

## **SPORT MATTERS GROUP: A federal budget week to build on...**

January 30, 2009

Hi all,

As we wrap up a hectic and productive week of federal budget communications and engagement, I thought it made sense to add to our analysis on 4 fronts.

First, the infrastructure program that has been created - what's called the RInC program - for sport and recreation is still taking shape. We are communicating with federal officials about opportunities to share information and we'll apply the patience principle as this process comes together. Hang tight, but not for long as we'll need to move quickly to help them get \$500m out the door in 24 months. (One other thing, please let your networks know that SMG is not running this program! We've been flooded with proposals and drawings and environmental assessments which clearly attests to the need, just not by us directly.)

Secondly, the infrastructure file is more robust, as we had anticipated, given some cross-over opportunities within separate (non-RInC) infrastructure programs and the acceleration of the Building Canada Fund (5 years worth of funds to be expended in the next 2 years).

- Infrastructure Stimulus Fund (\$4billion) - This is all about rehabilitation of existing assets with allocations based on provincial populations. There is a huge backlog of renewal projects waiting in the queue (some in sport and rec) which will now get the green light and necessary funds. Nothing to act on here, except to realize that if one of your projects is in the hopper, it may well get picked up through the Stimulus Fund.
- Green Infrastructure Fund (\$1billion) - NRCan, Hockey Canada, and CRFC did a bang up job a few years ago on some work related to green technologies in facilities, especially arenas. Well, this new fund may well assist our arenas and pools in the specific area of energy conservation, sustainability, and greenhouse gas reductions through the investment in green technology. Did you know that arenas which convert to made in Canada cooling/warming technologies can reduce operating costs by as much as 50% and greenhouse gas emissions by as much as 80%? Arena retrofitters - go nuts!
- Critical Community Services Infrastructure in First Nations communities (\$135m) - There is a possibility that this investment in health services infrastructure may apply to activity and wellness facilities operating within holistic health frameworks (i.e. Wabano Centre in Vanier, ON). Aboriginal community leaders may want to look more closely at this opportunity.
- Improving Infrastructure at Universities and Colleges (\$2billion) - Some of you that work at higher education institutions and that have significant maintenance and repair projects in the works and prioritized by your organization will discover new opportunities through this new investment. There is a priority linkage to R&D capabilities at Universities (i.e. facility renewal at Wilfrid Laurier) or repair/refurbishment/expansion on

College campuses (i.e. expansion of PISE at Camosun College.) Good news for those that are ready to go with overdue maintenance or development projects.

Thirdly, there is a message to shape out of this - or rather, messages.

- The focus on infrastructure renewal means a minimum of \$1b in capital investment against a \$15b estimated deficit (2005) in sport and recreation facilities, fields etc. This is a strategic investment and one that we can work on together in the stimulus period, and importantly, thereafter.
- Important work has already been done on a number of fronts - with F-P/T working groups, Recreation facility assessments, Sport Institute planning, major project developments etc - that can be effectively integrated into the roll-out of this program. Networks of sport and recreation leadership organizations exist to assist the Regional Development Agencies in their implementation process, quickly.
- Sport and recreation matters - and is more connected than ever. This is simply a message about us and our emerging ability to coordinate our efforts in a way that adds value. We are receiving correspondence from all over the country demonstrating that our networks are active, engaged, and ready to move on opportunities. Let's spend some time talking about and thinking through the implication of this development too.

One last thing - in our analysis earlier this week, we missed one significant budget item related to Marquee Festivals and Events that draw significant number of tourists. Of course, this applies to many sporting and recreational activities across the country so if you're in the Event management side of sector, you'll want to track this development through the Canadian Sport Tourism Alliance and other Tourism authorities.

All for now,

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On behalf of the Sport Matters Group

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