

The Columbian (Vancouver, WA) – 10/23 – Everett to host ice skating competition

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EVERETT, Wash. (AP) -- The 2008 Skate America championships, featuring the world's top figure skaters, will be held at the 8,000-seat Comcast Arena at the Everett Events Center.

U.S. Figure Skating, local officials and community leaders announced the selection at a Tuesday news conference. The competition is part of the International Skating Union Grand Prix Series and is considered the premier international figure skating competition held in the United States each year.

Some 60 athletes from 15 nations are expected to compete in the internationally televised event.

Snohomish County Council Chairman Dave Gossett said the event is expected to bring thousands of visitors and produce up to \$2.6 million in local tax revenue.

Mountlake Terrace-based Production Sports was invited to bid on the 2008 event, scheduled to kick off Oct. 23, 2008, with practice for the skaters. Competition will begin Oct. 24, a Friday, and continue through that weekend.

Co-owner Steve Baker said Everett won the right to host the competition partly because Snohomish County put up \$100,000 in hotel tax revenue to promote the event.

The Everett Silvertips hockey team and the Everett Home Show shuffled their schedules to enable the Everett arena to be available for the Skate America competition.

Athletes will be housed at the new Tulalip Resort Casino, which is expected to open in June.

The 2010 Winter Olympics will be held in Vancouver and Whistler, British Columbia.