

Winning design unveiled for new Royal Alberta Museum *Building will be memorable landmark for Albertans and visitors*

September 14, 2011

Edmonton... The team of Leducor Design-Build (Alberta) Inc. has been named the successful team to design and build the new Royal Alberta Museum in the heart of downtown Edmonton.

“This is the right design for our new museum,” said Ray Danyluk, Minister of Infrastructure. “It truly expresses our province’s history, landscapes, and potential. The concept leaves no doubt that the Leducor team understands Alberta, and Albertans. Like our province, our new museum will represent the best of what the world has to offer, celebrating our past, our present and our future.”

The Leducor Design-Build (Alberta) Inc. team of Leducor Construction, DIALOG Design and Lundholm Associates Architects was selected following the evaluation of four proponents shortlisted for the project. An expert review panel, which included architectural and museum industry professionals, evaluated the proposals based on design, ability to deliver the project, and the best value for the budget.

“The true measure of a great museum is what’s inside, and I think we are seeing the beginning of greatness, a building that will truly inspire those that visit to understand their world, and all the pieces of our world, a little better,” said Lindsay Blackett, Minister of Culture and Community Spirit. “I know the staff at the Royal Alberta Museum will take up the challenge to make their new home a highly functional museum behind the scenes for acquisition, conservation and research, and that the front of house will be the most educational and entertaining environment it can possibly be.”

“We are extremely pleased to be welcoming the new Royal Alberta Museum into our downtown as another anchor in our vibrant and growing arts and culture district, and we thank the Province for their commitment to making this happen,” said Mayor Stephen Mandel. “They have chosen a design that reflects the importance of both the new location in the heart of our city, and more significantly, the legacy it will house. The museum will be a testament to the pride of all Albertans.”

“This design for our new museum is contemporary and modern with a variety of shapes and textures, along with some familiar and much-loved ‘touches’ from the past,” said Marla Daniels, president of the Friends of Royal Alberta Museum Society and a review panel member. “The exterior design takes advantage of the surrounding urban landscape. It makes a visual impact, addresses the streetscapes and reaches up to our big Alberta sky. It is a gathering place and invites you to come in and explore—from all directions.”

Using the design-build method for the new Royal Alberta Museum provides efficiency and flexibility. The project is able to be started and completed sooner as Leducor’s construction managers and design team work together from day one, allowing for construction work to begin while refinements in design work are still taking place. More information, including design images, is available at infrastructure.alberta.ca.

Media inquiries

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To call toll-free within Alberta, dial 310-0000.

The new Royal Alberta Museum

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The new Royal Alberta Museum will have double the space of the existing museum, enough to exhibit the museum's human and natural history artifacts in one facility, about 10 million of which are currently in storage. It will also have the capacity to host international exhibits that Alberta has been missing out on simply because the museum does not have the space. The museum will be a destination that offers multipurpose spaces such as a theatre, a cafe, large video screen visible from the street, and outdoor terraces. The increased size and central location, as well as the use of today's technology, will ensure the new museum is much more accessible for visitors from Alberta and beyond. Doors will open for thousands more visitors each year, either in person or through virtual visits.

Overall Design

The design for the new Royal Alberta Museum has an engaging sense of place and responds to the unique aspects of Edmonton and Alberta. The architecture and the planning are finely tuned to the function of the museum. **The design seeks to:**

- Enhance the visitor experience, be thought provoking and beautiful
- Be accessible and inclusive with an animated and engaging public space
- Connect with the community, to create a museum that is a central social setting
- Integrate with the exhibition design and give form to the telling of the story of Alberta
- De-mystify the museum for the public by providing views into the working museum
- Nurture the museum's unique programs and experiences from classes and school programs, to tours and special exhibitions
- Protect the collections
- Celebrate Alberta and be a source of pride for all Albertans

Transportation

The plan provides safe, efficient and pleasant environments for pedestrians and cyclists through continuous linkages along streets and through park settings, easing the transition across major arterial roads and reducing conflict between cars, trucks, bicycles and pedestrians through streetscape and intersection design. The museum offers a strong pedestrian oriented "walkable" environment.

The museum will also feature underground connection to the LRT, which includes display space for the museum. There is also provision for a future high-speed rail station.

Landscape Design

The approach to the landscape design is to develop a setting and public realm that is integrated and cohesive with the museum building, an extension connecting with the surrounding city, and a dialogue between city and nature. There is a dynamic weaving between interior and exterior spaces.

The overall landscape design highlights the environmental stewardship of the museum site design. Landscape sustainability initiatives within the project that demonstrate environmental stewardship provide the museum with the potential to educate visitors through their leadership in this area and contribute to achieving LEED® gold designation for the project.

Interior Design Features

An important strength of the plan is the ability to place almost all of the public destinations on one, highly accessible level. The Human History galleries on the level above have their ‘gateway’ visible from the main lobby hub below, and are directly served by a dramatic stairway. With this arrangement, all of the public elements are visible and easily accessible, and orientation is natural and simple. The entire public museum layout can be quickly appreciated and engaged with by visitors.

The arrangement of the group arrival and processing leading directly to the main lobby means that school groups will experience the full drama of the arrival sequence as do other visitors. Embedding of the activity rooms in the galleries further expresses the importance of education in the museum, makes it visible, and provides great potential to make use of the exhibitions in the educational programs. Creating a portal to the collection and research work of the museum in association with the demonstration labs and visible collections is also a strong device for revealing the usually hidden aspects of the museum around which there is great interest and curiosity.

The Human History galleries dominate this level with a secondary lobby and gateway immediately at the top of the main stair. A passage overlooking the lobby below wraps around and leads to an exterior exhibition terrace. A study and rest area is located in the widening of this path. An exterior garden space is created adjacent to and is accessible from the Aboriginal Cultures Gallery. This honours the importance of nature in aboriginal values, and provides a place for reflection and occasional ceremonial use.

LEDCOR DESIGN-BUILD (ALBERTA) INC.

The Ledcor Design-Build (Alberta) Inc. team is comprised of:

- Ledcor Construction
- DIALOG Design
- Lundholm Associates Architects.

Ledcor Group of Companies

Founded in 1947 in Leduc, Alberta, as Leduc Construction, the Ledcor Group of Companies is now one of the most diversified companies in North America. The company is owned 100 percent by its over 5,000 employees with corporate headquarters located in Vancouver, BC. Ledcor Construction counts among its successfully created building projects, The Bow in Calgary and Epcor Tower in Edmonton.

DIALOG Design

DIALOG Design is a multidisciplinary team of architects, engineers, interior designers, urban designers and planners. DIALOG operates as a Practice Corporation in Alberta with offices in Edmonton. The company has been involved in several high-profile projects including the National Institute for Nanotechnology and Francis Winspear Centre in Edmonton and the Granville Island Redevelopment in Vancouver.

Lundholm Associates Architects

Lundholm Associates Architects is an architectural firm based in Toronto with a focus on the cultural sector, primarily museums, libraries and galleries. Michael Lundholm, author of the Royal Alberta Museum design, is the former Director of Architecture of the National Museums of Canada. Among its projects, Lundholm, in association with Lett Architects, is designer of the Peterborough Museum and Archives.

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