



Victoria's Spirit Square to Break Ground

Date: Thursday, March 26, 2009

For Immediate Release

VICTORIA, BC — Media is invited to a groundbreaking ceremony of Victoria's Spirit Square tomorrow morning. Mayor Dean Fortin will be joined by the Honourable Ida Chong, Minister of Technology, Trade and Economic Development, Chief Robert Sam of the Songhees Nation, and Coast Salish artist Butch Dick.

Designed to make Centennial Square more inviting to the general public and increase opportunities for celebrations and events, Victoria's Spirit Square will include a canopied turn-key performance stage and infrastructure to host small and medium size performances as well as markets, a drinking water feature in the shape of a First Nations inspired ladle, and a sustainable garden of native species. The project is an important step in the City's overall plan to rejuvenate the north end of downtown.

What: Victoria's Spirit Square Groundbreaking Ceremony
When: Friday, March 27, 2009, from 10 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.
Where: Centennial Square next to City Hall archway

A reception will follow in the City Hall Antechamber, where design drawings and a model of Victoria's Spirit Square will be on display. Joe Daly, the landscape architect for the project, will be available for interviews.

Years ago, Cormorant Creek ran through what is now Centennial Square and served as a water source for the traditional Songhees community. Two Spirit Poles designed and carved by Salish Coast artist, Butch Dick and his son Clarence, will serve as a gateway into the Square and highlight the historical contributions of the Songhees and Esquimalt people.

The project is made possible by the BC Spirit Square program, launched by the Ministry of Community Services in 2006 to support the creation or improvement of town squares or open spaces in communities throughout the province. Program funding is based on a 50/50 (provincial/local government) cost-sharing basis, with the City of Victoria receiving the maximum contribution of \$500,000. BC Spirit Squares were part of BC150, an initiative that planned activities and events as part of British Columbia's 150th anniversary as a Crown Colony.

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