

For immediate release

CMHR announces September 2014 opening date ***Museum, tourism, business partners set to welcome surge of visitors***

WINNIPEG – November 4, 2013 – The Canadian Museum for Human Rights (CMHR) will open its doors to the world on September 20, 2014, its President and CEO announced today at a briefing with industry partners.

“A national project of this scope and scale comes along just once in a generation,” Stuart Murray said. “When the doors of this building open next September, it will be a historic moment for Canada and a proud day for Manitoba, as we welcome visitors from across the country and around the world.”

CMHR Board Chair Eric Hughes said the Museum reflects the best of what Canada has to offer to the world. “It doesn’t matter which province or territory you’re from. This museum belongs to all of us: to you in Manitoba, to me from Alberta, to each citizen from coast to coast to coast,” he said. “This project reflects the values we cherish as a nation. By celebrating our success and reflecting on our failings, the CMHR will be a beacon of learning and inspiration for Canadians.”

Officials from tourism and business sectors said the Museum’s opening will spark a new chapter in Canadian human rights history and a sustained boost to the economy. An estimated 250,000 people are expected to visit the Museum each year. Economic Development Winnipeg has projected the annual gross economic impact at \$159 million, with estimated annual direct expenditures of \$79 million.

“The Canadian Museum for Human Rights is putting Winnipeg and Canada on the map as a destination for human rights scholarship and tourism,” said Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC) Senior Vice President of Marketing Greg Klassen. “People are more aware of human rights issues than ever before, which opens exciting new tourism markets for travellers who want unique experiences that will move and inspire them.”

The CMHR is already receiving much interest as a venue for national and international conference events. Every week, it receives 10 to 15 new inquiries about spaces for receptions, weddings, conventions and corporate events. The Museum begins accepting bookings this month.

Brigitte Sandron, Travel Manitoba’s Senior Vice President, Strategy and Market Development, said the CMHR presents a unique opportunity for the province. Travel Manitoba is working with the CTC to promote the Museum to international markets as a future member of its Signature Experiences Collection.

“The Museum will be a catalyst for educational tourism targeting the youth market,” she said. “This is significant because the student and youth market is growing faster than any other segment,” Sandron said.

Tourism Winnipeg Senior Vice President Chantal Sturk-Nadeau, said future conventions have been booked in Winnipeg because of the Museum, while tour operators and independent travellers are waiting to add the CMHR to their leisure and group travel plans.

“Winnipeg is undergoing an exciting renaissance thanks to the opening of CMHR, a world-class polar bear exhibit being built at Assiniboine Park, the return of professional hockey, a brand new airport and many other exciting developments,” she said. “This creates a tremendous opportunity to package Winnipeg as a distinct travel destination in ways that were not possible before.”

Travel Manitoba and Tourism Winnipeg are already collaborating in their efforts to promote the Museum to key markets. “The Museum’s opening enables us to package visits to the Museum together with visits to Manitoba’s other iconic attractions, such as our northern safari experiences or our world class fishing,” Sandron said.

Confirmation of the Museum’s opening date sets planning in motion for an inaugural year of celebratory events, expected to attract interest from across the country and require help from more than 200 volunteers.

Gail Asper, National Campaign Chair for Friends of the CMHR, said it is exciting to see the vision of her father coming to life. The late Dr. Israel Asper believed in creating a place that would educate and inspire a new generation of human rights champions, built as a partnership between the public and private sectors.

“Opening the Museum doors is not an end, but a beginning,” Asper said. “With the help of more than 7,000 donors who believe in the power of human rights, we have been able to set the dream in motion. However, there is still much work to be done to ensure this inspiring project lives up to the potential we all envision, helping our children and grandchildren become educated and aware of the value of taking action for human rights in Canada and around the world.”

A media event focused on CMHR construction and design, featuring guided tours conducted by architects and lead construction contractors, is planned to be held inside the Museum on November 18.

The [CMHR](#) is the first museum in the world solely dedicated to the evolution, celebration and future of human rights. It is the first national museum in Canada to be built outside the National Capital Region. The Museum will use immersive multi-media technology and other innovative approaches to create an inspiring encounter with human rights unlike anything visitors have experienced before.

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Countdown to opening

- Construction of the museum's interior spaces is nearing completion. Installation of museum exhibits has already begun and will continue through the winter and spring.
- CMHR staff and contractors are busy finishing exhibits, educational programs and public tours that will tell hundreds of stories using immersive multi-media technology and other innovative approaches, creating an inspiring human rights journey unlike anything visitors will ever have experienced before.
- Local community organizations, businesses, schools and individual citizens will be invited to be part of a team of more than 200 volunteers that will be needed to welcome visitors to Winnipeg as part of inaugural-year activities.
- Museum admission fees and membership details will be set early in the new year, after research and focus testing is complete.
- Inaugural-year programs and celebrations will be family-friendly, and most will be free. Details of inaugural-year events will be announced throughout the first half of 2014.
- Local businesses and tourism organizations are already preparing for opening-year visitors. The Museum is collaborating with tourism partners at the local, provincial and national level to promote Winnipeg as an exciting travel destination for visitors from around the world.
- More than 80 per cent of conventions confirmed to Winnipeg have expressed interest in using the Canadian Museum for Human Rights as either an off-site venue, for delegate tours or as part of a delegate companion program.
- The average convention delegate spends up to four times as much as the average leisure visitor, often engaging in pre-and post-convention travel, as well as return visits with family or friends.
- Tourism Winnipeg and the CMHR will be jointly targeting large human rights conventions and congresses from national and international markets, which will help bring in new tourism dollars.
- CMHR has opened the door to new markets, such as student/youth group travel. Tourism Winnipeg's travel trade sales manager spoke with approximately 100 tour operators from Canada and the U.S. at the Student Youth Travel Association Annual Conference about the museum. Many are interested in bringing their groups and are awaiting information on programming and costs.
- The museum is expected to stimulate Winnipeg's private sector as local tour operators develop new tours to complement the museum's offerings, according to Tourism Winnipeg.