

Britco joins Olympic team for Athletes' Village

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A LITTLE GIRL gives the Vancouver Olympic mascot Miga a hug during a press conference held by the Vancouver Organizing Committee for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, (VANOC), and Britco Thursday morning in Langley. Britco has been awarded a contract worth approximately \$32 million by VANOC to build the Olympic and Paralympic lodge and townhouse accommodations at the Whistler Athletes' Centre.

Langley is playing a big part in the 2010 Olympics and Paralympic Winter Games.

With 2010 Olympic mascots Quatchi, Sumi and Miga in tow, Vancouver Organizing Committee (VANOC) CEO John Furlong announced Thursday that the Whistler athletes village will be built by Britco Structures.

The announcement was made at Britco's head office on Smith Crescent (off Glover Road) and included 2006 paralympic curling gold medalist Gary Cormack, Furlong, other VANOC representatives as well as Langley and Surrey dignitaries.

The morning announcement even included a friendly bear hug between Fort Langley-Aldergrove MLA Rich Coleman and Quatchi.

"I took the mascot test," Coleman told the Langley Montessori Grade 5 and 6 students who took part in the announcement.

"I can tell you I'm most like Quatchi," Coleman said, laughing and breaking into the impromptu hug with the sasquatch mascot.

Britco has been awarded a contract to design and build the Whistler Athletes' Centre as well as supply temporary rooms to accommodate up to 690 team officials staying in the athletes' village.

The contract's estimated value is \$32 million and the projects will provide upwards of 200,000 labour hours of work for Britco's employees at their two B.C. plants in Agassiz and Penticton, along with all the work in the Whistler village.

Britco has also joined the VANOC sponsor family as an official supplier of modular products and services for the 2010 Games, which gives it sponsorship rights for the Canadian Olympic teams participating in the 2008 Summer Games in Beijing, the 2010 Vancouver Games and London in 2012.

The permanent athletes' village Britco builds will also be a legacy training facility for Canadian athletes long after the 2010 Winter Games.

Under the terms of the contract, Britco will build a permanent 100-room lodge and 20-unit townhouse complex for 330 athletes. The lodge and townhouses are both scheduled to be completed one year in advance.

"We will build a complex everyone will be proud of. It will be on time and on budget. You can count on Britco," said Britco spokesperson Mike Ridley on Thursday.

"We want the world's best athletes to feel that the Whistler Olympic and Paralympic Village is their home away from home," said Furlong. "A positive experience in the village will help them prepare for the rigours and excitement of competition."

In an interview with The Times, Furlong said Britco's design offers the athletes a modern, comfortable living space that reflects very nicely on the organizing team and B.C.

"I would live in any one of these units right now," he said. "For the athletes, their accommodations are going to be a 10 out of 10."

The modern, West Coast style of the athlete village Britco will build is far from what people imagine when they hear the words modular homes, he said.

"When the world comes and looks at this village they will go away in awe. This village will be pure magic," said Furlong.

On Thursday, Britco felt that magic by involving many children including students from Langley Montessori school, a facility Britco built this year.

"I'm holding Gary Cormack's gold medal from the 2006 Torino Games," said Britco's Mike Ridley. "To achieve this medal it requires discipline, excellence and being the best you can be. Britco has the same goals of excellence."

Coleman told the crowd about how proud he was of the Olympic committee's work so far.

"I was thinking about the controversy surrounding Olympic time lines and here we are almost ready for the Olympics now," he said.

"Everyone at Britco is very excited to be part of the Vancouver 2010 Winter Games. Britco's modular manufacturing approach to building construction incorporates sustainable and environmentally-friendly construction techniques," said Rick McClymont, co-founder of Britco.

What VANOC likes about it too is that it's a local company using B.C. products, said Furlong.

"Britco is solving a big problem for us and in a sustainable way because it's permanent and affordable housing for future athletes," said Furlong in an interview with The Times on Thursday.

Furlong, along with other VANOC representatives, was at Britco's head office on Thursday to announce the Langley building company's Olympic contract to build the Whistler athletes' centre. It will remain as a permanent legacy.

"This is the start of something extremely special," he said. "The community (Langley) should feel very proud. You have some inspired leaders here in Britco."

It was Dan Doyle, VANOC's head of construction, who asked Furlong if he could show him 'something' less than a year ago.

Doyle took Furlong to Britco's Agassiz plant to look at the housing options it offers.

"It was a stunning experience. I walked in and I could feel the energy, the passion for excellence. We went back in the car to drive back to Vancouver and we were just full of ideas," he said.

Fast forward several months later and Britco has been awarded the \$32 million contract. The athletes' lodge and townhouse complex will be built one year before the opening ceremonies of the 2010 Games.

"What an example of how a dream can turn into reality," he said. "It's a fantastic story."