

OLYMPIC EXPERIENCES

Calgary, Turin Games fuelled economic booms

Temporary construction jobs helped Italian city recover from loss of 80,000 manufacturing jobs in the 1990s

BY BRUCE CONSTANTINEAU
VANCOUVER SUN

The Calgary and Turin Winter Olympics were 18 years apart, but both cities used the Games to pull themselves out of an economic quagmire, two former mayors of the cities said Thursday.

Former Calgary mayor Al Duerr noted Calgary was North America's fastest-growing city in 1981 when it won its bid to host the 1988 Games.

But a major recession the following year caused thousands of city residents to lose their jobs and homes.

"There were a lot of reasons for people to feel bad," Duerr said in an interview.

"The Olympics gave people a chance to hope and brought a renewed self-confidence."

Former Turin mayor Valentino Castellani said the northern Italian city went through much the same process in hosting the 2006 Games. The region had lost 80,000 manufacturing jobs in the 1990s and was in dire need of urban renewal.

"We bid for the Games because we needed to get onto the international stage to put Torino on the map and to change our image and identity," he said.

Both former mayors were in B.C. Friday for a Simon Fraser

University Urban Studies program presentation — *How the Olympics changed Calgary and Torino* — at SFU's Surrey campus.

Castellani, who was Turin's mayor from 1993 until 2001 before becoming president of the Torino Olympic Organizing Committee, acknowledged the Games were "very expensive."

He said the Italian government spent about \$3.2 billion on transportation improvements, sports venues and thousands of housing units while the organizing committee broke even on its operating budget of \$1.9 billion.

"The temporary construction jobs were very important in the transition [to a new economy] and the transportation improvements would have taken 20 or 30 years to be implemented without the Olympics," Castellani said.

"The Games were a real catalyst."

He feels it's still too early to assess the real legacy of the 2006 Games, but believes most of the indicators are positive, noting tourism visits to the city increased by 17 per cent last year while dropping 10 per cent in other major Italian cities.

"Before the Games, there was no tourism guide for Torino in any language other than Italian," Castellani said.

"Now we have guides in 22

different languages and Michelin Guide has given Torino a three-star rating — like Venice and Florence — which is fantastic."

Duerr feels the Olympics gave Calgary three kinds of legacies — infrastructure, financial and social.

Infrastructure legacies include sports venues like the speed skating oval and Canada Olympic Park, in addition to improved transit facilities.

While the 1976 Summer Olympics in Montreal created a \$1.5-billion debt that was only paid off three years ago, Duerr said the Calgary Games created a more positive benefit, including an endowment fund that continues to support a variety of sporting activities.

"But I really feel the most important legacy is the social legacy, and cities are about people," Duerr said.

"The success [of the 2010 Games] will be the degree to which Vancouverites embrace it ... My advice to Vancouverites would be the world will be looking at you and how you handle it will be defining for what you are as a community."

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BILL KEAY/VANCOUVER SUN

Former Calgary mayor Al Duerr and Valentino Castellani, the former Turin mayor and chief of the organizing committee for the 2006 Olympics were in Vancouver to share Olympic experiences.

TODAY, IT'S A BRAND NEW CBC NEWS.

WINTER GAMES



Children audition in hopes of being one of 250 volunteers to participate in the opening and closing ceremonies at the Paralympic Games.

Kids, adults vie for spot at 'unique' Paralympic opening, closing ceremonies

BY REBECCA TEBRAKE
VANCOUVER SUN

The Vancouver Olympic Centre was abuzz with excitement Sunday as people of all ages and abilities strapped on their dancing shoes for a chance to participate in the Opening and Closing ceremonies of the 2010 Paralympic Games.

Vanoc hosted an open audition in the hopes of finding 250 volunteers who would be willing to dance, move or carry placards in the ceremonies. The audition was held in two sessions — one for adults and another for all ages.

"We had everyone from 11-year-olds to 85-year-olds," said Patrick Roberge, the executive producer of the ceremonies.

The audition attracted people of all abilities.

There were people wearing fancy dancewear and doing stretching and breathing exercises.

Others came with their children for a family Olympic experience. And some performers have disabilities similar to those of the athletes who will be competing in Vancouver in March.

Organizers are planning for the ceremonies to have a different feel than those happening a few weeks earlier at the Olympic Games.

"We follow the Olympic closing and opening ceremonies and they are going to be spectacular," Roberge said.

"Because we know that ... our show has to have a unique identity.... Parts of our show will be very participatory, involving not only the audience, but the population at large."

Would-be volunteers were

asked to hit the floor and follow trained dancers through a movement routine, which included a pretend, roaring reaction to Team Canada winning a gold medal in hockey.

"What we are really looking for is that enthusiasm and the commitment to being part of a great show," Roberge said.

"If they can't quite get all the moves right it doesn't matter."

"The most important thing for today is that they are having fun and the movement will come later," said Jocelyn Peden, the associate director and head choreographer for the ceremonies.

Peden said she was surprised at how quickly people picked up the basic movements.

Those chosen in this audition will have to attend weekend practices in January to perfect the routine.

Just what would be required of

them was a mystery to many of the participants, including Maja Senn and her daughter Alexandra Apedaile.

The two are from Squamish, but were in Victoria Sunday morning and got up at 5 a.m. to make it to the audition.

They were patiently cracking pistachios in the bleachers while the event's organizers got organized.

"I wanted her to have an experience where she can take it all in first-hand and then contribute at the same time. We really support the Paralympics because [Paralympians] are the real heroes in our eyes," Senn said.

Apedaile said she hasn't been doing much practising for the audition except for doing a few cartwheels and some Irish dance lessons.

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WHISTLER

Makers of Swiss Army knife open 'pop-up' retail outlet for 2010 Winter Games

BY BRUCE CONSTANTINEAU
VANCOUVER SUN

Swiss Army knife maker Victorinox will open a temporary "pop-up" retail store in Whistler during the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The store will open Feb. 3, operating in February and March in space now occupied on Whistler Village Stroll by Keir Fine Jewellery, which will return to the location after the Games.

"Lots of pop-up stores are emerging now and this is a great opportunity for us to showcase Victorinox during the Olympics," Victorinox visual merchandising director Scott Suaebe said. "First of all, it's a marketing initiative for us and also a chance to generate revenue."

It will mark the first time the Swiss-based company has opened a temporary retail store during an Olympics, he said. Victorinox merchandise includes its world-famous knives, cutlery, watches, travel gear, clothing and fragrances.

Suaebe said it will take just two days to transform the Keir Fine Jewellery store into a branded Victorinox outlet.

It will use lightweight modular units to create a new store within the existing store and install new fixtures and signage. The company will hire and train the existing five jewelry store workers to work in the temporary retail outlet.

Pop-up retailing is a fairly recent trend of opening short-term sales spaces in unique loca-

It will take just two days to transform the Keir Fine Jewellery store into a branded Victorinox outlet.

tions to generate a buzz about a particular product. Suaebe said a successful experience in Whistler likely would encourage Victorinox to repeat the exercise in other locations.

Keir Fine Jewellery owner Dave Campbell, who has sold Victorinox merchandise in the store for 16 years, said subleasing the space will give him a "little sabbatical" that will let him watch the Olympics rather than work through them.

He said Victorinox products will have more appeal to the international audience that will be in Whistler during the Games than the premium-priced jewelry he normally sells.

The company likely won't have a fully branded retail store in Vancouver during the Olympics, Suaebe said, but it does want to increase its presence in the city at that time, possibly by holding special events with Vancouver retailers who sell Victorinox products.

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