



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BC Speed Skating Association Announces Canada's Newest Indoor Oval Ready to Host Sanctioned Competitions

– City of Fort St. John Eyes Future Development of BC's Athletes, Hosts Provincial Long Track Championships –

Fort St. John, BC – Canada's newest indoor long track speed skating oval, located in Fort St. John BC, home to National Team members Denny and Jay Morrison, will begin the new year by hosting its first ever BC Speed Skating Association (BCSSA) sanctioned event.

BCSSA's Executive Director Ted Houghton is encouraged by the facility's future vision with less than a month before Denny Morrison will skate for Canada at the Olympic Games.

"With such a strong tradition and community club system in BC and the growing legacy of the Morrison brothers, this facility will be the beginning of a new era of speed skating in both BC and in Canada," added Mr. Houghton.

As the number one ranked speed skating nation in the world, Speed Skating Canada's Director General Jean Dupré recognizes the positive impact the facility will have on the future development of the sport.

"The City of Fort St. John has been producing top ranked speed skaters for a number of years now, and with this new facility, Canada will continue to be a dominant speed skating nation for many years to come," said Mr. Dupré.

Following the news, the Fort St. John Elks Speed Skating Club was awarded the official sanction to host the WorkSafeBC Speed Skating Long Track Championships, being held this weekend.

Elks Club President Sheri Dressler, who also serves as the Organizing Committee Co-Chair for the events, is impressed by the level of commitment the City of Fort St. John has had in bringing the facility up to international standards capable of hosting SSC sanctioned competitions.

"The safety of skaters on our track is of critical importance, because top skaters can reach speeds of up to 60-kilometers per hour during the final lap in the 500m distance. We appreciate the City's lead role in ensuring the facility sanction by SSC and are very excited to welcome the speed skating community to our brand new facility in 2010," commented Ms Dressler.

The City of Fort St. John approached the innovative nature of the facility's design by developing a speed skater safety committee, which included representatives from the City, the Design-Build Joint Venture and the Elks Speed Skating Club.

The committee, which was chaired by VANOC's Magnus Enfeldt, discussed design and safety challenges such as mat thickness, types of foam, and foam density with the goal of reaching the highest possible track safety standards of the International Skating Union.

Following the completion of the ice making, track surveying and painting, the safety mats will be installed and the Oval will be ready for skaters for the inaugural event.

The WorkSafeBC Speed Skating Long Track Speed Skating Championships, is set to begin on January 23-24, 2010. More information can be found on the BC Speed Skating Association's website at <http://www.speed-skating.bc.ca/>.

The official launch of the Enerplex is planned for Fall 2010.

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