

## Welland Wins Bid to Host 2013 ICF World Junior Canoe Sprint Championships

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BUDAPEST – The City of Welland, the Welland Recreational Canal Corporation (WRCC) and CanoeKayak Canada celebrated an enormous victory on Saturday at the International Canoe Federation's (ICF) meeting of the Board of Directors as Welland was selected as the host city for the 2013 ICF World Junior Canoe Sprint Championships.

The bid to host the World Junior Championships at the Welland International Flatwater Centre beat out Brandenburg, Germany; Racice, Czech Republic; and Minsk, Belarus to secure their place on the international stage and calendar for 2013. This victory marks the first time since 1989 that the World Juniors have been awarded to a host outside of Europe.

"It's absolutely an honour to be selected as the host city for the 2013 ICF World Junior Canoe Sprint Championships," said the Mayor of Welland Damian Goulbourne who led a four-person delegation from the southern Ontario city. "We've worked very hard at delivering the message that our site, our City and all that the Niagara Region has to offer is world class. We are a national facility that our community and all Canadians can be proud of. It's an exciting moment for all of us."

The competition will be held at the Welland International Flatwater Centre (WIFC) which will also be the host venue for the canoe and kayak sprint events for the 2015 Pan American Games. "The 2013 World Championships will deliver an early economic return on infrastructure improvements planned for the Welland venue as part of Pan Am", suggested Bob Mahler, Chair of the WRCC. "The World Juniors will deliver a sizeable economic impact, for the City and Niagara Region, two years earlier than the anticipated impact of the 2015 Games", he continued, "this is the business of sport tourism and this is a big win for Welland". Preliminary sport tourism economic assessments peg the impact at over \$7 million, with an estimated 55 countries and roughly 1,000 athletes coming to the area for nearly a week of competition.

Peter Giles, CanoeKayak Canada's Commodore, suggested going in Canada was a bit of an underdog to win the World Junior bid. The victory is being heralded as an indication of the strong bid work done by Welland, CKC and Bid Committee staff and members. "The Welland team did a great job with their bid book and presentation," said Giles, a member of the 1996 Canadian Olympic paddling team. "We were up against traditional Eastern European cities for the sport and powerhouse paddling nations. We have a great relationship with the ICF and they have a lot of trust in our abilities."

The bid focused on the technical aspects of the Welland course; the synergies of working with CKC, the ICF and Federations in the Americas with the Pan Am Games on the horizon; and combined the stunning Niagara inventory of culture, heritage and attractions. "We felt we had delivered an impressive world class host site with a clear rationale for the move from Europe," stated Stephen Fischer, Executive Director of the WRCC and the WIFC. "This is a thrilling moment in delivering the WIFC to our community and to the world. Given the relative newness of the WIFC as an organization, the gravity of this international vote of confidence is truly rewarding."

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