

## PRESS RELEASE

### ***Connecting with Heritage:* Theme for 2009 Rideau Canal Festival**

#### **“Green” festival focuses on connecting children to the UNESCO World Heritage Site**

OTTAWA, Ontario—June 8, 2009— The Rideau Canal Festival, presented by Hydro Ottawa, is proud to announce that *Connecting with Heritage* will be the theme for this year’s “Aim for Zero Footprint” celebration. Slated for the August Civic Holiday weekend (July 31<sup>st</sup> to Aug 3, 2009), this family-friendly festival will continue to celebrate the historical significance and UNESCO World Heritage Site designation of a national treasure, the Rideau Canal.

In keeping with this year’s theme, one of the festival highlights is a new educational dimension that connects children to their heritage. The *Rideau Canal Connection Project*, unveiled today, involves over 600 students from Georges Vanier Catholic Fine Arts School in Saskatoon and the Vincent Massey School in Ottawa. The students learned about the rich heritage of the Rideau Canal while creating artwork that will be featured on bus boards and other outdoor displays throughout Ottawa, Kingston and Saskatoon leading up to the festival. Advertising space was graciously donated by Pattison Outdoor Advertising.

Another art-based educational project, the *Rideau Canal Heritage Markers*, is also being offered to Ottawa schools to learn about this historic waterway as well as about the importance of environmental sustainability to preserve this UNESCO World Heritage Site. The goal is to involve 25 local schools and day camps in the program. Students will produce Heritage Metre Markers that depict a green celebration of the Canal’s heritage, and will display them along the famous waterway during the Festival.

“We believe that it is important for children across the country to learn about the Rideau Canal, a cornerstone of our heritage and the centerpiece of our National Capital that continues to awe visitors from around the world. We’re proud to support this initiative as it plays a unifying role in the education of future generations about the history that we all share,” said Royal Galipeau, Member of Parliament for Ottawa/Orléans.

And, like last year, the Festival is again an “Aim for Zero Footprint” celebration with a sharp focus on environmental sustainability. Creating a “green” Festival was a priority for last year’s event - so much so that it became the country’s first Zero Footprint Festival. Organizers remain committed to achieving that goal for the 2009 celebration focusing on innovative ways to offset carbon emissions and minimize the Festival’s environmental footprint. There are many activities that highlight environmental preservation during the four-day event, including Energy Ottawa’s Green Rendezvous, an Ecosphere environmental fair, a Green Speakers Series, and the Enbridge Buy Local Barbecue Challenge, among others.

“After only one year, the Rideau Canal Festival has quickly become a very integral part of our province’s tourism offering. It provides a unique blend of education, history, and entertainment that is perfect for the whole family to enjoy. We are particularly proud of the Festival’s goal to be a carbon-neutral event to ensure the preservation of Ontario’s only UNESCO World Heritage Site for generations to come,” said Yasir Naqvi, MPP Ottawa Centre.

Designated by Festivals and Events Ontario (FEO) as 2008’s *Best New Festival*, FEO has already recognized the Rideau Canal Festival as one of the *Top 100 Festivals for 2009*.

The ever-popular Adopt-A-Metre program is back again this year. Building on last year's success, the Festival will continue to provide the public and corporate sector with an opportunity to adopt a piece of the Rideau Canal through the Adopt-A-Metre program, offering participants a way to connect with the Canal while demonstrating their support for the Festival. The \$20 donation entitles 'adopters' to a number of Festival benefits and is directed to help offset carbon emissions.

"We're extremely proud to be part of the Rideau Canal Festival once again. This 'green' festival is a perfect match for Hydro Ottawa as it offers a unique opportunity to celebrate a vital part of our community in an innovative and environmentally-friendly way," said Rosemarie Leclair, President and CEO of Hydro Ottawa, the festival's presenting sponsor. "We encourage the whole business community to join us in making this a carbon-neutral "zero footprint" festival through the Adopt-A-Metre program."

The second annual Rideau Canal Festival will kick off with a 7,000 metre party for all, making use of the eight new Canal Metre Lounges located between the Bytown Museum and the Dows Lake Pavilion. This four-day festival will feature the ever-popular Flotillas, a new Rideau Heritage Village, the Musical Breeze Parade of Bicycles in collaboration with the Ottawa Chamberfest, the Canoe Rendezvous, the famous Colonel By Day Celebrations and many other activities.

"This year's theme offers children and adults alike the chance to obtain a wealth of historical information about the Rideau Canal," said festival volunteer Chairman, Henry Storgaard. "Our aim is to have local communities come together to celebrate, appreciate, and take pride in one of Canada's national treasures."

For further information and details of the activities of this year's festival, please visit:  
[www.rideaucanalfestival.ca](http://www.rideaucanalfestival.ca).

- 30 -

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