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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
November 19, 2007**

**TRAVEL ALBERTA SIGNS WORLD UNIQUE AGREEMENT WITH
SIX NATIONAL WINTER SPORT ORGANIZATIONS**
—World Cup TV to showcase Alberta to millions as international sports destination—

Calgary, Alberta—Travel Alberta and six national winter sport organizations have signed a landmark marketing partnership designed to promote Alberta as a premier international winter sports destination.

Surrounded by medal-winning World Cup athletes and representatives of Canada's six winter national sport governing bodies, Cindy Ady, Associate Minister of Tourism Promotion, announced the \$450,000 agreement - the first of its size in the world – during a ceremony at CODA's Canada Olympic Park – the flagship facility of Canada's first Olympic Winter Games in 1988.

"Alberta hosts by far the most winter World Cup events in North America, and this agreement boosts funding for sport and bolsters our international reputation as a leader in winter sports tourism," said Ady, who heads Alberta's 2010 Olympic Winter Games initiatives. "With all the sports Travel Alberta has brought together under this agreement, we are really able to showcase Alberta to the world."

Partners on the World Cup Roundtable in support of the agreement include: Cross Country Canada, Canadian Snowboard Federation, Speed Skating Canada, Biathlon Canada, Bobsleigh Canada Skeleton and the Canadian Luge Association.

Through increased signage, marketing opportunities, hosting and numerous other initiatives, Travel Alberta intends to use international television coverage for the 2007-08 World Cups to promote the province as a sport tourism destination. All of the World Cup events are televised internationally, attracting more than one hundred million viewers over 310 broadcast hours each winter.

"Amateur sport in Europe attracts millions of visitors who tune in to follow the World Cup circuit each week," said Jean R. Dupre, director general, Speed Skating Canada, who added that speed skating in the Netherlands is similar to Canadians watching Hockey Night in Canada. "Whether it is speed skating in the Netherlands, snowboarding in France, cross-country skiing in Norway or bobsleigh in Germany, winter sport is an integral part of European culture, and we believe working together with Travel Alberta will be an effective way to reach these audiences and better market the province as a winter sport destination."

Promotions under the agreement, which is renewable, started with the ISU Long-Track Speed Skating World Cup held over the weekend on the Olympic Oval ice at the University of Calgary.

"Travel Alberta's partnership with the World Cup Roundtable will increase worldwide awareness of Alberta as a winter and sports tourism destination as the world begins to turn its attention to the Olympic Winter Games in 2010," said Derek Coke-Kerr, managing director of Travel Alberta.

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Travel Alberta also has a long-standing marketing partnership with Alpine Canada Alpin for the opening men's and women's World Cup races of the season at Lake Louise in late November and early December.

"Alpine Canada Alpin's long-standing relationship with Travel Alberta builds significant awareness of the Alberta Rockies and the world-class skiing of Alberta's destination ski resorts," said Ken Read, chief executive officer, Alpine Canada Alpin. "Our Alpine Ski World Cup events have brought Alberta into millions of households around the world, and we are pleased to see our fellow sports benefitting from the support of Travel Alberta."

Traditionally, agreements have been signed with only one sport governing body at a time. The multi-sport agreement was co-ordinated by CODA, the legacy operator of the 1988 Olympic Winter Games facilities, and developer of the nation's first \$276-million Canadian Centre of Sport Excellence, which is currently under construction in southern Alberta. With Canada Olympic Park serving as the hub location, the core new facility to be added is an Athletic and Ice Complex.

"The support of Travel Alberta will help our athletes become the world's best while also showing to the world the wonderful and unique sport and travel opportunities available in this province," said Jim Younker, CODA's acting president. "Travel Alberta has been a leader in supporting international events in the Calgary Bow Valley Corridor, and today once again, has shown its commitment to marketing this province by showcasing what makes Alberta great – and winter sport excellence is one of our significant strengths. We encourage not only our friends around the world, but all Canadians to catch these exciting sporting events."

Earlier this year, the Alberta government committed first-in funding to help CODA restore Alberta's Olympic legacy to international standards through the creation of the Canadian Centre of Sport Excellence, solidifying the province's role as a sport leader within Canada and around the world.

"By renewing the legacy of the 1988 Olympic Winter Games, along with this unique winter sport initiative unveiled today, the Stelmach government has ensured the road to 2010 will come through Alberta, and return here after the Games," said Ady, who also joined Premier Stelmach in August to deliver \$40 million – the first instalment of the Alberta government's \$69 million commitment to CODA's project in support of the nation's high-performance athletes.

More than half of the 2006 Canadian Olympic Team, representing communities across the province and around the country, trained at CODA's facilities.

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 on the Internet.

Travel Alberta is the destination marketing organization for the Province of Alberta and is responsible for effective investment of Alberta's tourism Levy in marketing programs that grow the province's \$5 billion tourism industry.

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