

# Vancouver Island stands to score big on 2010 Olympics

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## Mt. Washington leads the province in planning for the games

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Vancouver Island sits second only to the Lower Mainland for regions expected to benefit from the 2010 Olympic Games, and Mount Washington is leading the province in planning for the games, according to members of the Comox Valley Olympic Committee.

The committee met with the regional district's Comox Valley directors last week to present local opportunities and advantages.

"Vancouver Island is judged to be second only to the Lower Mainland in terms of tourism benefits," said Olympic committee member Marty Douglas.

In addition to the tourism benefits, is the \$40 million in facilities construction money that's slated to be spent in non-host communities around the province. And with Mount Washington gunning to become a major centre for nordic ski training, the Comox Valley could see some of that funding.

"Mount Washington is way out ahead of the province, they're really leading the charge," said Darryl Pippin, who heads of business opportunities and investment attraction for the local committee.

"We've been working behind the scenes to build up Mount Washington

as a centre for excellence in sport," said Lee Apedaile, of the Strathcona nordic ski club. The mountain hosts dry land training for the national cross country team, which began this month, and is developing nordic combined (ski jump and cross country) and biathlon training facilities "with the vision of establishing a training centre that could be nationally and even internationally recognized."

One hurdling block for local facilities is the application process. In the Comox Valley, most sports and aquatic centres are operated by the regional district. However, under the current application process, only municipalities are able to apply for funding from the province. Douglas said he

believed that condition would be "negotiated out of the way."

Throughout the province, the demand for workers in the province to construct the games is expected to overwhelm the labour pool.

Even if the province graduated every student in Kindergarten through to Grade 12, the province would still be short some 300,000 workers, Douglas said. The construction is expected to create one million jobs, he said.

Local businesses can benefit as well, he said.

"In the imagination of local entrepreneurs there are opportunities," Douglas said.

"We're optimistic the Comox Valley is going to be the best non-games site in the province."