Public Invited to Tour Victoria’s Historic Clock Tower

VICTORIA, BC – On Canada Day, residents will have the opportunity to enjoy a unique view of Victoria from City Hall’s historic clock tower.

The City of Victoria is opening up the clock tower as part of the “Open the Doors to History” program sponsored by the Downtown Victoria Business Association. Heritage interpreters will guide groups through the tower from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Friday, July 1.

Visitors will have a full view of the inner workings of the clock and its driving counterweights that are still hand-wound to this day. If the timing is right, visitors will be able to see first hand how the bell-ringing machinery works when the clock chimes.

Access to view the clock tower will be through the Douglas Street entrance to City Hall. Visitors should be prepared to climb five flights of stairs to reach the clock.

Victoria City Hall is the earliest surviving municipal hall in British Columbia and was built in several stages between 1877 and 1891. The clock tower was built in 1890 and first chimed 120 years ago at noon on May 5, 1891. In 1962, as part of the Centennial Square renewal project, the interior of City Hall was renovated and a new wing housing the Council chambers was added to the west side of the building.

The 105 foot clock tower serves as a significant heritage landmark in the Old Town District. In 2006, the City’s Engineering and Heritage staff restored the tower to its authentic appearance, complete with facsimile decorative features that had decayed and been removed several decades ago. The City of Victoria received an Award of Merit from the Hallmark Society for the restoration of the tower in 2007.

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