

ELMA NEWSLETTER
05/2011

February marks the end of ELMA's first year in action and It will also mark the beginning of a new era for ELMA.

The future of ELMA looks bright and it is now hoped that the next steps for ELMA will bring local enterprise closer so that together we may move into developing an Accessible Vuokatti... A VUOKATTI FOR ALL!

With the EU estimating that the Accessible Tourism market in Europe is valued at 80.000.0000.000€ it is foolish not to take the chances to look into making our wonderful region a destination of choice for everybody to enjoy regardless of their physical capabilities.

In my personal opinion (although influenced by proven research) sport is a pleasurable and Healthy activity for all and Vuokatti's main potential is Sport and Leisure tourism and the fact that a barrier free sport and leisure environment is a rare but very desired location, we now have the tools to become unique and a sought out destination.

The Snowpolis, ELMA Project is committed to serving the region and all those who select Vuokatti and Kainuu as their destination of choice whether it be for holiday, business or any other reason. Moreover, we here at ELMA want to support all individuals and inspired entrepreneurs who look to develop in the Accessibility markets.

Remember, being accessible is not just about ramps and elevators but also about hospitality, friendliness, security, support and lots of fun. With this in mind we will remain fully committed.

Thank you to those of you who make all that possible in our region.

Happy Reading "for all"



Danny Silva
ELMA Project Manager

--ELMA NEWS--

1. IPC Vuokatti World Cup 2011 in numbers

The International Paralympic Nordic World Cup is no new event in Vuokatti. It was first hosted here back in 2006 and since then it has become a regular occasion every January with only the exception of January 2010 as it was just before the Paralympic games in Vancouver.

What makes this event welcome and desirable here in Vuokatti? Well the answer is simple... It gives us an opportunity to see very unique athletes in action and it is a great way to attract visitors to the region during a period of low activity.

The 2011 World Cup opener just last January brought to Vuokatti:

- 15 nations which included athletes, coaches, technicians, guests, seminar speakers and officials
- 100 athletes representing 11 nations
- 35 wheel chair guests
- 20 Visually Impaired guests
- 50 guest with other physical disabilities
- 50 team members (coaches and technical staff members)
- 10 IPC officials
- 50-60 volunteers involved in organizational activities
- 6 events – 3 in cross country and 3 in biathlon
- An estimated 1500 overnights

All in All it was a highly positive experience for all participants in both the organizational side as well as the competitive side. With this the IPC has already extended its interest to return to Vuokatti in 2012 and this time to possibly host the World Cup finals in April 2012.

We here like to extend a very warm thank you to the involvement of the volunteers from Kajaani University of Applied Sciences and Kajaani Vocational School, the hard working staff from the Organizing committee and to the Vuokatti Sport Institute for being such a great host, organizer and a perfect venue.

For more information and results visit www.ipcvuokatti2009.net

2. Snowpolis to coordinate the Calypso EU project for Low season Tourism Exchanges for people with disabilities

On October 4, 2010 after some preliminary earlier in the year, the ELMA team properly submitted a proposal in a response to the Call for proposals from the European Commission's Directorate General for Enterprise and Industry (DG ENTR) for their CALYPSO Program.

The proposal was aimed at studying and finding proper / suggestive practices for “Facilitating Transnational Low Season Exchanges in Europe through the Development of Social Tourism”. It would also serve to support National development for Calypso structures.

After some months of anxious waiting and some deliberation, on 14.02.2011 The Snowpolis proposal was accepted by the European Commission. Once all the official documentation is complete, the “**Able Access for All Exchange**” program (AAAE) will be the first direct EU project to be coordinated by Snowpolis.

The AAAE will involve 2 other member states: Portugal and Cyprus. Snowpolis will coordinate the activities of this project and the participating countries. The activities aim at studying, testing and proposing the possibilities of creating tourism exchange programs between organizations of different member states whilst using specific target groups to experience unique programs of the visited countries and promote low seasonality as a key period for a holiday.

Vuokatti’s appeal to the active natural lifestyle will be the main theme for the project.

More details will be made available in the coming months as the project develops.

Visit www.vuokatti4all.org for other details.

