

OLYMPIC WARNING

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A Salt Lake City activist has advised Vancouver to take steps now to prevent an unnecessary spate of evictions if the city ends up hosting the 2010 Winter Olympics. Glenn Bailey, spokesperson for a coalition of community groups called Salt Lake Impact 2002 and Beyond, told the Straight that more than 100 people were evicted before the recent Winter Olympics as landlords tried to capitalize on the demand for housing.

"The Olympic homeless shelter that was set up temporarily, just for the period of the Games, was hopping—very busy," Bailey said.

"Most of the evictions that we saw were from low-rent motels that were surrounding the downtown areas."

A Vancouver group, Impact of the Olympics on Community (IOC) Coalition, has invited Bailey to speak on Tuesday (March 26) at Vancouver Community College at 7 p.m.

Bailey said rents in one low-cost Salt Lake City motel went from \$180 a week to \$105 a night during the Games. "Those are the kind of things that should be avoided," he said. "The Olympics shouldn't cause homelessness."

On March 14, the Non-Partisan Association majority on Vancouver city council voted against a motion for a bylaw dealing with Demolition controls. Am Johal, chair of the IOC Coalition, told the Straight that Los Angeles introduced a similar bylaw before it hosted the Summer Olympics in 1984 and conducted a campaign to let low-income residents know their rights.

On March 12, Vancouver city council received a city manager's report on the status of the 2010 Olympic bid. The same day, the IOC Coalition issued a news release pointing out the report's "complete absence of any discussion on the possible impact of the games on the city's affordable housing stock".