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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts

### **CONVENTIONS BC GETS BOOST FOR MARKETING PLAN**

VICTORIA – The provincial government is providing more than \$85,000 to Conventions BC to develop a provincial convention product development and marketing plan, Tourism, Sport and the Arts Minister Stan Hagen announced today.

“B.C.’s five publicly owned convention centres offer world-class conference opportunities, and we want to ensure that local, national and international event planners have the information and resources they need to plan their next convention here,” said Hagen. “Marketing B.C. as a prime convention destination is a great step towards meeting our industry goal to double tourism revenues by 2015.”

Minister Hagen was in Berlin last week, where he joined Tourism BC officials to promote B.C. as a world-class tourism destination at the International Trade Bureau trade and consumer conference. While he was there, Hagen also met with convention centre officials from Berlin, Hanover and Frankfurt to gain a better understanding of how to maximize our convention industry in B.C.

Conventions in B.C. are big business. In 2006, B.C.’s five major convention centres hosted a total of 1,630 events, including 274 conferences and conventions that hosted out-of-town delegates. These non-resident delegates spent over \$235 million, delivering a total economic impact of more than \$560 million, including delegate, exhibitor and event production spending.

Studies show that delegates spend between \$276 and \$553 per day, depending on location, and that about one third of delegates travel to other parts of the province as part of their stay. Conventions also enhance tourism by encouraging delegates to return to B.C. with their families for future vacations.

“This initiative will benefit the entire province, because along with the direct delegate spending come many other benefits, including new trade and investment, professional development and opportunities to showcase B.C. products and services,” said Conventions BC chair Jocelyn Jenkyns of the Victoria Conference Centre. “The new funding will enable us to develop a broader plan to both enhance our convention product and be more effective at attracting national and international conferences and conventions.”

Conventions BC is a consortium of five publicly owned convention centres across the province: The Vancouver Convention & Exhibition Centre, the Victoria Conference Centre, the Telus Whistler Conference Centre, the Penticton Trade & Convention Centre and the Prince George Civic Centre. The group aims to pool resources to create a provincial convention product, raise B.C.’s profile in the convention market and ensure a consistent quality of convention experience.

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