



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Welland to Champion New “Pond to Podium” Initiative with CSC Ontario and National and Provincial Rowing Partners

WELLAND - The Welland Recreational Canal Corporation has partnered with ROWONTARIO (RO), Rowing Canada Aviron (RCA) and Canadian Sport Centre Ontario (CSCO) to see the Welland International Flatwater Centre (WIFC) be named as the home base for their groundbreaking “Pond to Podium” initiative . “Pond to Podium” will foster rowing’s high-performance development in Ontario. This brand new program will bring a new National Development Centre for rowing to the WIFC with the goal to provide athletes the guidance and coaching required to move forward in their athletic careers.

“Building a community through innovation requires putting the right partners at the table to maximize potentials. This announcement is a true example of prosperity for our City through innovation and we are proud to be partners in this very important national program. The “Pond to Podium” initiative will become a shining example of how we can partner as a resource to support our next generation of Olympians” said Mayor Goulbourne.

“Pond to Podium” will see Welland become a National High Performance Development Centre that will route potential Olympians to our National Rowing Team. The centre will target athletes in the Training to Compete stage of the Long Term Athlete Development plan. Welland will serve as the training centre for athletes moving on from one of the four talent identification and development centres being set up across Ontario. The focus of the program will be to identify, target and develop Ontario athletes with podium potential and become the foundation of a true development pathway for high-performance athletes and coaches in Ontario. “The ‘Pond to Podium’ High Performance training and identification initiative is the opportunity of a lifetime opportunity for rowing in Ontario,” explains Derek Ventnor, Executive Director of ROWONTARIO. “This level of investment being made by the Government of Ontario will provide us with the first real opportunity to develop a true pathway to the podium for Ontario athletes and coaches. This collaboration between a Canadian Sports Centre, NSO and PSO is the first of its kind in Canada at this scale and will be used as the benchmark by several sport funding agencies including Own The Podium, Sport Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Health Promotion for future funding programs across the Canadian sport sector. We are very happy and very proud to be selected as the first sport to be given this opportunity.”

The City of Welland and the WRCC, through their continued support of rowing and the development of the Welland International Flatwater Centre, are an integral partner in the delivery of this initiative. This announcement will lead to immediate job creation in Welland and will see national level athletes taking up residency in Welland beginning as early as July 1, 2010. “Being named the National Development Centre under the “Pond to Podium” program is marvellous news for our community. It confirms that our commitment to the 2015 Pan Am Games and the improvements along the waterway continue to pay dividends,”



suggested Bob Mahler, WRCC Chair, “the National Development Centre means additional full-time residents and jobs in our community. As well our local coaches and athletes will benefit for years to come from daily interaction with Canada’s leaders in their sport.”

Rowing has been listed as a Tier 1 sport at both the federal and provincial level and has been chosen by the Ontario government to be the pilot sport for new investment. A management team, consisting of representatives from the key stakeholders, will guide and monitor the progress of the program. “The Welland International Flatwater Centre is at the hub of great things happening and great things coming: with the Pan Am Games, the Human Performance Centre and the 2013 World Junior Championships. The activities and investment surrounding the “Pond to Podium” National Development Centre capitalizes on Welland’s position as a premier international water sport destination” Stephen Fisher, Executive Director of the WRCC and the WIFC. Locally, the community will see national level athletes on the waterway in the next few days.

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For more information regarding the “Pond to Podium” announcement:

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