

Tuesday, November 25, 2008

A mountain emerges in Burlington, Ontario

Mountain Equipment Co-op's new store will serve Southwestern Ontario

Vancouver, BC – Residents of Southwestern Ontario woke up today to a new mountain – in Burlington. Mountain Equipment Co-op™ (MEC), Canada's largest co-operative and leading outdoor retailer, opened its twelfth store there, south of Queen Elizabeth Way on a 1.8-acre site at the intersection of Brant Street and Leighland Road.

MEC's Burlington store will serve more than 100,000 members who live within its range, stretching west of Greater Toronto throughout the Niagara Peninsula.

"MEC exists to serve our members' clothing and equipment needs – and to support and celebrate Canada's outdoor community," said CEO David Labistour. "We are extending our reach into Southwestern Ontario to help MEC members access products, services and resources to enhance their outdoor experiences, and to encourage the activities that are our passion."

The Burlington store gives MEC members access to a comprehensive selection of clothing and gear – from the MEC-brand and other leading manufacturers – designed to optimize outdoor activities and perform in real-world conditions.

Burlington store manager Anita Cairns said, "We look forward to welcoming new members and to encouraging them to play outdoors in self-propelled ways."

Hiking, camping, cycling, canoeing and snowsports – are the five most popular activities among MEC members. All can be pursued in Southwestern Ontario.

The store will employ 79 people upon opening, in a mix of full- and part-time, casual and senior positions. Staffing will increase during holiday and seasonal peaks to meet member demand.

With over 19,000 square feet devoted to retail space (of 27,000 sq.-t. total), the Burlington store will feature some 7,500 products that span the various activities MEC supports. It also includes a bike shop (opening spring 2009) to service members' need for repairs or the installation of parts and accessories that they purchase.

"MEC's Burlington store is the culmination of a long and thorough process to satisfy several key accessibility and sustainability objectives," said Labistour. "Burlington is the hub of MEC's membership base in the region; and the store is located near the GO Station and major arteries connecting to surrounding areas. To minimize our environmental footprint, we again took great care to construct the store to standards that are at the forefront of green building in Canada."

(more)

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MEC Burlington features a combination of structural elements and operational systems that are expected to make it *70 per cent* more efficient than a conventional building. Energy conservation is at the core of MEC's green building approach, and the Burlington store incorporates existing and innovative solutions to achieve efficiency. The store will be LEED certified and is on track to achieve a Gold rating.

"We are pleased to welcome Mountain Equipment Co-op to Burlington and applaud this leading retailer's commitment to encouraging active living and adhering to rigorous green building standards," said Burlington Mayor Cam Jackson. "MEC's new Burlington store is a compliment to our city's growing economy and our commitment to a greener future."

MEC provides financial support to outdoor recreation and wilderness conservation projects through its community involvement grants. Since 2006, it has funded 131 projects in Ontario totaling \$647,895. This includes a \$100,000 land acquisition grant to the Bruce Trail Association for its Rush Cove project as well as a \$10,000 recreation access grant to the Share the Road Cycling Coalition to make Burlington more bicycle friendly.

MEC's Burlington store is the outdoor retailer's third location in Ontario, after Toronto and Ottawa. As part of its multi-channel retail offering, MEC now operates 12 stores across Canada as well as www.mec.ca and a service centre.

Anyone can join MEC and become part-owner in the Co-op by purchasing a \$5 lifetime individual membership. Members are entitled to buy gear and are eligible to vote on how the Co-op is governed. MEC membership forms can be found in retail stores and online.

About Mountain Equipment Co-op

Mountain Equipment Co-op is Canada's leading retailer of outdoor clothing, gear and service for self-propelled activities. Established in 1971, MEC has more than 2.9 million members throughout Canada and around the world. Widely recognized for its commitment to sustainability – economic, social, environmental – MEC is a member of One Percent for The Planet, an alliance of some 500 companies in 20 countries that annually allocate one per cent of their total revenues towards various community-based environmental initiatives. Wilderness conservation and recreation access are the focus of MEC community grants, which total over \$12 million since 1987 when MEC began providing financial support to Canada's outdoor community. Additional information about MEC is available online at: mec.ca

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