



Ontario Visual Heritage Project

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Feature Length Documentary on Muskoka History Available NOW!

BRACEBRIDGE, Ontario – Dec. 4, 2008 – After the launch of the Muskoka District installment of the Ontario Visual Heritage Project in June, the DVD of the production is now available through local museums and community groups. Entitled, ‘Life on the Edge; Stories from the History of Muskoka,’ the DVD features a two-hour documentary film, which explores the intriguing history of the Muskoka district and its people through interviews with local historians, archival films and photographs, and re-enactments of historical events. The DVD is packed with additional interviews and stories.

In partnership with the Muskoka Heritage Foundation and other community groups, ‘Life on the Edge’ has been in the works since July of 2006. This past summer, the project was well received by a full house at its premiere screening at the Algonquin Theatre in Huntsville. Since then the project team has been hard at work preparing the film for DVD and distribution into every school, library, and museum in the district – free of charge, thanks to the generous support of the Ontario Trillium Foundation and FedNor.

One of the goals of this not-for-profit project is to create multimedia tool kits, which are meant to teach, preserve and promote the history of Ontario to audiences young and old. The documentary is the central component of each project, and is augmented by a website, a course-guide for educators, and an interactive DVD which allows viewers to access stories via a timeline, through their location, or according to their theme.

When discussing the Muskoka District, project Director Zach Melnick said: “We are thrilled by the amount of volunteer support we’ve received for this project. 50 historians, 55 local actors, and people from across the district have come out to promote and preserve the history of Muskoka. Together we’ve created a project that we hope will spark new relationships and a renewed interest in history.”

Under Melnick’s direction, the Ontario Visual Heritage Project has seen success in seven counties in Southwestern Ontario, including: Haldimand, Norfolk, Brant/Brantford/Six Nations, Elgin, Oxford, Sarnia-Lambton, and Chatham-Kent. The Muskoka project is one of four projects that were launched this summer, including: the City of Greater Sudbury, Manitoulin Island, and the West Parry Sound District. All four documentaries will be available in a box set of DVDs entitled “The Shield.” Each of the films includes French subtitles.

One of the perks for community partner organizations, is that they can sell the DVD as fundraising items – ensuring that the history featured in the film is preserved.

‘Life on the Edge’ is available for \$20 (plus applicable taxes) at the following locations:

- in Bracebridge: the Muskoka Heritage Foundation & the Muskoka Rails Museum
- in Huntsville: Muskoka Heritage Place
- in Bala: the Bala Museum

- in Gravenhurst: the Gravenhurst Archives at the Library, the Bethune Memorial House National Historic Site, Grace and Speed
- in Port Carling: the Muskoka Lakes Museum, the Muskoka Lakes Association
- on Georgian Bay: the Georgian Bay Historical Society & the Honey Harbour Historical Society
- Muskoka Tourism

For additional information on the project, or to view a video trailer of ‘Life on the Edge; Stories from the History of Muskoka,’ please visit our website at www.visualheritage.ca.

The Ontario Trillium Foundation is an agency of the Government of Ontario. For over 25 years, the Foundation has supported the growth and vitality of communities across the province. OTF continues to strengthen the capacity of the volunteer sector through investments in community-based initiatives. For more information, please visit www.trilliumfoundation.org.

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