

LOCAL NEWS

Locally built "BC Canada Place" officially open to the world

British Columbia-Canada Place was officially opened in Torino, Italy on Sunday January 22nd, 2006. It will be B.C.'s home away from home in Torino

try officials feature the latest technology. Several kilometers

needed to safely place the large building on the chosen site which

ashore in Bella Coola before we rescued it and incorporated it into our design." It is now being called the "Spirit Log" and visitors are being encouraged to touch



as part of the 2006 Winter Olympics, while showcasing British Columbia to the global Olympic audience.

In early May 2005, Sitka Log Homes of 100 Mile House was chosen to build B.C. Canada Place to showcase B.C. products and to offer a glimpse of what the world can expect for the Winter Olympics coming to Vancouver in 2010.

Sitka's previous experience building 3 magnificent log lodges used during the Salt Lake City 2002 Winter Olympics and their vast international experience was the catalyst which helped them to qualify and then to win the competitive bid to build this project.

The 4,200 sq.ft house was built with sustainable and almost entirely B.C. made products. The log shell was built using beetle-killed lodgepole pine harvested from the interior of B.C. "We saw this as an important opportunity to show the rest of the world the natural beauty of this wood and to confirm its structural integrity," said John Johnson, owner and operator of Sitka Log Homes Inc.

The lodge, designed in house by Sitka Log Homes, blends warm rustic style with sophisticated high tech. It was specifically designed to welcome wheelchair visitors as well, including a glass elevator and state of the art meeting rooms for our Olympians and indus-

of wiring was installed for the system which is computer controlled and can change the inside and outside lighting from anywhere in the world.

Outside the house, landscaping was designed to evoke the look and feel of B.C. with clusters of fir trees ranging in size from 2 meters to 10 meters high flanked by an array of boulders from Lone Butte weighing up to 2000 pounds.

"During the reconstruction in Italy we proudly displayed signs with our companies name and the fact that we were from 100 Mile House, B.C." said Johnson

Everything from light fixtures, windows, and the landscaping boulders were all shipped from 100 Mile House. The 2 story high fireplace was pre-built in 100 Mile and had to be lifted in and out of the container by cranes.

When it became apparent the time line could not be achieved with local Italian labour alone, various tradesmen from 100 Mile House and B.C. were sent to help with the project. 20 flights to Italy were initiated by a local 100 Mile House travel agency.

The project had more than it's fair share of Olympic sized hurdles to jump over. There was the special engineering

tricky task of designing the building to attach to an existing glass building. 5 out of the 11 containers shipped to Italy contained the log shell, which according to the European Union, must now be heat treated before shipping. There was the truckers strike in B.C which caused many logistical problems in obtaining containers. There were various train derailments delaying transportation within Canada and then more truck strikes in Italy when the containers had finally arrived. Despite it all the log house was finished by the requested dead line of Jan 3rd, 2006 just 3 months after receiving the first container on site, and to high praise from all who've visited it.

More than 250 people joined Colin Hansen, B.C. Minister of Economic Development for the official grand opening. Hansen and Sheldon Tetreault of the Metis Nation opened the carved front doors to the house as part of the opening ceremonies. 2 Royal Canadian Mounties in their scarlets stand guard in and greet visitors to the house. One of the main attractions has become the massive cedar post in the center of the house. Johnson explained "The 238 year old large diameter log was washed

the B.C. Spirit Log and receive the energy, best wishes and Olympic spirit of the people of British Columbia.

British Columbia-Canada Place opens each morning to a line up of people waiting to view it, averaging 400 people per day touring through it during the week and 1000 per day during the weekends. It will close March 21st, 2006 after the Paralympic have finished. At that point the city of Torino plans on re-assembling the house in a park in the center of the city which is used for various displays of art.

Located in the heart of the city and right beside one of the accredited media center, B.C. Canada Place has already caught the attention of many international media organizations already in Torino to cover the Olympic and Paralympic games. Sitka hopes this will expose B.C and the South Cariboo to the world audience.

A one day forum will be held on February 24th in BC Canada Place hosted by BC Wood in which various wood products are promoted. This will be attended by 75 selected architects and builders from Europe. Premier Gordon Campbell is the key note speaker at this event. A representative from the BC Log and Timber Association will be making a presentation on behalf of the industry.