

Niagara Region Welcomes the Toronto 2015 Pan Am Bid Team Venue Plan

Niagara Region, February 18, 2009 - News released today by the Toronto 2015 Pan American Games Secretariat was positively received by Niagara Region.

Niagara will become the site for outdoor water sport competitions in rowing and canoe/kayak sprint events, should the 2015 Pan/Para Pan American Games be awarded to the Greater Toronto Area/Golden Horseshoe region of Ontario.

The Toronto 2015 Pan/Para Pan American Games Secretariat has selected the City of St. Catharines and the Canadian Henley Rowing Corporation as the organizations that will host the rowing competitions at the renowned Royal Canadian Henley Regatta Course, and the City of Welland and the Welland Recreational Canal Corporation will host the Canoe/Kayak sprint events at the International Flatwater Centre on the North Course of the old Welland Canal.

"The Canadian Olympic Committee, and our provincial and federal government partners responsible for preparing the Games bid, recognize that Niagara has extensive international experience in these sports, world class facilities for training and competition, and a strong network of volunteers that will ensure the success of rowing and canoe/kayak competitive events," said Regional Councillor Tim Rigby, Chair of the Niagara 2015 Pan/Para Pan American Games Steering Committee.

"Niagara is recognized for its world class sporting venues and is widely known as an ideal location for top athletes to compete. The selection further highlights the attractiveness of Niagara as a place to live, work and play," says Peter Partington, Regional Chairman. "Staging these sporting events will raise Niagara's profile and recognition internationally and we're very excited about this opportunity."

The investments that will be made by Ontario, Canada, Niagara communities and local sports organizations will result in the upgrading of existing facilities to meet international standards for training and competition. According to knowledgeable sources, in multi-sport international games, such as the Olympic Summer Games, it is unique to have dedicated world-class facilities for both rowing and canoe/kayak competitions.

"These legacy facilities will strengthen the region's leadership for training athletes in rowing and canoe/kayak sports and will become the future sites of major regional, national and international competitions," observes Rigby, whose lifelong commitment to the sport of rowing is widely-recognized across Canada.

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The Games Secretariat also announced that the City of Niagara Falls would be the site of a Welcome Centre that will host athletes and visitors.

“Niagara is an ideal location for hosting international sporting events that bring together international sport organizations, athletes, coaches and families. Sports Tourism is a growing segment in the marketplace, and Niagara is very well positioned with its facilities and vibrant communities to be a leader in Canada,” said Patrick Gedge, CEO, Niagara Economic Development Corporation and Tourism Niagara.

A Niagara 2015 Pan/Para Pan American Games Steering Committee, with representation from all municipalities in Niagara, has been established to prepare for hosting competitors, supporters and visitors to the sport venues in Niagara. The Committee is also working toward developing a comprehensive inventory of sport facilities and a plan to market Niagara to participating countries as a location for pre-competition training.

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