

## MEDIA RELEASE

### NANAIMO TOURISM BUSINESSES TAKE AIM AT ACCESSIBILITY

**Vancouver, BC (July 10, 2008):** Tourism businesses in Nanaimo are tapping into a larger market and attracting more travellers by becoming accessible for people with disabilities. These businesses will undergo assessments over the next three weeks to determine their accessibility rating as part of the Accessible Tourism Strategy, a partnership of the Province of British Columbia, Tourism B.C., Tourism Vancouver Island, 2010 Legacies Now and numerous other organizations.

“The Accessible Tourism Strategy is using the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games as a catalyst to position B.C. as an international accessible travel destination and to help create lasting legacies in B.C. communities,” explained Bruce Dewar, chief executive officer for 2010 Legacies Now. “Together with our partners, we plan to assess 10,000 tourism businesses by 2010 and share this information with travellers worldwide.”

The Accessible Tourism Strategy was established in May 2007 following a \$1.14-million grant from the provincial government. The assessments will help tourism businesses tap into the multi-billion dollar accessible tourism market by evaluating how easily people with mobility, visual and hearing disabilities can access the businesses.

“By taking stock of what Nanaimo has to offer and sharing this information with travellers worldwide, the Accessible Tourism Strategy will help to position Nanaimo as a travel destination for not only Paralympic athletes leading up to 2010, but also for the millions of people worldwide who are living with a disability,” said Nanaimo-Parksville MLA Ron Cantelon

Close to 275 Nanaimo businesses, including food and beverage, retail, tourist attractions and other services, will undergo accessibility assessments throughout July. Businesses that achieve a positive accessibility rating will receive icons displaying this information, which can be used on location, on websites or in marketing materials. Businesses which rate below the accessibility standards will receive feedback on features to improve and information on suppliers to make the improvements.

“Through the assessment process, Nanaimo-area businesses will see that often making simple, inexpensive improvements can make them accessible for thousands more travellers,” said Dave Petryk, president and chief executive officer of Tourism Vancouver Island. “These accessibility icons will become a trusted brand of information that travellers worldwide can depend on when making their travel plans.”

The accessibility assessments are free of charge and voluntary. Businesses interested in participating can call 1-866-427-2010 or email [inclusion@2010LegaciesNow.com](mailto:inclusion@2010LegaciesNow.com).

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Backgrounder attached.

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