

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CARIBOO tourism bats a thousand at Barkerville's annual Sports Day and Pie Eating Contest

Barkerville BC, August 11th, 2009 - More than 1000 visitors from around the world - including nine Canadian provinces, three US states, South America, Germany, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, central Europe, the Netherlands, Scandinavia, Asia and the South Pacific - flooded into Barkerville Historic Town for the 6th Annual Williams Creek Sports Day and Pie Eating Contest this past Saturday, August 8th.

The day's weather stayed warm and sunny despite early thunderstorm-warnings from several national weather desks - and all reports indicate a "grande olde tyme" was had by all.

Traditional gold rush era sporting events began at 1:00 PM (Pacific Daylight Time) with the ever-popular children's Broad Jump. Fun continued throughout the afternoon. An exciting Ladies Nail Driving competition was followed by the eagerly-anticipated children's Funny Face contest, Peanut Toss and Cracker Eating/Whistle race. Later in the day dozens of adult ladies stepped up to the starting line once again for a heated Egg and Spoon Race, which was followed by a tumble-filled Sack Race for children, a grunt-filled adult men's 20-lb hammer toss, and a hair-raising Egg Toss that paired adult partners with their minor counterparts (no pun intended) for some shell-cracking fun. Barkerville's time-honoured, adults-only Greasy Pole Climb finished off the festive day of sport - after a slippery, soapy, "death-defying" 22-foot ascent the Pole Climb winner walked away with sore arms, but in good "spirits" (his prize was the traditional bottle of "Yukon Jack.")

At the close of the afternoon's athletics, the crowd made its way to Barkerville's Goldfields Bakery, where several long tables laden with banana cream pies awaited the not-so-feint-of-stomach. First, the children's heat took their seats - two tables of seven contestants each - and later the adults took a turn. The rules were simple, and the same for both teams: eat the entire pie in front you - *without* using your hands - and only eat it *once*. Two rounds of gastronomical mayhem ensued. Ultimately a winner was called for each heat - once enough banana cream was wiped away to recognize the grinning face beneath - and afterwards the 1000+ gathering dispersed quietly into another beautiful Barkerville evening.

James Douglas, Barkerville's new Marketing and Communications Specialist, is encouraged by the amount of activity he has seen in the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast's tourism sector over the past couple of months - especially at Barkerville. Saturday's enthusiastic Sports Day attendance only adds to his encouragement.

"Barkerville saw 300 more visitors this week than we did this same time last year, during a summer season that has seen reductions of 20-30% in other areas of the province," Douglas says. "The August long weekend brought several thousand visitors our way - thanks in part to the biggest ArtsWells Festival yet - and the number of local and local-to-British Columbia guests who are choosing to 'stay-cation' in their own province this year seems to be reflected in our August 8th Sports Day turnout. As we get closer to the

Olympics and Vancouver 2010, I think interest in the Cariboo and Barkerville will only intensify - and that this interest will spill over into our 2010 summer season. The world's attention is focusing on British Columbia as we speak, and the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast is British Columbia. I think we cannot help but benefit from that attention, economically and recreationally."

If the local and international turn-out at this past weekend's Williams Creek Sports Day and Pie Eating Contest is any indication, it would seem the recreational benefits have already begun.

For more information on seasonal and special events occurring at Barkerville Historic Town, please visit www.barkerville.ca.

IMAGES OF BARKERVILLE'S 2009 SPORTS DAY AND PIE EATING CONTEST

Please feel free to download and publish any of the eight high-resolution images contained in the following Picasa web album, without need of further permission, for use in conjunction with the above information:

<http://picasaweb.google.com/BarkervilleHistoricTown/BarkervilleSportsDayPieEatingContest2009?authkey=Gv1sRgCMq3qu-fw76dsAE&feat=email#>



Photo credit: James Douglas

ABOUT BARKERVILLE HISTORIC TOWN

BARKERVILLE HISTORIC TOWN is the largest historic site in Western North America (www.barkerville.ca). Barkerville is provincially, nationally and internationally recognized for its historic significance associated with its place in western Canada's gold rush era and the role the gold rush played in BC joining Canada. Barkerville is widely known as a "must see" for travel itineraries in western Canada. The historic town is also a significant contributor to the Cariboo regional economy and is widely regarded as a unique component of the regional identity.

The Barkerville Heritage Trust, as Barkerville's operating and managing partner, works in conjunction with the Province of British Columbia, the owner and statutory guardian of Barkerville's heritage resources, to ensure that Barkerville is efficiently managed, entertaining and educational to visitors, and financially stable as the premier heritage resource and tourism attraction for the Cariboo. The ultimate aim is to maintain and enhance Barkerville's position as a nationally significant heritage resource and tourism attraction for British Columbia and Canada.

Barkerville is situated 80 km east of Quesnel, British Columbia in the foothills of the Cariboo Mountains, close to Troll Mountain Ski Resort and Bowron Lake Provincial Park. The nearby community of Wells (8 km from Barkerville) is the service and housing centre for the area (www.wellsbc.com) and is itself a dynamic cultural community, home of Island Mountain Arts, the acclaimed Toni Onley Artists' Project, the International Celtic Harp School (www.imarts.com), the dynamic indie music festival ArtsWells (www.artswells.com), and the Sunset Theatre (www.sunset-theatre.com). Wells is also situated close to a wide variety of winter and summer outdoor activities.

MEDIA INQUIRIES

James Douglas

Marketing and Communications
Barkerville Historic Town
Box 19
Barkerville, BC V0K 1B0

250-994-3302 ext. 41
888-994-3332 toll free
250-994-3435 fax

james.douglas@barkerville.ca
www.barkerville.ca

