

Post office mosaics to be preserved and incorporated into the new Royal Alberta Museum

October 15, 2012

Edmonton... The removal of nine mosaic murals from Edmonton's former main post office building provides a visual milestone of the work already underway on the new Royal Alberta Museum. The mosaics will be preserved and incorporated into the new museum.

"After months of careful planning and design work, we have gained initial access to the Canada post office site," said Wayne Drysdale, Minister of Infrastructure. "We have begun select demolition and removal of key heritage features, like the murals, to be preserved and used within the new Royal Alberta Museum. By next fall, we can expect to see the new facility's foundation work getting underway."

Minister Drysdale joined Culture Minister Heather Klimchuk to mark the new museum's progress by assisting in the removal of the murals. The murals as well as terrazzo flooring and Tyndall limestone panels, also to be reclaimed from the old post office building, will be part of the new museum's pedestrian boulevard and courtyard cafe.

"The mosaics, by artist Ernestine Tahedl, have been part of downtown Edmonton's urban fabric for nearly half a century," said Minister Klimchuk. "I am happy to see they will keep their place of honour as part of the new Royal Alberta Museum. They will be beautifully complemented by important artistic elements from the existing museum. In keeping with Alberta's commitment to culture, this new museum will retain historic elements of two key Edmonton landmarks."

All conditions have been met to receive \$122.5 million in federal funding toward the cost of the \$340 million museum project. The Alberta government will have full access to the Canada post office site in spring 2013. Construction of the new Royal Alberta Museum is expected to be complete in 2016 and employ as many as 4,000 construction workers.

In addition to the heritage features from the post office building, the new museum will retain artworks now found within, outside and on the grounds of the current Royal Alberta Museum. Exhibits and programs continue to be offered at the current museum site, while construction of the new facility is underway.

Media inquiries

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Much progress underway on new Royal Alberta Museum *Select demolition and preservation work, new design images*

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Construction Progress

As part of a planned, phased-in approach, the Alberta government gained initial access to the Canada post office site in downtown Edmonton late this summer. Work on selective demolition, including the safe removal and disposal of hazardous materials, is underway and will be ongoing as the Alberta government gains further access to the post office site. Full access is expected by next spring followed by the demolition of the post office building and start-up of foundation work.

Preservation Work

Removal and preservation of the nine Ernestine Tahedl mosaic murals from the old Canada post office building began early October and is expected to be complete in November.

The mosaic murals, commissioned by the federal government in 1966 for its Edmonton post office building, will be featured as part of the new Royal Alberta Museum's pedestrian boulevard.

Unique terrazzo flooring and Tyndall limestone panels, also to be reclaimed from the post office, will be revived in the courtyard of the museum's outdoor cafe.

Key artworks displayed at the current Royal Alberta Museum will also later be removed and highlighted within the new museum facility, including:

Entry Frieze, The Stake, and the Pronghorns by John Weaver; and

Natural History Frieze, Human History Frieze, and Storyteller by Ole Holmsten.

Design Update

- The new museum will showcase the best of the province's history and welcome all Albertans to a modern, accessible, inviting setting. It will have double the space of the existing facility to better exhibit the museum's human and natural history artifacts and will feature an exhibition hall for the best travelling exhibits from world museums.
- Design images highlighting the exterior of the new Royal Alberta Museum and providing a glimpse of how interior space will be used are available at <http://www.infrastructure.alberta.ca/3655.htm>.

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