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Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training
and Responsible for Labour

Alpine events put Whistler in global spotlight

WHISTLER – Some of the world’s best skiers and snowboarders are in Whistler for a couple of globally renowned alpine events this month.

First up is the 23rd annual Whistler Cup, which kicks off Friday and runs through Sunday. It’s one of the largest and most well-respected international alpine ski competitions for athletes 12 to 15 years of age. This year hundreds of athletes and their families from 18 countries are attending.

Resort Municipality Initiative (RMI) funding of \$5,000 went toward producing free daily afternoon concerts in Village Square. The Whistler Cup is expected to result in a \$4.4-million immediate economic impact for British Columbia.

Next up, some of the world’s best skiers will be sharing the spotlight with top snowboarders during the 20th annual World Ski and Snowboard Festival being held April 10 to 19. Festival events include halfpipe, slopestyle and big air as part of the World Tour Finals among other competitions. The Resort Municipality of Whistler invested \$113,000 of RMI funding to support this event. This festival is expected to attract 250,000 resort visits, as well as provincewide economic activity worth \$27 million that will help to keep B.C.’s economy diverse, strong and growing.

RMI is a \$10.5-million-a-year program that addresses the unique circumstances of resort-oriented municipalities to develop and enhance local tourism related infrastructure and amenities. The communities that participate in the RMI program include Fernie, Golden, Harrison Hot Springs, Invermere, Kimberley, Osoyoos, Radium Hot Springs, Revelstoke, Rossland, Sun Peaks, Tofino, Ucluelet, Valemount and Whistler. To date, Whistler has received \$60,822,060 in funding from the RMI program.

B.C.’s tourism sector is one of the eight key sectors identified in the BC Jobs Plan, creating more than 132,200 jobs and \$13.9 billion in revenues throughout the province in 2013. Since RMI inception in 2007, over \$87.6 million has been invested in tourism infrastructure and programs to support local and regional tourism economies in the 14 participating communities.

Quotes:

Shirley Bond, Minister of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training and Responsible for Labour –

“It’s great to be able to support world-renowned alpine events in Whistler that draw thousands of people and have a significant impact on B.C.’s economy. Whether it’s young skiers from around the world competing in the Whistler Cup or top slopestyle skiers thrilling audiences with their acrobatics, these events ensure Whistler remains one of the leading tourism

destinations in North America.”

Naomi Yamamoto, Minister of State Tourism and Small Business –

“The Whistler Cup for alpine skiing and the World Ski and Snowboard Festival in April are incredible opportunities to internationally showcase why Whistler ranks as one of the top skiing destinations in the world. Whistler’s stunning natural scenery gives visitors a taste of all the amazing opportunities for sport and adventure that await them across B.C. These signature events bring visitors from around the world, and help keep over 19,000 tourism-related businesses strong and creating jobs for British Columbians.”

Jordan Sturdy, MLA for West Vancouver-Sea to Sky –

“Whistler is a globally recognized destination for sports and athlete development, and plays a vital role in our province’s tourism industry. The RMI program has been instrumental in helping the community enhance its tourism offerings and organize competitions that attract the world’s best athletes. These two events are some of the most exciting alpine competitions on the planet, and I want to wish all participants the best of luck.”

Mayor Nancy Wilhelm-Morden, Resort Municipality of Whistler –

“Through provincial RMI contributions, the Resort Municipality of Whistler has invested in a variety of cultural and sporting events, such as the Whistler Cup and the World Ski and Snowboard Festival, and a wide range of programs to grow tourism. RMI funding promotes Whistler’s goals of delivering positive economic impact to the resort and to the province, and directly supports Whistler’s provincial GDP contribution of \$1.3 billion annually. ”

Quick Facts:

- The BC Jobs Plan, introduced in September 2011, builds on the strengths of B.C.’s most competitive sectors, B.C.’s educated and skilled workforce, and government’s fiscal discipline to ensure B.C. remains diverse, strong and growing.
- This announcement is another step toward fulfilling the BC Jobs Plan commitment to assist over 100 communities and 19 industry sectors to develop and/or promote world-class visitor experiences.
- Tourism is one of the largest industries in the province with over 19,200 businesses. In 2013, tourism accounted for \$7.3 billion (4%) of B.C.’s overall GDP.
- B.C. had a 5.3% increase in international visitors in 2014 – nearly a quarter of a million more people came to B.C. in 2014 than in 2013.
- Since 2003, tourism revenue in B.C. has increased by 44.3%.

Learn More:

To learn more about the RMI program, please visit:

<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/topic.page?id=30A40BDA6D8346798E15C6050063F719>

Whistler Cup: <http://www.whistlercup.com/en/SitePages/Home.aspx>

Whistler Ski and Snowboard Festival:

<http://www.whistlerblackcomb.com/events-and-activities/events-calendar/events/2015/04/wssf.aspx>

BC Jobs Plan: <http://engage.gov.bc.ca/bcjobsplan/>

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