

**Beyond 2010:
The Tourism Legacies of the Vancouver Olympic Winter Games**

By Rick Baxter, chair of Tourism Vancouver

As we prepare to welcome the world in 2010, Vancouver will once again be on the global stage – almost 25 years after hosting the world at Expo '86.

And although we're less than a year away from hosting the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, the vision to host the Winter Games is actually decades old. In fact, Whistler submitted two previous bids to host the Olympics. But it was in 1997 that Tourism Vancouver, Tourism Whistler and Sport BC joined together, formally launching the winning bid quest. Six years later, in 2003, Vancouver was named the Host City for the 2010 Winter Games.

While Expo '86 helped introduce Vancouver to the world, the 2010 Winter Games is expected to put the city firmly on the map of must-visit destinations. In terms of infrastructure and media, the Winter Games present an ideal opportunity to champion the city. No other event on the planet offers the kind of media coverage that comes with the Games – and Tourism Vancouver will skilfully leverage this exposure to promote Vancouver as the ideal four-season travel destination to hundreds of millions of viewers.

Of course, there are other beneficial aspects for our beloved city. Indeed, early on Tourism Vancouver recognized the opportunity for greater investment in areas such as infrastructure through hosting the 2010 Winter Games. For example, Vancouver's public transportation system is being improved and expanded to include the Canada Line, facilitating easier transportation for locals and visitors to move about the city, and travel to Vancouver International Airport in Richmond.

As well, both BC Place and the Pacific Coliseum have received substantial upgrades that secure Vancouver's position as a top meetings and events destination – thereby bringing more business and economic prosperity to the region.

And while other initiatives – such as the expanded convention centre facilities and improvements to the Sea-to-Sky Highway – are not Olympic projects, these upgrades help to strengthen Vancouver's infrastructure and reputation as a world-class city.

We also have an opportunity to strengthen the city's standing as a reputable sporting destination, helping to bring other international events to the city and confirming Vancouver's ability to host virtually any kind of competition.

Of course, these are just a few of the tourism-related legacies of hosting the world at this historic event. More than anything, the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games are an opportunity to show the world who we are and where we live. It's the opportunity of a lifetime.