



100 Mile House Free Press

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Olympics will feature 100 Mile log building

by Heather Colpitts
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'Cento Case di Miglio' is roughly how 100 Mile House translates into Italian.

The folks at Sitka Log Homes will have to brush up on their Italian after winning the bid to construct B.C. Canada House for the Torino Olympics of 2006.

The firm based at Tatton Station Road was one of a dozen bidders for the \$4 million project being co-ordinated by the provincial government.

"We were up against multi-million dollar architectural firms out of Vancouver and we did everything we could as a small- to medium-sized company to beat out these very large companies who do this exact same thing day-in, day-out for these government bids," commented Brad Johnson, the Sitka construction yard supervisor. "It's very exciting."

The official announcement came July 5 from Colin Hansen, the Minister of Economic Development (and Minister responsible for the Asia-Pacific Initiative and the Olympics).

"It's really to become B.C.'s embassy during the Winter Olympics next year, and an opportunity for us to showcase the 2010 Olympics," Hansen told the *Free Press* June 30.

During the games Feb. 10-26, the facility will serve as a business, culture and media centre, and will be open January through March 2006.

"We think this particular log building is going to be noticed," Hansen commented.

Torino has allocated a spot for the building near the center of the city near the main Olympic plaza.

The \$4 million price tag includes construction of the log building as well as transport and set-up overseas, landscaping



Lachlan Labere photo (D)

Sitka Log Homes owner John Johnson (left) welcomed B.C. Economic Development Minister Colin Hansen (middle) and Wendell Monical (right) for a branding demonstration July 5. Brands will grace the log building.

and all finishing, but not the furnishings. The structure will be made of beetle-kill pine.

"We're specifically using beetle-kill pine. A lot of people think it's a large problem and it is a large problem, but we're using it to our benefit," Johnson said.

Sitka is also using local products, such as Panorama Windows.

"So we're not the only 100 Mile House company benefiting from it. We're contracting out to other 100 Mile companies that are up to the task," Johnson said.

In addition, local brands are being used to decorate the logs.

In mid-July the building will be shipped down to Vancouver then across Canada via rail to Montreal for transport overseas before being reassembled in Italy.

Hansen noted that the B.C. government has invited Canada to be a partner in the project but has not heard back yet. The private sector can also be sponsors which will help offset costs.

"There's certainly an opportunity to showcase

other B.C. products," he explained.

Sitka was one of the firms that answered the province's request for proposal which called for the construction of a log facility.

The building has been donated to the City of Torino for its use after the Olympics.

The two-storey log building has a mezzanine and is approximately 4,000 square feet. Built out of pine, it is being integrated with an existing building in the Piazza Valda Fussi, and will be landscaped with rocks and trees so it looks like a slice of Whistler.

The plans call for a Native pole at the entry as well as stone work and wood decoration.

Hansen said the project is worthwhile to gain British Columbia international exposure, noting that the province had a "presence" at the Salt Lake City Games even though the 2010 bid had not yet been awarded.

"Every country really has to maximize their marketing opportunities during the games," Hansen said.