

# Premier visits Mount Washington to drum up support for Olympics

■ **World class:** Premier says local ski hill could be a perfect training ground for Olympic athletes if B.C. wins 2010 bid

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Premier Gordon Campbell made Mt. Washington Alpine Resort his fifth stop in an effort to promote the 2010 Olympic bid for B.C.

In a presentation to Valley community representatives Campbell said the mountain would be ideal for Olympic competitors to train prior to the great event.

"It's about giving our children something really exceptional," he said.

Campbell touched on a number of benefits of the Games, prior to the meeting, telling the Record that getting the Comox Valley Airport referendum to pass successfully is not part of Campbell's campaign, but he said an expanded Comox Valley Airport would be a great asset in making it easier for athletes to get here.

"Airports are an integral part of modern day infrastructure," he said. "They have a major economic impact."

Campbell said everyone from law enforcement personnel to retailers and service staff feel better when the Olympics arrive in a community.

"The way people feel about working together is

improved when the Olympics are here," he said.

Money isn't a problem for the bid, he said as the bid is the largest public/private partnership ever, drawing funds from the federal government as well.

"This investment makes sense," Campbell said. "There will be a four-to-one return to help in health care and education, and 200,000 new jobs."

For communities outside of Vancouver and Whistler, such as the Comox Valley, Campbell said the 2010 Olympics is a good opportunity to expand on facilities.

Meanwhile, with provincial elections in two years, the possibility of being named on a recall list don't worry Campbell at all.

"The recall campaign is really about trying to fight the last election, (it's nothing to do with) the Olympics," he said.

Campbell said the idea of Canadian athletes being able to sing the Canadian National Anthem in front of the world would be great.

Mt. Washington PR Co-ordinator Dave Hampshire said Nordic teams would arrive in B.C. many weeks before their scheduled event which would give them and their myriad of support personnel ample opportunity to become acclimatized to the altitude as well as typical snow quality.

"The advantage that Mt. Washington possesses is it's a world-class facility," he said. "Raven Lodge combined with the resort's altitude and snow quality mirror what is typically found at the proposed Nordic venue at Whistler-Blackcomb."

He said the mountain is currently pursuing international nordic team training, including the biathlon, which takes place ahead of the actual Olympic Games.

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■ **Premier's proposal:** Gordon Campbell visited Mt. Washington Tuesday to raise support for Vancouver's 2010 Olympic bid. He suggested the ski hill might have a role to play in the Games.