

**100% ACCESSIBLE:** Kimberley Conference Centre's pre-function area (artist's rendering)



# MEET ME IN...

Today's state-of-the-art conference venues offer a glimpse of where the meeting business is going

BY MALWINA GUDOWSKA

**"BUDGETS ARE NOT WHAT THEY USED TO BE,"** says Heather Hornoi, economic development officer for the City of Kimberley. "If you have one conference a year instead of four, you need that value in the meeting space." With the new 24,000-square-foot Kimberley Conference and Athlete Training Centre, slated to open this September, the town in British Columbia's East Kootenay region is hoping to attract companies looking for a first-class space for trade shows, conferences and other events, with the added mountain lifestyle features offered in the surrounding area.

"Kimberley has world-class recreation facilities right here," boasts Hornoi. "Most conferences have pre-and-post activities, and we're known for our golf courses.... We want to take that reputation and expand it to a first-class business destination."

In keeping with meeting organizers' demands, Kimberley's conference centre will

offer them options in how green they want to go, from declining tablecloths or water pitchers to incorporating carbon-offsetting measures. The centre will accommodate a 350-person banquet-style seated dinner or a 500-person theatre-style seated event with four break-out rooms and advanced audiovisual capabilities.

While the conference centre will be housed on the bottom floor, a training centre for nordic, alpine, curling and sledge hockey athletes will take up the main floor, in addition to an aquatic centre. "The facilities complement each other," says Hornoi. Athletes could train while at the same time holding awards ceremonies, for example, while companies could use the facilities for team-building exercises. "Put your work team on sledges (small sleds with blades used by Paralympic hockey athletes) and see what team can get from one side to the other with support from their group," says Hornoi. "It's about building that camaraderie." >



**Kimberley Conference and Athlete Training Centre**  
**Location:** Kimberley, B.C.  
**Cost:** \$7 million  
**Size:** 24,000 square feet  
**Completion date:** September 2010