

For Immediate Release

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Federal Budget Stimulates a New Sport and Recreation Building Initiative

With yesterday's Federal Budget, Finance Minister Flaherty and Sport Minister Lunn have taken direct aim at the long standing infrastructure deficit in sport and recreation with a new \$500 million fund, to be expended in the next 2 years, to renew and build facilities in our communities. "This is a good day for the sport and recreation sector and for the millions of Canadians across the country that uses facilities for recreational activities," declared Robert Lilbourne, President of the Ontario Recreation Facilities Association (ORFA). "It is great to see our government realize that infrastructure money is not just required to improve our roads and sewers but that investment is also desperately needed to enhance our aging arenas, pools and other related facility areas. This new fund demonstrates the government's interest to help ensure facility owners and operators provide their patrons with safe and quality recreation facilities."

With specific references to the 1967 Centennial year building boom, the Federal Budget highlights in detail the need for "hockey arenas, soccer fields, tennis and basketball courts, and swimming pools" as examples for upgrading, renewal and building through this nationally delivered initiative. The program will be a 50/50 matching initiative, delivered through regional development agencies whereby provinces and municipalities, community sport organizations, and the private sector may all apply for matching funds for shovel ready projects. Three big goals drive the new fund - economic stimulus, quality facilities, and national spirit - and the allocation will be based on merit and project readiness.

"This is well received news for owners of aging recreation facilities who have been dealing with infrastructure that for the most part is reaching the senior phase of their building life-cycle," stated John Milton, ORFA's Chief Administrative Officer. "With such a long-standing need to address the sport and recreation infrastructure deficit, this program promises to assist facility owners and operators in addressing their local needs for buildings that serve as the social and cultural hub of the broader community."

"Recreation facilities are more than ice sheets, swimming pools, soccer fields or ball diamonds. They are important gathering places in our communities that bring people together in both good and bad times. "This new fund has come along at the right time for all Canadians," stated

Randy Kinnee, Chair of the Canadian Recreation Facilities Council. Kinnee further elaborated, “that in 2005 the Canadian Recreation Facilities Council joined forces with Hockey Canada to conduct a National Arena Census. The Census identified that of the 2,486 ice arenas in Canada, 47% of arenas are over 26 years of age and 32% of arenas are over 36 years old. The oldest arena was constructed in 1921. A facility’s age generally influences its cost of operation and arenas along with all kinds of other recreation facilities are reaching a period in their life-cycle that requires significant investment. Today’s Federal announcement comes at a timely point in this life-cycle of recreation facilities.”

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The [Ontario Recreation Facilities Association Inc.](#) (ORFA) was incorporated in 1947 as a provincially-recognized, not-for-profit, volunteer driven recreation organization to be the leader in the recreation facility profession. The mission of ORFA is to provide leadership in the development and delivery of innovative training and education programs, value-added services, and quality products for the benefit of the recreation facility profession. The ORFA serves as the National Head Office of the Canadian Recreation Facilities Council.

The [Canadian Recreation Facilities Council](#) (CRFC) is a not for profit, nationally recognized volunteer council who’s member associations and associates have a common interest in providing sustainable sport and recreation facilities in Canada. The membership of the CRFC consists of Provincial/Territorial associations, and nationally recognized not for profit and government affiliated organizations who have interests similar to the CRFC.