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## **SKATE CANADA, HOCKEY CANADA JOIN FORCES WITH CODA ON CANADIAN CENTRE OF SPORT EXCELLENCE**

**—CODA signs memorandums of understanding to conclude 20th anniversary Olympic celebrations—**

**CALGARY**—Skate Canada and Hockey Canada signed official agreements with the Calgary Olympic Development Association on Friday that will bring the national sport bodies together to build the first Canadian Centre of Sport Excellence now under development in southern Alberta.

The world-leading Athletic and Ice Complex, which is the core new facility to be added to the planned Canadian Centre of Sport Excellence, will become home to both national sport organizations once it is built. Skate Canada and Hockey Canada will also continue major regional operations across the country.

“This is a landmark day for winter sport in our country as CODA partners to deliver the critical facilities necessary for Canadian athletes to be the best in the world,” said Guy Huntingford, president and chief executive officer, CODA. “The road to Vancouver 2010 comes through Calgary, and it must return here afterwards if Canada is to reach our goal of becoming the number one winter sport country in the world.”

When complete, the Athletic and Ice Complex – which will be constructed at Canada Olympic Park – will contain ice surfaces, gymnasiums, physical training facilities, testing, nutritional experts, and advanced technology that provides every competitive and instructional advantage required to compete and consistently win internationally. It has been designed to be built in stages as funding becomes available.

“Skate Canada is extremely excited about the many opportunities this centre will provide, and is very pleased to be involved at the ground floor of this initiative,” said William Thompson, chief executive officer, Skate Canada. “In addition to giving the Association the ability to support our high-performance athletes through access to state-of-the-art training facilities and sport experts, it will provide the opportunity to facilitate coach mentoring as well as improve program development and testing. We look forward to drawing on the energy and expertise that this multi-sport facility will provide.”

Working together with Hockey Canada over the last two years, CODA has already secured \$129-million in funding for the multi-million dollar project that will renovate the existing legacy of facilities from the 1988 Olympic Winter Games and add new ones such as the Athletic and Ice Complex.

“This announcement ensures we will have a permanent home where our national teams can train and provides a competitive advantage which will allow us to be the best in the world,” said Bob Nicholson, president, Hockey Canada, whose organization has outgrown its existing facilities in Calgary. “The pursuit of excellence and medal performances at all levels is a common goal in sport and the Centre of Sport Excellence gives Canadian athletes access to world-leading training and programs. We look forward to working with CODA to raise the additional funding required to begin construction as soon as possible.”

The historic signings took place during a street hockey tournament, culminating CODA’s 20th anniversary celebrations of the 1988 Olympic Winter Games which have been taking place in Calgary over the last two weeks. International Olympic heroes, representatives from the federal, provincial and municipal governments, and sport leaders participated in the festivities at Canada Olympic Park showcasing two decades of sporting excellence. Thousands also came together last week to celebrate the “Best Ever” Olympic Winter Games with Canadian medallists, Eddie “The Eagle” Edwards and Devon Harris of the Jamaican Bobsleigh Team.

“CODA’s world-unique training and competition facilities have allowed Canadian athletes to set record medal counts at every Winter Olympics since 1988,” said Huntingford, who added the Canadian Olympic medal count has grown from five medals in 1988 to 24 in 2006. “The signing of these agreements today marks the beginning of an exciting future ahead where we are going to build on our successful legacy and work together to create more Olympic heroes for Canada.”

Upgrading the legacy of facilities funded by the federal government for the 1988 Olympic Winter Games, while adding new ones, CODA’s vision for the Centre of Sport Excellence was a plan launched in 2001 to make Canada the world-leading winter sport nation by 2010. The made-in-Canada solution was developed after in-depth study of institutes built by leading sport nations around the world including Australia, Europe and the United States, which have resulted in increased athletic performance and participation in those countries.

CODA is a national leader in creating Canadian Olympic winter sport excellence from the grassroots level to the country’s best athletes. A not-for-profit organization, CODA supports national sport organizations, encourages educational opportunities and subsidizes the operation of unique training and recreational facilities used by the nation’s top athletes and the general public For more information on CODA please visit us at [www.coda.ca](http://www.coda.ca) on the Internet.

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