

BC "Wood First" Champions saluted

VANCOUVER, Feb. 23 /CNW/ - At a reception at the heart of Olympic fever - in Robson Square -- in downtown Vancouver this evening, Premier Gordon Campbell and Forests and Range Minister Pat Bell took advantage of the opportunity to acknowledge the impressive 2010 Winter Olympic Games venues and to recognize the vision, leadership and hard work of many outstanding wood champions in BC who made it all a reality. Mary Tracey, executive director of Wood *WORKS!* BC was among a group of architects, planners, engineers and BC mayors who were presented with awards for their work in and support of wood design and construction in BC, especially as it relates to Olympic venues and revision to the BC building code which now permits six-storey wood frame construction.

Ms. Tracey was awarded for her "wood first" leadership and relentless efforts in promoting wood construction opportunities in BC, notably her work with the Olympic venues. She was also a driving force behind the change to the BC building code, revised last spring.

Olympic projects involving technical support and wood expertise of Mary Tracey and her team of technical advisors at Wood *WORKS!* BC include the Richmond Olympic Oval, the Vancouver Convention Centre, the Trout Lake Arena, the UBC Winter Sports Centre and the Whistler Nordic Centre at Callaghan Valley.

"Mary Tracey is a leading advocate for wood in Canada, and I'm delighted to see that she has received recognition for her dedication and leadership," states Jean-Luc Carriere, vice president of Tembec, one of the leading forest products companies in Canada. "As a member of the forest industry, I would like to extend my congratulations to her for this well-deserved award."

"I am very honoured to receive this award," states Ms. Tracey. "It's gratifying to know that Wood *WORKS!* BC played a role in the development of our beautiful Olympic venues, all of them a showcase of wood and wood products. But what gives us at Wood *WORKS!* BC more pride than anything else is the knowledge that we've been part of the renewed interest and renaissance in building with wood; part of what's being billed as the greatest legacy of the 2010 Winter Games -- an increased awareness of sustainable living."

Indeed the groundwork for a wood culture in BC has been in the works for many years -- starting well before Vancouver got the Olympic bid. Wood *WORKS!* BC urged the original organizers of the bid committee to make a commitment to build Olympic facilities with wood. "Winning the bid became the catalyst for a renewed interest in wood - it really took the wood culture in BC to the next level," remembers Ms. Tracey. With the 2010 Winter Olympic Games being billed as the "Sustainable Olympics", wood was the natural choice as a building material for the Olympic venues in Greater Vancouver and Whistler.

Wood *WORKS!* BC provided technical support and wood expertise to building and design professionals, interacting and working with them on the Olympic venues. One of the most unique applications of wood systems and most innovative uses of wood can be found in the largest structure built for the Olympics and the crown jewel of them all -- the international award-winning Richmond Oval. Designed to accommodate the long-track speed-skating events before an audience of more than 6,000 spectators, its expansive six-acre free spanning "wood wave" roof, with a content of BC's "beetle kill" wood, is a precedent setting example of BC's and Canada's advanced wood engineering and prefabrication capabilities.

While the scale of the Olympic Oval is not likely to be replicated in any other BC community, there are many smaller versions that have been built with Wood *WORKS!* BC's involvement. For the past 11 years, Wood *WORKS!* BC has also worked extensively with municipalities on smaller community projects



ranging from firehalls to libraries; from pools to ice arenas and recreation centres. With the passage of the new Wood First Act, Wood *WORKS!* BC has been asked to help local governments navigate their way through the "build with wood" requirements on publicly-funded projects.

"We applaud the BC government for recognizing that we can generate new demand for wood products to support forest-dependent communities while promoting climate-friendly construction," explains Ms. Tracey. "The introduction of the Wood First Act and revision of the building code to permit six-storey wood frame construction does that by making wood as the first choice and primary building material."

"Wood *WORKS!* BC is proud to help lead the way to innovative and creative uses of natural, beautiful, sustainable and renewable wood in design and construction. We look forward to working together to make "wood first" in BC, across Canada, and around the world," she concludes.

Wood *WORKS!* is a national industry-led initiative of the Canadian Wood Council, with a goal to support innovation and provide leadership on the use of wood and wood products. Through workshops, seminars and case studies, Wood *WORKS!* BC provides education, training and technical expertise to building and design professionals involved with commercial, institutional and industrial construction projects throughout BC.

For further information: Contact: Mary Tracey, Executive Director, Wood *WORKS!* BC, 1-877-929-9663 (1), cell: (250) 864-1344