

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Calgary heading into banner year for major sport events

Five major events in 2009 promise significant economic benefits

(Calgary, AB) – As an active, athletic community with an outstanding reputation for hosting international sport events, Calgary is heading into one of the most exciting years ever for hosting major sport championships. Thanks to the joint efforts and shared vision of the Calgary Sport Tourism Authority, Tourism Calgary and the Mayor's office in partnership with numerous local organizing committees and volunteers, Calgary will host an unprecedented roster of five major sport events in 2009.

Calgary kicks off the year in March with the largest attended sport event in Canada – the 2009 Tim Hortons Brier and finishes with one of the most iconic sporting events in Canadian history – the 2009 Grey Cup. In between, the city will host the 2009 World Water Ski Championship Festival, the Ironman Triathlon 70.3 and the 2009 CN Canadian Women's Open – all held in July and August. In addition to these five major sport events, the city is also hosting a number of smaller ones, including the Burton Canadian Open 2009 Snowboarding Championship, the BMO Skate Canada Junior Nationals, the 2009 Canadian Karate Championship, the 2009 Calgary Highland Games and the 2009 Esso Cup National Women's Midget Championship.

"Calgary has a strong and proud tradition of sport and an outstanding reputation for being one of the most successful host cities in the world," said Calgary Mayor Dave Bronconnier. "We're known as a city of charm, energy and action with a committed volunteer base that's the face of hospitality to all of our city's guests. I encourage everyone to invite friends and relatives to plan their visits around these exciting events, discover our beautiful city and all that it has to offer."

The events are expected to give Calgary a serious injection of cash. The combined economic impact on the city from the five major sport events alone is estimated to be close to \$90 million. Including spectators and participants, total attendance to all five events is expected to be more than 350,000 people with obvious economic spinoffs for Calgary businesses, attractions, restaurants and hotels.

With tourism and visitation indicators suggesting that travelers are seeking out meaningful vacation experiences closer to home, both the number and scope of events are positioning Calgary as an enticing year-round sport city and premiere tourism destination – something Tourism Calgary plans on capitalizing on.

"Tourism Calgary is focusing its promotional efforts on attracting more Albertans and Canadians to the city," said Tourism Calgary Chairman Earl Williams. "We're aggressively selling and promoting our city throughout Alberta, western Canada and the country to assist the local organizing committees in selling out all of these events, which in turn will benefit our tourism partners, attractions and members."

2009 is promising to set the stage for more exciting events in the future. The Calgary Sport Tourism Authority (CSTA) is a group of Calgary business people who volunteer their time and expertise to bidding for major sport and cultural events on behalf of the City. The group has been instrumental in helping secure many of this year's events as well as the 2012 IIHF World Junior Championship taking place in Calgary and Edmonton in late December 2011 and early January 2012.

"We're thrilled about all the exciting events on Calgary's horizon," said CSTA Chairman Doug Mitchell. "This city has an outstanding track record for hosting international sport events. This year is an example of how hard the CSTA and its partners have worked, and will continue to work, on attracting international sport events to our calendar that stimulate economic activity, provide community legacies and benefits to our tourism industry."

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About Tourism Calgary

Tourism Calgary is a not-for-profit, membership based organization specializing in the marketing and promotion of Calgary and area as the destination of choice for leisure and business travel. For over 50 years Tourism Calgary has been the only organization dedicated to this purpose, and has grown to include a network of over 500 businesses; from city attractions and accommodations to arts groups, entertainment venues, restaurants, transportation outlets and various services.

About the Calgary Sport Tourism Authority

The Calgary Sport Tourism Authority proactively bids for and attracts international sport events that offer branding and promotional opportunities, community legacies and benefits to the tourism industry; further promoting and positioning Calgary as the premier host of sport and cultural events in Canada. The organization is a collaboration of community leaders and key stakeholders from various industries. The board of directors includes representatives from Borden Ladner Gervais LLP, Calgary Flames, Royal Bank of Canada, TELUS, CamCar & Associates, WinSport Canada, Canadian Sport Centre Calgary, Calgary Economic Development, Office of the Mayor, and Tourism Calgary.

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