

Log cabin will showcase B.C. at Olympics

TORINO 2006: Structure will be assembled from lodgepole pine killed by beetles

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Beetle-killed B.C. pine will be going to Olympic glory as part of an elaborate log cabin built as B.C. Canada House at the 2006 Winter Olympics.

Sitka Log Homes of 100 Mile House will be shipping a 4,000-square foot cabin to Torino, Italy. Developed at a cost of \$4 million, it is to serve as a showcase for B.C. business, tourism and culture.

Economic Development Minister Colin Hansen touted the house as an opportunity to promote B.C. in advance of the 2010 Winter Games in Whistler and Vancouver.

"It's not just any old house," said Hansen. "It's a house that invites the world to discover what we already know, that this is the best place to live, to work, to play and to invest."

Sitka owner and operator John Johnson said: "I feel an incredible responsibility to pull it off so I'll make it the best I can and the best

it can be."

The structure's lodgepole pine has a blue streak to it as a result of being killed by pine beetles. But Johnson said the colouring doesn't detract from the structure.

"It's a very subtle blue," he said. Bidders for the contract had to come up with a truly B.C. structure.

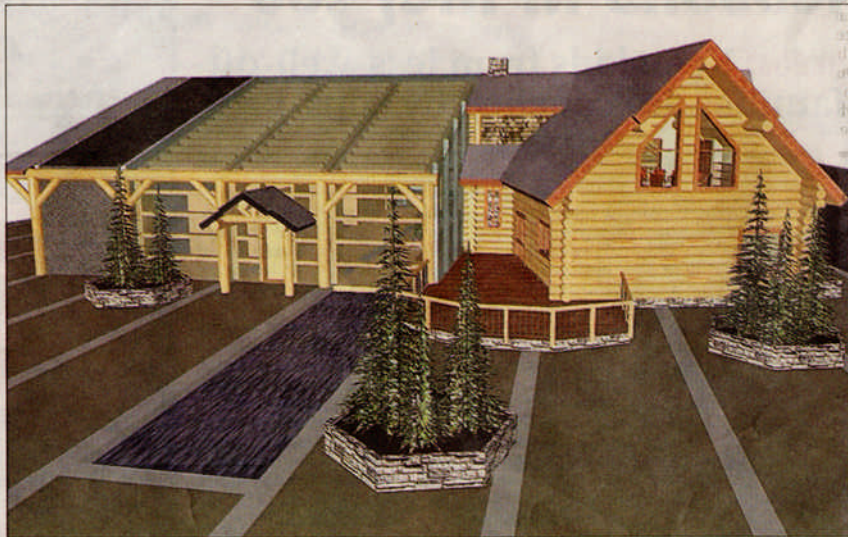
"They wanted a B.C.-resort-like feel — like something you would see in Whistler . . ." said Johnson.

Sitka, which turns out about 50 projects a year, has built the shell of the Olympic structure in 100 Mile House. It will be broken down and shipped to Vancouver in late July to be heat-treated to kill off any bugs that might still be in the wood.

The pieces will be shipped by rail to Montreal, then taken by boat to Europe. The pieces of the cabin are to be in Torino by mid-August. Johnson will travel to Italy to oversee its assembly by December.

"Hopefully you'll see it on TV when you watch the 2006 Olympics," said Johnson.

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Artist's conception of B.C. Canada House, which will be landscaped with granite rocks and coniferous trees.