

Tahoe's talk of Vancouver, Jan. 26 pm edition

By Kathryn Reed

WHISTLER, British Columbia – No matter what an Olympic committee does, it can't improve the mountain. And that's OK when it comes to Whistler-Blackcomb.

Franz's and Dave Murray's runs – where the women and men Alpine skiers will race – were already there. Details about those runs will be divulged on Lake Tahoe News next week.



LTN's Susan Wood on Jan. 26 explains to the officer why she is in a secure area.

New to Blackcomb is the Sliding Centre. It was closed to the public Sept. 1 after a summer of letting people experience the Olympic venue.

It will open again Feb. 5 when the Olympic torch arrives in Whistler. There is a community cauldron at Skiers' Plaza in Whistler where the unofficial flame will flicker.

(Vancouver is where the real cauldron and the five rings will be; after all, these are the Vancouver Games, not the Whistler

Games.)

“The flame lights the Olympic Cauldron at the close of the Opening Ceremony. That signifies the start of the Games. How the cauldron is lit, what it looks like and where it’s located stays a closely guarded secret until the ceremony,” Suzanne Walters, Vancouver Organizing Committee spokeswoman, told Lake Tahoe News.

Of course people with tickets to the Opening Ceremony probably know where it’s located. Actually, the opening and closing ceremonies are at BC Place Stadium, which had \$150 million in renovations. This will be the first time any Opening Ceremony has been inside.

Lake Tahoe News was able to get a glimpse of where the bobsleigh (what the Canadian’s call it), luge and skeleton events will begin. The area where spectators will be and tents are being erected.

The Canadian Royal Mounted Police stopped us just before we could get a good view of the venue. We were promptly told it was a secure construction zone. Apparently not that secure.

The facility will remain a permanent part of the resort after the Games in what is being called the Legacy Program.

Celebration Plaza, which is under construction on the southwest end of Whistler Village, is where the medal ceremonies will be. Organizers for a while thought about giving medals out at the venues, but then switched back to the plaza idea.

Crews are out there at all hours of the night and day. The Games start Feb. 12. Presumably everything will be done before the nearly 2,500 athletes from more than 80 nations compete for 258 medals.

A platform for Canada Television has been going up for days at

what seems like a painfully slow pace with little movement despite a gaggle of workers night and day.

From Monday to Tuesday a platform was put up in front of the village grocery store for purposes unknown.

Kiosks that will dispense information to tourists are scattered about the village " though shuttered right now.

A lift at Whistler Creekside is new this season. It's not open to skiers now. It's there to haul spectators to the grandstands at the base of the downhill courses. The men's and women's end at the same point.

Whistler Olympic Park, site of the cross country-biathlon-ski jump events, is all new. It, too, will be open to the public after the Games as one of the Legacy venues.

In Richmond, near Vancouver, an ice rink " the speed skating variety " is one of the new structures.

Some hotels, spas and restaurants have arrived in Whistler since Vancouver was awarded the games. But for the most part, the area is just like it was.

The Olympic Village for the athletes will be turned into workforce housing " something locals say is greatly needed.

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