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FEDERAL BUDGET STIMULATES A NEW SPORT AND RECREATION BUILDING INITIATIVE

OTTAWA – January 27, 2009 — With today's Federal Budget, Finance Minister Flaherty and Sport Minister Lunn have taken direct aim at the long standing infrastructure deficit in sport and recreation with a new \$500 million fund, to be expended in the next 2 years, to renew and build facilities in our communities. "This is the right thing at the right time for Canada," declared Ian Bird, Senior Leader of the Sport Matters Group. "With such a long-standing need to address the sport and recreation infrastructure deficit, this program promises to strengthen our communities, encourage individual participation and sporting excellence, and stimulate economic development."

With specific references to the 1967 Centennial year building boom, the Federal Budget highlights in detail the need for "hockey arenas, soccer fields, tennis and basketball courts, and swimming pools" as examples for upgrading, renewal and building through this nationally delivered initiative. The program will be a 50/50 matching initiative, delivered through regional development agencies whereby provinces and municipalities, community sport organizations, and the private sector may all apply for matching funds for shovel ready projects. Three big goals drive the new fund- economic stimulus, quality facilities, and national spirit- and the allocation will be based on merit and readiness accordingly.

"When we work together to create places where physical activity can happen, we make it easier for Canadians to move more. This new funding will help secure a healthier future for Canada," said Kelly Murumets, President and CEO of ParticipACTION, the national voice of physical activity and sport participation in Canada.

"Canadian athletes benefit from facilities and community environments that support excellence. This new fund presents opportunities for investment in regional Sport Institutes which are ready to build and that promise to connect our best and brightest athletes with Canadians involved in recreational activities," commented Alex Baumann, 2 time Olympic gold medalist and executive director of the Road to Excellence Initiative of Podium Canada.

Jamie Ferguson, CEO of Sport Nova Scotia and chair of the Canadian Council of Provincial and Territorial Sport Federations remarked, "It's great to see that this dedicated funding has arrived. We know that the only way we can fully address the inactivity and facility crisis is with this kind of federal commitment, in complement to the work already underway in our provinces and territories. We look forward to working with public officials and the sport community to get shovels in the ground."

"Recreation facilities are more than ice sheets, swimming pools, soccer fields or ball diamonds. They are important gathering places in our communities that bring people together in good and bad times. This new fund has come along at the right time for all Canadians," stated Moosejaw's Randy Kinnee, President of the Canadian Recreation Facilities Council.

"A big part of moving from the sport we have to the sport we want is having access to more and better spaces for play. The new fund will build more than just facilities, it will inspire community spirit and foster inclusive and vibrant neighbourhoods," stated Victor Lachance, chair of the True Sport Foundation.

Pierre Lafontaine, the national team head coach and CEO of Swimming Canada noted, "Even more exciting than the investment itself is the way that the new fund will bring together municipalities, colleges and universities, sport clubs and more – all with a goal to make our communities better. That's what Canada is all about."

The Sport Matters Group is a collective of national, provincial, and community sport institutions and leaders who care about the future of sport in Canada and who collaborate on various sport policy issues. The Group has actively worked together on the Canadian Sport Policy, the Sport and Physical Activity Act, and on increasing the resources available for sport in Canada.

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