



## PRESS RELEASE

### RIDEAU CANAL FESTIVAL LAUNCHES LANDMARK ANNUAL EVENT

#### Community rallies around bold initiative for Ottawa's newest and free festival

OTTAWA, Ontario—April 18, 2008—The Rideau Canal Festival Committee today announced Ottawa's first celebration of the Rideau Canal as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The inaugural edition of the Rideau Canal Festival is slated for the August Civic Holiday long weekend (August 1<sup>st</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup>, 2008) coinciding with Ottawa's Colonel By Day.

"I used to bring my kids to the canal when they were little to watch the hand-cranking of the locks. They'd sit for over an hour, mesmerized, watching the whole procedure. The kids were on to something – what an amazing feat of engineering," said Henry Storgaard, the first Volunteer Chairman of the Rideau Canal Festival, a group of prominent local citizens who pooled their time and resources to make the festival a reality. "It was important to the committee to honor the heritage of the canal and the enjoyment that it brings to each of us individually, as well as to our whole city," he added.

This free festival is packed with myriad activities: Colonel By Heritage Fair, the first Rideau Canal Night Flotilla, World Heritage Flotilla starting from Fort Henry in Kingston, the world's largest parade of bicycles (aiming for a Guinness World Record), Ecosphere – The Green Rendez-vous, and more.

The Ontario Government was instrumental in bringing the festival to fruition. "The McGuinty Government is proud to be a partner in this exciting festival that celebrates our rich culture and heritage and commemorates the Rideau Canal as Ontario's only UNESCO world heritage site," said Madeleine Meilleur, M.P.P. for Ottawa-Vanier.

The festival has partnered with Toronto-based environmental group Zerofootprint for insight on maintaining the eco-friendly character of the festival. Organizers are encouraging people to participate in the Adopt-A-Meter campaign. For a price of twenty dollars, participants will be able to adopt a meter of the canal, which will contribute to a carbon fund set up to offset carbon emissions resulting from the festival. Organizers are aiming to minimize the festival's environmental footprint.

"We are excited to be helping the Rideau Canal Festival reduce its environmental impact," commented Deborah Kaplan, the Executive Director of Zerofootprint. "As a World Heritage Site, it is important that we help preserve the Rideau Canal and ensure that those attending this event are aware of how they can act to help preserve the area for future generations."

For further information: [www.rideaucanalfestival.ca](http://www.rideaucanalfestival.ca)

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