



July 21, 2010

The Association of Edmonton Convention Hotels supports the Edmonton Indy and believes it represents great international exposure and economic benefits for our city. As hospitality and tourism professionals representing 22 major hotels in Edmonton, it is mystifying to our members that there is any controversy or question as to the value of this event.

There has been a lot of focus on and many news articles written about the fact that the Edmonton Indy has cost the city approximately \$9 million over the past two years, the AECH feels it is equally important to highlight the additional tax dollars generated for the city directly from this event and the greater economic return on this investment that benefits Edmontonians as a whole.

An economic impact of \$80 million in 2009 provided employment and opportunity both at the event and through-out Edmonton. Many hotels reported that Indy weekend saw the highest occupancy and room-rates of the summer in 2008 and even in the economic down-turn of 2009. This does not even take into account those who visited because of the race and have since returned or viewers from outside our region and around the world who have visited after watching the race on TV.

Through the Destination Marketing Fund, collected as a 1% levy on hotel rooms sold, the Edmonton Hotel industry has provided \$1.5 million in funding to the Indy over the past three years as clear evidence of the value our industry and other tourism operators see in forging a long-term relationship with the IZOD IndyCar race series.

Edmonton has always taken pride in hosting major events and has a rich history of supporting professional sports in many disciplines. The Edmonton Indy is the one event which places Edmonton on the world stage on an annual basis, with 41.4 million viewers in 147 countries in 2009, and 200 reporters from the world media reporting to their viewers on both the race and our city.

It generally takes several years for an event like the Indy to develop and grow a regular audience, so we can expect that as the Edmonton Indy becomes a regular part of our summer offering and attendance grows the economic benefits will also grow. In addition, Indy weekend gives fans three days of racing featuring the NASCAR Canadian Tire Series and the Northern Alberta Sports Car Club, providing exposure and revenue for these series as well.

Edmonton is one of only two Canadian stops on the IZOD IndyCar series in 2010. In 2009, we were the only stop when Toronto was removed from the schedule. The city of Toronto clearly sees the benefit of the race, and organizers there have worked diligently to get back on the schedule for 2010. Should Edmonton lose our position on the schedule, there is no doubt that another Canadian city such as Vancouver will work to gain that spot and all the benefits that go along with it.

The Edmonton Indy is an investment in the future of Edmonton, in both economic success and our reputation as a truly world-class city, and as such needs to be supported and given the opportunity to grow into the event it can be.

Sincerely,



Robert Blackwell

President, Association of Edmonton Convention Hotels

General Manager, Delta Edmonton South Hotel & Convention Centre