

June 23, 2004

Canmore Nordic Centre to Receive \$16.5 Million Upgrade

Edmonton... The Canmore Nordic Centre, site of the Nordic skiing events for the 1988 Calgary Winter Olympics, will receive a \$16.5 million upgrade in support of the Calgary-Canmore World Cup Cross-Country Skiing event bid for 2005. Gene Zwozdesky, Minister of Community Development, responsible for sport, recreation and parks, and Janis Tarchuk, MLA for Banff-Cochrane, made the announcement at the Canmore Nordic Centre today.

Canmore Nordic Centre Provincial Park, located in Kananaskis Country about one hour west of Calgary, accommodated the cross-country and biathlon facilities constructed for the Calgary Olympics, and includes 70 kms of groomed trails for advanced, intermediate and novice skiers. Other facilities include a paved roller ski-training loop, mountain biking trails, and a major disc-golfing course, making this a popular year-round destination.

"The Canmore Nordic Centre is a world-class facility for cross-country skiing, and with today's announcement of \$16.5 million we can continue to foster the development of Alberta's and Canada's cross-country ski competitors," said Zwozdesky. "Upgrading this facility to international and Olympic standards is extremely important to Alberta's sport development system. It also increases our event-hosting capabilities and provides greater training opportunities for athletes, coaches and officials."

With approximately 325,000 recreational skiers visiting annually, this Centre is a focal point for winter recreation and tourism. "Hosting the 2005 World Cup event at the Canmore Nordic Centre will add much excitement to our Alberta Centennial celebrations, and will provide significant economic benefits to our provincial and local tourism industry," added Tarchuk.

The Alberta Government will provide an additional \$425,000 over two years to the Foothills Nordic Ski Club to support the hosting of the Calgary-Canmore World Cup in 2005 assuming its bid is successful, Zwozdesky said. The 2005 World Cup event in Canmore will yield considerable training and competitive benefits to Canadian cross-country skiers in preparation for the 2010 Winter Olympics to be held in Whistler, British Columbia.

Kananaskis Country, the flagship of Alberta's parks and protected areas network, encompasses more than 4,000 square kms of diverse landscapes, from glacier-capped mountains to broad valleys and rolling foothills. In addition to the outstanding mountains and foothills landscape, K-Country provides a variety of year-round recreation opportunities for over 2,000,000 visitors a year.

For more information, visit the Alberta Community Development website at www.cd.gov.ab.ca.

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Note: Backgrounder attached

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Background

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Canmore Nordic Centre Upgrading

The \$16.5 million upgrade to the Canmore Nordic Centre will restore the facility to international competition standards and accommodate increased visitation. The refurbishment will include:

- Replacement of snow guns and addition of 30 new guns;
- Replacement of biathlon targets with current technology;
- Equipment replacement;
- Replacement and expansion of the snow making system;
- Replacement of public address system and media infrastructure;
- Replacement of two scoreboards;
- Expansion of stadiums;
- Improvements to site and trail lighting;
- Improvements to signage and landscaping;
- Upgrade of bridges and erosion control;
- Expansion of walkways, roadways and parking;
- Upgrade and expansion of buildings;
- Development of controlled instructional area;
- Construction of new storage buildings;
- Upgrade and expansion of maintenance building; and
- Site grading and paving at maintenance compound.

Benefits

- Restores ability to host Olympic-caliber events and re-establishes international credibility;
- Reliable snow making system;
- Extends the ski season from 120 days to 165 days;
- Continue to meet partner and contractual obligations with the ability to explore new opportunities;
- Increases current level of recreational use and tourism visitation;
- Maximizes the probability of maintaining National Training Centre status; and
- Enhances economic benefit to the Bow Valley Corridor, the City of Calgary and the Province of Alberta.

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