

# DESIGNER THRILLED TO TAG ALONG

BY DERRICK PENNER  
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**J**oe Freeburn, a partner in Vancouver-based Cajo Designs, looks forward to fashionably accessorizing the 2010 Olympics.

Vancouver-Olympics-branded luggage tags, passport holders, tote bags, picture frames and compact mirrors designed with a high-fashion flair: Starting this year Cajo has won the right to produce them among the 2010-licensed commemorative souvenirs.

"It's huge for any company selected as a licensee," said Freeburn, a self-professed Olympics junkie.

For Freeburn, it's a chance to vicariously tag along with the Olympic ideals of excellence, community and fair play.

He travelled to Turin to soak in the spirit of the 2006 Games and found the whole experience intoxicating, so he doesn't mind pushing his company's brand into the back seat to promote the Games.

"We'll have lots of other opportunities to [promote Cajo]," he added.

Cajo, whose fashion accessories have been featured in *People Magazine* and *In-Touch Weekly*, has projected possible sales from the souvenirs, but Freeburn doesn't expect "to make millions and millions of dollars."

"I don't think that's your intent going into it," he said. "But don't get me wrong, everybody's into it to make some money."

Some \$3.3 billion is supposed to rub off on British Columbia from hosting the 2010 Olympics, according to the 2002 economic-impact study from Intervistas Consulting Inc. commissioned by the provincial Trade and Investment Office.

And the licensing of dozens of official Olympic products, from umbrellas by Vancouver Umbrella to dog jackets and ski straps by RC Products and women's apparel by chic Vancouver retailer Aritzia will be the most quickly visible aspect of the 2010 Games over the coming months.

"Licensing is where people have an opportunity to participate [in the 2010 Olympics] with a relatively small investment," said Dave Cobb, executive vice-president for marketing with Vanoc. "It's also a way we can involve dozens of companies [in the Olympics]."

And licensees are one of the key ways Vanoc has to brand the Games in the public eye, as well as earn marketing contributions to its operating budget.

Cobb said licensee firms don't pay Vanoc to use its Olympics trademarks, like other sponsors do, but the licensing firms do pay royalties from sales of their Olympics merchandise to Vanoc.

Vancouver's bid for the games estimated licensing would earn \$35 million for the organization, but Cobb said the Hudson's Bay Co.'s experience of having sold huge amounts of Canadian Olympic team merchandise during the 2006 Games has caused the organization to revise those expectations upward.

Hudson's Bay is one of Vanoc's biggest sponsors.

Cobb added that Vanoc has had a response from high-quality merchants, making significant promises that is "certainly beyond what we expected in the bid book."

Vanoc expects licensing to make up five to 10 per cent of its marketing revenue, which is no small amount considering that Olympic organizers hope to pull in \$725 million in direct sponsorship.

Vanoc has raised \$590 million of its direct sponsorship goal to date. Bell Canada is its biggest sponsor having contributed \$200 million, but other Canadian business stalwarts such as Royal Bank, General Motors Canada, Petro-Canada and Canadian Pacific Rail have also been brought on board.

Cobb said Vanoc's goal for 2007 will be to raise about half of the \$135 million balance remaining.

Cobb said Vanoc's final operating budget for the Games will be released with the business plan, but will be in the \$1.7-billion range.

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