

MEDIA RELEASE



VANCOUVER TO SEE LONG-TERM BENEFITS FROM HOSTING THOUSANDS OF INFLUENTIAL MEETING PLANNERS

A Joint News Release from Tourism Vancouver and the Vancouver Convention Centre

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Vancouver, BC: Approximately 2,600 meetings industry professionals from all over the world will gather at the Vancouver Convention Centre from July 24 to July 27 for Meeting Professionals International's (MPI) 2010 World Education Congress (WEC).

In addition to injecting over \$3 million worth of direct spending into the BC economy over the four-day event, this congress is one of the most influential Vancouver has hosted in recent years, representing millions of dollars of potential future meetings business for the city.

MPI is the world's largest association for meeting and event planners. Many of the delegates attending this year's WEC are responsible for planning and executing their organization's events – the type of business that Tourism Vancouver, the Vancouver Convention Centre and Vancouver's hotel community work to bring to the city.

"Hosting MPI's World Education Congress is equivalent to the largest client 'site inspection' Vancouver has ever hosted," said Dave Gazley, Tourism Vancouver's vice president of Meeting and Convention Sales, and co-chair of the local host committee. "With the expansion of our spectacular convention centre, early on we identified the WEC as an industry event we needed to host because of its potential to generate future business for our city. It's a big win for Vancouver."

"There's a great deal of excitement and anticipation amongst our team as we prepare to host this influential group," said Ken Cretney, general manager of the Vancouver Convention Centre and co-chair of the local host committee. "The impact of hosting the WEC extends far beyond the four days of the event. Meeting planners from around the world will experience first-hand why our award-winning facility and spectacular city are the ideal location for their future meetings."

Jeff Busch, vice-president of strategic communications for MPI, said that MPI planner members represent a collective buying power of US\$16.9 billion in their event-planning businesses. "Granted, not every member is coming to Vancouver, but a good number of people that control extensive budgets are attending," said Busch. "There is no better way to sell your city than to have this group of meeting planners visit and experience it. So that next time they have to schedule a large event or meeting, all the benefits and beauty that Vancouver has to offer is fresh in their mind."

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“Thanks to the recent expansion of the Vancouver Convention Centre, BC is able to host larger meetings than ever before, contributing millions of dollars to the province’s economy,” noted the Honourable Kevin Krueger, BC’s Minister of Tourism, Culture and the Arts. “With the success of the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, we have just demonstrated our ability to host world-class events. Now, more than ever, we are well positioned to benefit from the Games-time exposure and host large international events in our province.”

Tourism Vancouver’s focus is on building exceptional customer relationships with meeting planners, travel influencers, travel media and independent tourists. The Meetings and Conventions team actively sells Vancouver worldwide as a premiere event destination and services hundreds of meetings each year. Tourism Vancouver’s “service edge” strives to deliver the best combination of customer sales, service and destination value anywhere in the world.

The Vancouver Convention Centre is the only two-time winner of the International Association of Congress Centres’ APEX award for “World’s Best Convention Centre.” Since inception in 1987, the facility has demonstrated a constant commitment to service, technical and culinary excellence, as well as environmental sustainability. With its expansion complete, the Centre has tripled its size to cover 1.1 million square feet (or four city blocks) for a combined total of 466,500 square feet of pre-function, meeting, exhibition and ballroom space.

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