3. The ELMA Project – 1 year on...

The ELMA project set out to produce data to help local development that would be friendly for all users regardless of age, sex or ability. Considering the reality of the potential in the region, the focus was to develop a barrier free destination for the Sport and leisure guest with disabilities to select Vuokatti as their destination of choice for training and competing. The goals were:

- Gather supportive information and data to show the growing potential in this market and what is needed in Vuokatti to offer proper conditions for the disabled individual and families.
- To show that accessibility is **not just** to help people with disabilities but is helpful for every person.
- To disseminate this information through Seminars and direct consultation
- Offer material for future reference to the different stakeholders; Personalized reports and a manual was developed showing the concept of Universal Accessibility and good practices.
- To keep people informed and updated, a newsletter was introduced in October 2010; today sent to over 72 organizations in Finland and Europe

Another objective was to promote and create an Accessible image for Vuokatti that could be recognized both nationally and internationally. Today the results speak for themselves:

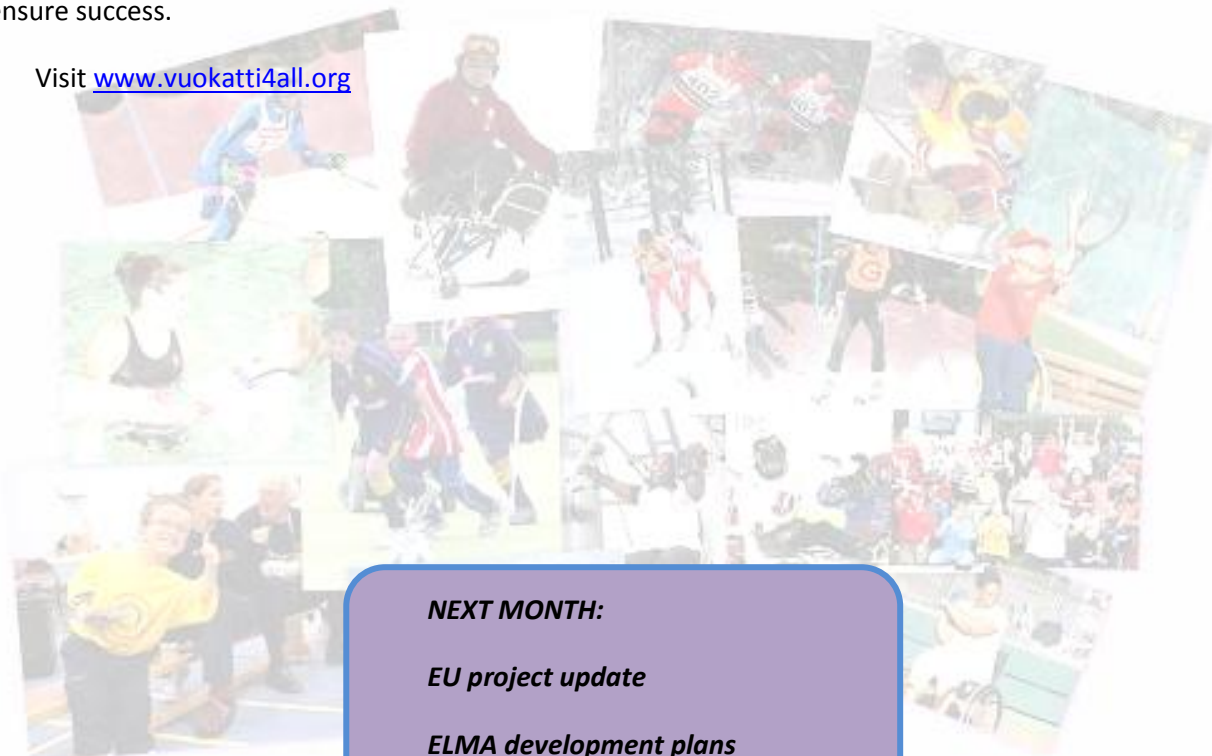
- www.vuokatti4all.org has over 8.000 hits from 1285 per day.
- ELMA project given certificate of quality by ENAT for 2010/11
- EU recognition from DG ENTR – accepting coordination of EU project for Social tourism – Calypso
- Participation in the DG EAC project for volunteerism in Sport (disability sport issues)
- International Paralympic Committee(IPC) awarded Opening WC 2011 to Vuokatti and Finals for 2012(under consideration)
- Union Cycliste International (UCI) accepting Para-cycling event in Vuokatti

- Ridderrennet International circuit to be developed in Vuokatti
- New partnerships in research with Jyväskylä University and CWC thanks to the participation and promotion in Paralympic Sport and development seminar in Vuokatti.
- IPC intent to cooperate and develop a Paralympic ski research and classification center (long term plan now to be proposed to IPC board members and National Paralympic committees)

In conclusion the ELMA project has hopefully opened the door to a new vision in the Vuokatti Master plan where Accessibility will serve as a positive marketing tool and offer possibilities for new markets and also further developments.

Further success of ELMA and Accessibility in Vuokatti/Kainuu will now depend on the openness for dialogue and the motivation of the different stakeholders in the region. To work together and jointly build will ensure success.

Visit www.vuokatti4all.org



NEXT MONTH:

EU project update

ELMA development plans

Monthly Tip