

(CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY)
SPEECH

LINDSAY BLACKETT
MINISTER
CULTURE AND COMMUNITY SPIRIT

PREMIER'S COUNCIL ANNOUNCEMENT

3:06 P.M.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2008

GOVERNMENT HOUSE

- Thank you Jeffrey.
- Our culture is the window through which the rest of the world sees us.
- Since becoming Minister of Alberta Culture and Community Spirit, I have visited a number of communities across the province.
- I have witnessed something phenomenal in every single one of the places I've visited – big and small.
- Whether it's a small hamlet creating a community theatre enjoyed by hundreds of people, families coming together to create a viable junior sports team, or artists who beautify their community – Alberta has a strong and vibrant cultural landscape.
- To protect, preserve and enhance this creativity and spirit, our Premier called for the creation of a cultural policy for the province that we launched last spring, called *The Spirit of Alberta*.

- *The Spirit of Alberta* provides a framework to help ensure that all Albertans are able to access culture, no matter where they live in the province.
- It is also helping us to ensure that our cultural professionals, and our cultural industries, are able to thrive here.
- We have already done a great deal of work to implement this policy.
- For example, on September 6, government organized Alberta Arts Day – a one-day celebration of arts and culture.
- People across the province celebrated by participating in one of close to 100 events led by almost 30 communities – and these are only the events we knew about.
- Many other Albertans also participated in their own way – by taking an art walk in their community, hosting a crafternoon, or even creating sidewalk chalk art with their children.
- The day was a true demonstration of Albertans’ pride in their province, and all that we have to offer.

- Our first-ever Arts Day was so successful that I am expanding it to a three-day celebration across the province.
- I encourage all of you to mark your calendars for Alberta Arts Days 2009, which will be held on the third weekend of September – between September 18 and 20.
- Albertans will be hearing more about this exciting celebration very soon.
- Alberta Arts Day was a solid start, but there's still a great deal of work that needs to be done to ensure that we effectively implement our cultural policy.
- We are in the process of developing an inventory of government supported cultural facilities and initiatives that currently exist throughout the province.
- We are also working hard to help support our cultural industries – including Alberta's film industry, which received an additional, one-time investment of \$14 million through our province's Film Development Program.

- A program that supports film and television projects shot and produced in the province.
- Today, I am happy to announce that we are celebrating another significant milestone – by officially establishing the Premier’s Council on Arts and Culture.
- This council will be providing advice and support as we continue to implement Alberta’s cultural policy.
- Council members will work collaboratively with government, the private sector, the cultural community and individual Albertans to preserve our culture and build a legacy that unites us, helps us better understand ourselves and each other, and makes us even more proud to call Alberta our home.
- Our criteria for council members was a tall order.
- This past spring, we put out a call to Albertans interested in helping us to champion culture – and the cultural policy – throughout the province.
- We were looking for people with creativity to spare, and with knowledge and expertise in different areas of focus – to reflect Albertans’ broad definition of culture.

- We were also looking for people who demonstrate the qualities of strong leadership.
- More than 275 Albertans from all over the province, and of all ages, responded to our call.
- As a result, we were able to create a Premier's Council that truly represents our province's diversity.
- I am pleased to be able to introduce you to this outstanding group, by asking council members to come forward when I call their names:
 - Ms. Amanda Affonso of Calgary
 - Amanda is an active community volunteer, dance teacher and choreographer, as well as a regulatory and financial manager for the Canadian Energy Pipeline Association.
 - Mr. Brad Hembroff of Lethbridge
 - Brad is a lawyer, former Alberta Foundation for the Arts board member and active volunteer.

- Ms. Diane Jones Konihowski of Calgary
- Diane is a three-time Olympian and was the Chef de Mission for the 2000 Canadian Olympic Team
- Ms. Angela Keibel of Drumheller
- Angela is an active volunteer, member of many non-profit boards and leader in the non-profit sector.
- Mr. Jeff Kovitz of Canmore
- Jeff is a lawyer, businessman, current chair of the Banff Centre Board of Governors and active volunteer.
- Ms. Audrey Luft of Edmonton
- Audrey is the president of Manpower Services and the chair of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts.

- Mr. Tom McCabe of Calgary
- Tom is the CEO of Theatre Calgary, as well as the former vice president of the Bank of Montreal and past president and CEO of Alberta Tourism.
- Ms. Sherryl Sewepagaham of Edmonton
- Sherryl is an elementary school music teacher and member of Asani-Aboriginal Women's Trio.
- Mr. Robert Steven of Grande Prairie
- Robert is the director and curator for the Prairie Art Gallery in Grande Prairie and is also an active volunteer in visual arts, the performing arts and service organizations in his community.
- Mr. John Short of Edmonton
- John is a freelance journalist and former broadcaster.

- Ms. Josée Thibeault
of Edmonton

- Josée is a professional artist and president of the
Regroupement artistique francophone de l'Alberta.

- Ladies and gentlemen, I am proud to officially introduce you to the Premier's Council on Arts and Culture.

- I would ask all of you to remain standing during the Premier's remarks.

- Thank you.