



Email us at:
promoney@pacpress.southam.ca

New Money

Business news, Jon Ferry: 604 605-2603

A23

Wednesday, January 16, 2002

Eyes on Olympic gold

B.C. businesses look to Winter Olympics in Utah for winning sales

By Damian Inwood
Staff Reporter

BOWEN ISLAND — Vikki Fuller's family-run souvenir company is going for gold next month at the Salt Lake City Winter Olympics.

Circo International Products Group Inc. operates out of a small first-floor office in Artisan Square, a few minutes from Snug Cove.

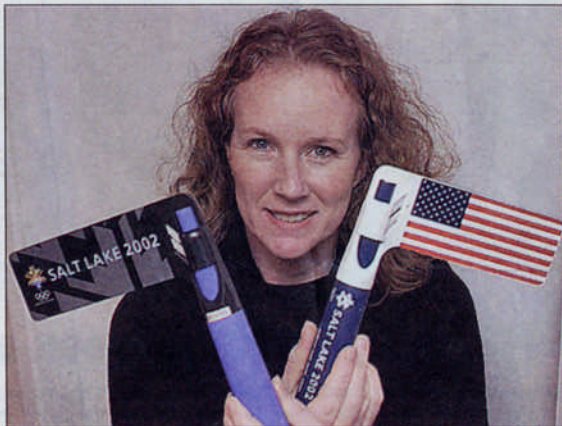
And Circo is one of a handful of B.C. companies that are cashing in on the Olympic rings.

Mark Fuller, Vikki's husband, is already in Utah, getting ready to sell tens of thousands of what he believes are the only Canadian merchandise items bearing the official Olympic logo.

"I'm thrilled," said Vikki Fuller. "We're going for gold down there."

Circo's major product is "the razzle," a \$9.95 US plastic noise-maker, based on wooden rattles that were popular with soccer supporters in Europe in the '60s.

Mark Fuller hopes to sell up to 100,000 razzles at all five indoor venues and elsewhere in the Olympic city.



Les Bazso — The Province

Circo's Vikki Fuller hopes to sell lots of 'razzles' to Olympic fans.

Circo is also marketing a miniature sculpted figure that sports an official Olympic jersey as well as children's dish and placemat sets featuring the official games mascots.

Getting the licence involved lengthy negotiations and Circo signed the Olympic agreement in 2000, said Fuller.

He hopes to go on to sell the razz-

le at future world sporting events.

"We're shooting for the World Cup of soccer in South Korea and Japan and then the Athens Summer Olympics," he said.

Another B.C. company making its mark in Utah is a log-home builder from 100 Mile House.

John Johnson, owner of Sitka Log Homes, said his company successfully bid to build the 23,000-

square-foot day lodge at Snow-basin Resort, near the finish line for the men's downhill and other Olympic alpine ski races.

The company also built two smaller lodges further up the mountain.

"The organizers jumped in their Lear jet and flew to 100 Mile House and said, 'This looks pretty good, nice logs, great,'" said Johnson.

The contract meant trucking the three ski lodges in prebuilt sections on 40 loaded semi-trailers.

Two other Lower Mainland companies are also doing business in Salt Lake City.

Bensen, a Vancouver furniture manufacturer, has provided 13 sofas, five sectionals, 22 armchairs, 14 cabinets and 13 coffee tables to Nike's Olympic HQ.

Tentnology Co., a Surrey special-events supplier, is shipping from 50 to 200 of its portable shelters to Utah to be used for anything from ticket kiosks to first-aid tents.

"We've had our tents at the Atlanta Games, the World Cup of soccer, the Commonwealth Games and Lillith Fair," said owner Suzanne Warner.

"We've already started talking to people in Greece about the Athens summer games."

dinwood@pacpress.southam.ca