



Ontario Visual Heritage Project

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HD Documentary on West Parry Sound History to Premiere at Stockey Centre

PARRY SOUND, Ontario – July 22, 2008 – After two years in production, the West Parry Sound area installment of the Ontario Visual Heritage Project, will be launched at the Stockey Centre, in Parry Sound on Friday August 22nd, 2008. The event will feature a screening of the two-hour, HD documentary film, which explores the intriguing history of the West Parry Sound area and its people through interviews with local historians, archival films and photographs, and re-enactments of historical events. Everyone is welcome at this free event, courtesy of the Town of Parry Sound and Carling Township. To kickoff the evening a reception will be held at 6:30pm, and the screening will begin at 7:15pm. The evening will wrap up around 10:00pm.

The Ontario Visual Heritage Project team, has been hard at work since funding for the project from the Ontario Trillium Foundation and FedNor was announced in July of 2006. The call for support was also answered by many local businesses and community groups, including: the Parry Sound Downtown Business Association, the West Parry Sound District Museum, the Retired West Parry Sound Teachers Association, the L.U. Maughan Company Limited, the Parry Sound Area Community Business and Development Centre Inc., the Parry Sound Area Chamber of Commerce, and Perry and Anna Marie Harris. Seven local townships became project partners as well: McDougall, the Archipelago, Carling, McKellar, Seguin, Whitestone, and the Corporation of the Town of Parry Sound.

Under the guidance of a steering committee made up of local volunteers from the historical community, over 35 historians were interviewed and the talents of 85 community actors were employed for the 27 re-enactments shot for the film. Area historical groups also played an integral role by providing archival materials.

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 where the videos can be viewed in streaming media, 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, and also includes 60 minutes of additional stories and content. The launch will celebrate not only the completion of the project and the history of the West Parry Sound area, but also the upcoming distribution of the multimedia tool-kits to every school, library, and museum in the district free of charge.

The West Parry Sound Visual Heritage Project looks at the stories that make the district unique, and the events that contextualize the area within the bigger picture of our country. When discussing the West Parry Sound area, project Director Zach Melnick said: “Parry Sound is a place where the sublime beauty and ferocity of the Georgian Bay converges with the strength

and severity of the Canadian Shield – and here, for thousands of years, people have managed to carve out a life for themselves amidst the rocks. From the Anishinabek – who followed the cycles of the seasons to sustain themselves, to the Free-Land Grant settlers – who endlessly picked rocks from their fields, to the industrial powers – whose products were developed to combat not only foreign enemies, but the Canadian Shield itself. Join us as John Macfie, Stewart King, Dave Thomas, and many other local historians tell the stories of perseverance and endurance that have shaped the people of the Parry Sound area.”

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 West Parry Sound area project is one of four projects that will be launched this summer, along with: the District of Muskoka, Manitoulin Island, and the City of Greater Sudbury. All four documentaries will be available in a box set of DVDs entitled “The Shield.”

Orders for DVDs of the project will be taken at the Launch at the Stockey Centre. Attendees will have a chance to provide feedback to the producers before the DVD master is created. In October the DVDs will be available for purchase from the West Parry Sound District Museum, and other partner organizations. For additional information on the launch, high resolution photographs, or to view a video trailer, 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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