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Essent ISU World Sprint Speed Skating Championships to Garner Significant International Television Exposure and Economic Activity for Calgary

Calgary – The Essent ISU World Sprint Speed Skating Championships 2012 being held January 28 and 29 at Calgary’s Olympic Oval continues an ongoing legacy of world-class high performance winter sport events spanning 24 years.

“The World Sprint Speed Skating Championships are Calgary’s third major international winter sport event in the past month with the IIHF World Junior Championships and Canada Post Freestyle Grand Prix,” said Randy Williams, Tourism Calgary President & CEO. “We are fortunate in Calgary to be a global centre for winter sport and the beneficiaries of the international visitation and media attention that come with hosting these incredible events.”

More than 1,120 hotel rooms have been booked for athletes, officials and delegates. And more than 30 international media will be in attendance. More than 300 tickets have been sold to international fans, mostly from The Netherlands – a country with a rich speed skating tradition. NOS, The Netherlands’ national broadcaster, is the host international broadcaster and will carry the event live both days for a total of eight hours to an audience of over 1 million people and a 11-34% market share in prime time.

Calgary and the iconic Olympic Oval will gain international exposure through more than 100 projected hours of international broadcasts to targeted Travel Alberta primary markets primarily in Europe and Asia including The Netherlands, Germany and Japan. Canada’s Christine Nesbitt, the reigning World Sprint Champion, will highlight the CBC broadcast during the NHL All-Star weekend leading into the Hockey Night in Canada broadcasts on Saturday and Sunday, January 28-29 to more than 400,000 projected national viewers.

“Hosting the Essent ISU World Sprint Championships definitely generates tremendous fan interest and attendance from out of Calgary including a strong contingent of international guests from Canada, Germany and The Netherlands,” said Alice Humeny, Chair of the Organizing Committee. “We expect the event to generate approximately \$2 million of economic activity for Calgary.”

Calgary’s continuing ability to host major international World Cups and World Championships is a direct result of the volunteer legacy created during the 1988 Olympic Winter Games. Heralded as a model for other Olympic cities, the Organizing Committee Calgary (OCC) is a volunteer-driven organization that has organized 28 World Cup and World Championship speed skating events and more than 20 National competitions since 1988.

As a component of supporting speed skating at the grassroots level in Alberta and Western Canada, the OCC introduced a new program in 2012 called Club Corner. In the inaugural year of the program, the event will welcome more than 500 speed skating club members from Red Deer, Edmonton and Calgary.

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