

Media Release

For Immediate Release

WorldSkills Calgary 2009 Spokesperson Launches into Space

July 16, 2009, Calgary, Alberta, Canada –Canadian astronaut Julie Payette blasted into space last night. Payette, who is aboard the space shuttle Endeavour, is a WorldSkills Calgary 2009 official spokesperson.

Payette was chosen as a spokesperson because she embodies the passion and expertise that perpetrates the global skills movement, igniting excitement amongst this year’s Competitors. Payette represents the field of technology for WorldSkills Calgary 2009. Several of the 45 Skill Categories represented at the 40th WorldSkills Competition reflect skills, trades, and technologies used in space travel. Mobile Robotics is a skill category that has obvious parallels to systems used in shuttle expeditions. Competitors in this skill category must assemble, manage and maintain mechanical systems within a mobile robot as well as install, operate, and troubleshoot mobile robot control systems. This technology brings to mind the famous Canadarm (and Canadarm2), a robotic arm that has been used by astronauts on space shuttles since 1981.

Payette also has links to robotics. She worked as a technical advisor for the Mobile Servicing System (MSS), an advanced robotics system contributed by Canada to the International Space Station. During the Endeavour mission, Payette will maneuver three robotic arms during five planned spacewalks. Other skill categories that draw on skills, trades, and technologies used in space travel include Mechanical Engineering, Polymechanics, Mechatronics, and Electronics.

WorldSkills Calgary 2009 President and CEO Richard Walker says, “WorldSkills Calgary 2009 is pleased to have Canadian astronaut Julie Payette as a celebrity spokesperson. She not only represents the technology sector that will be portrayed in the upcoming Competition, but she is an exceptional role-model for Canadian youth.” Payette is an encouragement to all Competitors, but has a special appeal for young girls. A strong female role-model is inspiring in a world of traditionally male-dominated skilled professions. Payette’s collaboration as a spokesperson for WorldSkills Calgary 2009 is sure to inspire students to reach for the stars.

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The 40th WorldSkills Competition is coming to Calgary, Alberta, Canada from September 1 – 7, 2009. The organizing committee, WorldSkills Calgary 2009, is leading the event coordination with support from WorldSkills International, Skills/Compétences Canada, and Skills Canada Alberta.