

BUSINESS



» OLYMPIC MOVEMENT

A towering accomplishment

Discovery Channel films Elmira firm's installation of Doppler radar tower it's moving across the country

JONI MILTENBURG

Elmira's Rigarus Construction is making its Olympic debut this month.

The company is relocating a Doppler radar tower that will be used for detailed weather forecasts during the 2010 winter Olympics. The 100-foot-high tower is being moved from King City, Ontario, on the edge of Toronto, to Whistler, B.C.

"This is kind of an unusual thing," said Paul Panagapka, president of Rigarus. "To take it down, move it across the country and put it back up is a little extreme."

It's unusual enough that the Discovery Channel has asked to film the installation of the radar dish and dome. Representatives of the Discovery Channel were tight-lipped about the filming, declining to comment on what it was being filmed for.

The tower being moved to Whistler will have a new Doppler radar system installed, to provide sports-specific weather forecasts. Environment Canada is providing weather services to the

Vancouver Organizing Committee for the winter games, including weather observations, venue-specific forecasts and warnings and climate studies.

Environment Canada has a network of 31 Doppler radar stations across the country. Doppler radar is used to measure the location and intensity of precipitation, as well as the direction and speed of the associated wind field.

The King City tower is an old one that was replaced in 2004 by a new radar assembly.

Rigarus is moving the tower, the 12-foot-diameter dish, and a 20-by-10-foot radome, the dome structure that protects the radar antenna from the elements.

The tower was taken apart last week and loaded on a truck on Thursday. This week, workers were putting in the foundation at the site six kilometres west of Whistler, near the entrance to the Callaghan Valley.

It'll be a five-day trip out to British Columbia, barring any delays: "The last we heard, the main road into B.C. is

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ON THE MOVE Paul Panagapka's Rigarus Construction is making its first foray into British Columbia with the installation of a radar tower in Whistler. Inset: the top of the radome is removed by a crane.

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