



September 26, 2009

Province supports agricultural heritage, recreation in Ponoka

Ponoka... Building on the region's rich agricultural heritage and community spirit, the Alberta government is contributing funds to assist with the development of the Ponoka Ag-Events Centre.

"Collaboration can lead to amazing accomplishments," said Lindsay Blackett, Minister of Culture and Community Spirit. "Thank you to all the groups involved in this important project. I am confident that funds provided for this new facility will enhance Ponoka's already rich heritage while boosting both tourism and the local economy."

Funds for the project are being provided to the Ponoka Agriculture Events Centre Society. The society is a unique partnership of the Ponoka Agricultural Society, Ponoka Stampede and Exhibition Association, Ponoka County and Town of Ponoka. Funds will assist with the development of the Ponoka Ag-Events Centre, including construction of an indoor arena, banquet area, concession, stocking pens, indoor barns, administrative areas and parking.

"This new centre will help to meet the year-round agricultural, equine, recreation and special events needs of residents in Ponoka and many surrounding communities," said Ray Prins, MLA Lacombe-Ponoka. "This partnership is an example of strong commitment to the community and foresight of community leaders."

The provincial government contributed \$3.2 million to the project from its Major Community Facilities Program (MCFP). Started in 2007-08, the MCFP was a two-year \$280-million lottery-funded program that helped municipalities, not-for-profit organizations and Aboriginal communities plan, upgrade or build major public-use facilities that enhance community life.

Funds were provided on a matching basis, meaning a great deal of community support was required to make the grant possible. Although the MCFP has ended, benefits like local employment will be seen for years to come. The Government of Alberta has a wide variety of community investment programs that create stronger and safer communities. For more information, visit www.culture.alberta.ca.

-30-

Media inquiries may be directed to:
Parker Hogan; Communications
Culture and Community Spirit
780-914-2869 (cell)