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Private sector fundraising campaign surpasses original goal

Confidence of thousands of Canadians gives wings to Human Rights Museum dream

WINNIPEG, MB A dream for an unprecedented new kind of national museum has captured the hearts and minds of Canadians and carried Friends of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights past their initial private-sector fundraising goal of \$105 million and put them well on the path toward raising an additional \$45 million for the project. The private sector campaign total now stands at \$107 million.

“When we started fundraising six years ago we had nothing – no building, no programming, and no patrons or alumni to form our donor base,” said National Campaign Chair Gail Asper, O.C., O.M.

“But thankfully, there were many extraordinary Canadians who shared our dream and lent their support to help it grow. Hundreds of people volunteered their time, wrote letters of support, and helped us open doors. And so far, we can look to 5,000 donors whom we count as our friends. It is thanks to their confidence in our vision that we are here today.

“And we know that none of this would be possible without the visionary support of the City of Winnipeg, the Province of Manitoba and the Government of Canada, which has shown incredible foresight in creating this as the first national museum outside of Ottawa.”

Asper’s father, CanWest Global Communications founder Israel (Izzy) Asper, O.C., O.M., first announced the idea for the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in April 2003. After his untimely death in October 2003, Gail Asper and Asper Foundation Executive Director Moe Levy took on the leadership of Friends of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights to carry Israel Asper’s dream forward.

MORE...

Before the Canadian Museum for Human Rights was created as a national museum, Friends undertook extensive business planning, fundraising and development activities for its establishment and is spearheading the Capital Campaign to raise the private sector contribution.

Inflation, environmental building upgrades and escalating construction costs in Manitoba have had a significant impact on the project budget since it was developed two-and-a-half years ago.

Last May, the Board of Trustees of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights asked Friends to raise an additional \$45 million from the public and private sectors to offset these increases.

“When the Museum’s Board of Trustees asked the Friends to continue the fundraising campaign, we were confident that Canadians would continue to show strong support for this project,” said Arni Thorsteinson, Chair of the Museum’s Board of Trustees.

“The level of private sector and government support speaks to the power of Izzy’s initial vision.”

Construction on the Canadian Museum for Human Rights has begun, and the Museum is anticipated to open in 2012.

- 30 -

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BACKGROUND

Friends of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights Inc. (Friends), is a Canadian registered charity that was established in 2002 to act as the project proponent for the establishment of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights.

Friends undertook the extensive initial business planning, promotion, engagement, fundraising and development activities for the establishment of the Museum and is spearheading the Capital Campaign to raise the private sector contribution.

On April 20, 2007, Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced that the Canadian Museum for Human Rights would be created as a national museum, operated as a Crown corporation by the Government of Canada and located in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

The Canadian Museum for Human Rights is Canada's fifth national museum, and the first:

- to be created since 1967,
- to be located outside the National Capital Region;
- to be developed with significant support from other levels of government and the private sector, and,
- the first proposed around a national student program.

The purpose of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights is to explore the subject of human rights, with special but not exclusive reference to Canada, in order to enhance the public's understanding of human rights, to promote respect for others and to encourage reflection and dialogue (Museums Act).

The Board of Trustees of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights is responsible for all aspects of the Museum, including design, construction, exhibit plan, content and programming. Total project capital cost is \$310 million.

Difficult things take a long time, impossible things a little longer.

~Author Unknown