



FOUR HOST FIRST NATIONS

LIL'WAT | MUSQUEAM | SQUAMISH | TSLEIL-WAUTUTH

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

2010 Aboriginal Pavilion ready to welcome the world

Vancouver, B.C. – Aboriginal leaders, Vancouver 2010 partners and government officials joined the Four Host First Nations today for the official opening ceremony of the 2010 Aboriginal Pavilion or “Chiefs’ House.”

Located at the corner of West Georgia Street and Hamilton Street, in front of the Queen Elizabeth Theatre, the 8,000 square-foot pavilion celebrates the diversity of Aboriginal peoples and cultures from across Canada, and is the centerpiece of the Four Host First Nations’ hosting efforts for the Olympic Winter Games.

“We are ready to welcome the world,” said Tewanee Joseph, chief executive officer of the Four Host First Nations. “We have invited Aboriginal people from across Canada to join us here at the Chiefs’ House for the world’s biggest potlatch, and they have accepted. Olympic visitors to our pavilion will see first-hand the diversity of First Nations, Inuit and Métis culture.”

Opening to the public on February 12th, the Chiefs’ House will feature a vast array of cultural programming, traditional and contemporary artwork and Aboriginal cuisine. It will be the premier venue for visitors from around the world to enjoy an exciting and authentic range of Aboriginal experiences.

“This magnificent gathering place would not have been possible without the strong support of the Vancouver Organizing Committee for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games (VANOC), our Aboriginal and other partners, and the governments of Canada, British Columbia and Vancouver,” said Joseph. “We are writing a new chapter in Canadian history together.”

“The 2010 Aboriginal Pavilion will long be remembered as one of the most unique features of these Winter Games and the source of lasting memories for all those who spend time here. Our government is pleased to have helped to make this possible,” said Gary Lunn, Minister of State for Sport, on behalf of Chuck Strahl, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-status Indians.

The pavilion includes a unique cedar longhouse-style structure, which curves around a 65-foot high, air-inflated, translucent dome that will feature a stunning audio-visual show. Each day will be a unique experience including daily showcases presented by First Nations, Inuit and Métis groups from across Canada; the 2010 Aboriginal Pavilion signature show, *We Are Here*; and a nightly performance series featuring an incredible line up of traditional and contemporary Aboriginal artists.





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"Through this pavilion, people from around the world will be able to learn about and experience the history and culture of Aboriginal people and communities from across British Columbia and Canada," said Premier Gordon Campbell. "These are the first Olympics to include indigenous peoples as full partners, sharing equally in the benefits, excitement and spirit of the Games. That is an incredible achievement and something all Canadians can be proud of."

The ceremony included a special tribute to the late Jack Poole, chairman of the VANOC Board of Directors. A man who took great pride in his Métis status, Poole was honoured by the Four Host First Nations with the naming of the Jack Poole Reception Hall and a special memorial wall, unveiled by Mrs. Darlene Poole, recognizing his leadership in helping build this historic partnership between the Four Host First Nations and VANOC.

"The opening of these doors signifies a complete circle in Aboriginal participation. This not only showcases Aboriginal culture at its best, but also represents the unique and collaborative partnerships that resulted from the Games ensuring a legacy that will last long after they have come and gone," said John Furlong, chief executive officer of VANOC. "I know my good friend, Jack Poole, was very proud of our partnership with the Four Host First Nations and would be honoured by this tribute here today."

In addition to the cultural programming, visitors to the Chiefs' House can also purchase official Vancouver 2010 Aboriginal merchandise from the Trading Post or sample tantalizing Aboriginal cuisine in the Jack Poole Hall.

"The leadership of the Four Host First Nations in the 2010 Winter Games reflects their long traditions of celebrating sport and culture, and hosting on their traditional territories," said Vancouver's Mayor Gregor Robertson. "Aboriginal people are essential to Vancouver's diverse culture, our green economy, and our bright future, and this Pavilion will be one of the most talked-about places during the Games."

In keeping with the traditions and protocols of the Four Host First Nations, special guests at today's opening were invited to participate in a witness ceremony. To reflect the oral traditions of the Nations, the witnesses were asked to remember what they had seen and heard and to share the experience with friends and family following the event.

"One has only to look at the design of this pavilion to see how the Games have brought us together," said Chief Leonard Andrew of the Lil'wat Nation. "The fusion of Interior and Coast Salish design for the dome and curved longhouse symbolizes how closely, and respectfully, our four Nations have come together — to work collectively as one team — to ensure the fullest possible Aboriginal participation and successful Games."





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"I'm proud of our participation in these Games, proud of our partnership with our friends and families in the other Host First Nations, and proud to be welcoming the world to our territories as full partners in these Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games," said Chief Ernest Campbell of the Musqueam Nation.

As part of the 2010 Aboriginal Pavilion programming, the Four Host First Nations are also hosting the Aboriginal Artisan Village and Business Showcase, located one block north of the pavilion at the downtown campus of Vancouver Community College. Open February 12-28, visitors to the Aboriginal Showcase will be able to purchase authentic Aboriginal arts and crafts from First Nations, Inuit and Métis artists from across Canada; discover some of the top export-ready Aboriginal businesses from a variety of sectors; and experience Aboriginal culture through a variety of events and performances including fashion shows, artist demonstrations and musical performances.

"We're pleased today to also announce the opening of the Aboriginal Artisan Village and Business Showcase on February 12th. This location will feature the work of Aboriginal artists and artisans from across the country, and showcase a range of Aboriginal businesses — businesses that are eager and prepared to participate fully in the modern economy," said Chief Bill Williams of the Squamish Nation.

"Aboriginal people, urban and rural, young and old, honoured leaders and performers, artists and entrepreneurs, are going to be here to stand with us and be part of these Games," said Chief Justin George of the Tsleil-Waututh First Nation. "This gathering here today reminds us that there is room for many paddlers in one canoe. But when we paddle together, with one heart, one mind and one spirit, great things can happen."

For more information about the 2010 Aboriginal Pavilion and the Aboriginal Artisan Village and Business Showcase, including hours of operation and a full schedule of events, please visit fourhostfirstnations.com.

About the Four Host First Nations

The Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games are being held on the traditional and shared traditional territories of the Lil'wat, Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations. Together, the Nations have incorporated a non-profit society - the Four Host First Nations - to coordinate their efforts as Official Partners in the planning and hosting of the 2010 Winter Games.

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