program called 'Raising Our Game.'

"The 'Raising Our Game' initiative is a good example of the partnership approach between the business community and government," Economic Development Minister Jim Kenyon said. "Our goal is to help maximize the benefits from major sports competitions hosted in our communities."

"The Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce is working with the business community to encourage communication and understanding about sport-related opportunities," chamber president Rick Karp said.

'Raising Our Game' builds on the efforts of organizations like the Yukon Convention Bureau, Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon and Sport Yukon to attract sporting events and raise standards of service.

Objectives of the 'Raising Our Game' initiative include:

- Working with partners and other business associations to communicate about opportunities for Yukon businesses resulting from the influx of competitors and visitors attending major sporting events.
- Helping Whitehorse show its best during the Canada Winter Games with a wintertime beautification initiative.
- Launching an employee recognition program that promotes service excellence, recognizes participating businesses, and offers initiatives and rewards to frontline staff.

"We will be hosting luncheons and workshops to keep businesses up-to-date on potential opportunities from sports-related events and activities," Karp added.

The chamber will also host a business-of-sport conference in late 2006 to discuss final preparations for the Canada Winter Games within the business community, and how to attract sporting events and make best use of sports facilities after the games.

“We are very pleased to take part in ‘Raising Our Game’ because it supports the work of our staff and volunteers to prepare the community for the largest event to ever take place North of 60,” Piers McDonald, president of the games host society said. “Thousands of visitors will be coming to Whitehorse in 2007 for the games, and all eyes will be on the Yukon.”

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