

April 30, 2008

In pursuit of Olympic excellence, Alberta increases support for athletes and training facilities

Calgary...Alberta's high performance athletes and training facilities are receiving new funding as part of the government's commitment to athletic excellence and promoting Alberta's role in the Olympics and Paralympic Games.

"Alberta is home to a significant number of Olympic and Paralympic athletes, officials and organizations – and we're proud to support them," said Cindy Ady, Minister of Tourism, Parks and Recreation. "The creation of the Olympic and Paralympic Secretariat and the investment in our athletes and facilities will not only lead to competitive successes, but also provide opportunities to promote Alberta's sport, tourism and culture on the world stage."

The government is injecting \$1.5 million annually towards the Podium Alberta program that will supplement the funding provided to Alberta's high performance athletes by the federal government. Through the Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation, this program will allow athletes to train and live in Alberta while competing at the national and international level.

Alberta's Budget 2008 also includes \$20 million to fulfill the second year of the government's three-year commitment to renew the legacy of facilities from the 1988 Winter Olympic Games through the creation of the Calgary Olympic Development Association's Canadian Centre of Sport Excellence. The Centre includes a world-leading athletic and ice complex as its core new facility that will be constructed at Canada Olympic Park.

"This is another landmark day for sport in our country and CODA's continued quest to deliver the critical facilities needed for Canadian athletes to be the best in the world," said Guy Huntingford, president and chief executive officer, CODA. "This first-in funding by the Alberta government for the Canadian Centre of Sport Excellence ensures the road to the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games will go through Calgary and return here afterwards."

Calgarian Russ Tynan will lead an Olympic and Paralympic Secretariat responsible for coordinating Alberta's approach and activities leading up to and during the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games. In keeping with the accord Premier Ed Stelmach signed with the Vancouver Organizing Committee in January 2008, the Secretariat will focus on coordinating and promoting Alberta's sport, tourism and cultural activities.

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Backgrounder: Information on Podium Alberta, Olympic Secretariat and CODA Centre of Sport Excellence

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