

News Release

NEW RIDEAU VALLEY CONSERVATION CENTRE OPENS

RIDEAU VALLEY, February 29, 2008 —The new, environmentally-friendly headquarters of the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority was officially opened late yesterday afternoon with speeches, unveilings and a gala reception for over 200 distinguished municipal and environmental guests.

Alan Arbuckle, RVCA Chair, hosted the event. City of Ottawa Deputy Mayor, Councillor and RVCA Director Glenn Brooks brought words of welcome on behalf of the City. Similarly, Merrickville-Wolford Mayor Doug Struthers spoke on behalf of the 17 member municipalities upstream of Ottawa. Architect Chris Simmonds gave a brief synopsis of the design and construction team headed by M.P.Lundy Construction. Other dignitaries included: Nepean Carleton MPP Lisa MacLeod; Township of Athens Mayor John Conley; Township of Drummond/North Elmsley Reeve Aubrey Churchill; Town of Smiths Falls Mayor Dennis Staples; along with Ottawa Councillors Steve Desroches, Maria McRae, Shad Qadri and Marianne Wilkinson.

The new Conservation Centre is located at the corner of Prince of Wales Drive and Rideau Valley Drive in Manotick. It is located on 12 acres of the city-owned 96-acre Beryl Gaffney Park. The location is part of an important collection of public greenspace that includes City of Ottawa parkland, Parks Canada Long Island lock station, the Jock River Landing, David Bartlett Park, Claudette Cain Park and the Chapman Mills Conservation Area. All of this greenspace is in the heart of one of the fastest-growing communities in the Ottawa area. The park also includes shoreline access to the Canadian Heritage Rideau River, now also a World Heritage Site thanks to the UNESCO designation of last summer.

The building has many features that make it an environmental gem: wastewater and stormwater are managed entirely on-site, energy efficiency is evaluated at 42% better than a similar-sized building, natural light and views are available throughout, recycled and locally made materials abound, 75% of the construction waste was diverted from landfill, passive solar heating, low-flow toilets and sinks, 15% of the construction products are themselves made of recycled materials, and on it goes.

RVCA Chair Alan Arbuckle summed it up for everyone in saying, "We are honoured and proud to be able to bring this quality of structure to the Rideau watershed. It is a living public demonstration of construction processes and practices that have low impact on the environment and on the occupants. Our municipalities, especially the City of Ottawa, and our many generous donors worked very hard and they all deserve our sincere gratitude."

The Conservation Centre serves not only as the new headquarters for the 60 staff members of RVCA but also as the Visitor Centre for the beautiful and adjacent Beryl Gaffney Park. Eventually, park displays, information and visitor services will be available at the Centre.

Special thanks to the Mayor, Councillors and staff of the City of Ottawa who showed leadership and commitment to this watershed project right from the start.

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More information:

Diane Downey

Manager, Community Relations

Rideau Valley Conservation Authority

613-692-3571 or 1-800-267-3504 ext 1126

diane.downey@rvca.ca