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New Brand for the OCC Heralds Bold, New Marketing Strategy

A bold, new visual identity to complement the iconic design of the new Ottawa Congress Centre (OCC) was unveiled last month, reflecting new branding for the facility and an unprecedented marketing position in attracting conventions and events to Ottawa from around the world.

The new logo, corresponding to the innovative architecture of the new convention centre, is deliberately modern, unconventional and compelling. The sinuous and flowing

lines in the symbol represent core features of the nation's capital – the abundance of water in its rivers and the Rideau Canal, reflected in the colour blue; the commitment to an environmentally-friendly building and operations, reflected in the colour green, and the colour red at the crest is suggestive of Ottawa's place on the national stage. Like the new facility, the logo has clear lines of circulation and orientation, transparency, movement and connection.

"This new logo features a series of light gradations, similar to the extraordinary reflections we see in the waterfront in Ottawa," said Patrick Kelly, president of the OCC. "But it also reflects the design of the building with its crystalline, glass exterior and its openness. We truly believe that Ottawa will host remarkable events in the future that will help define the 21st century."

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(L-R) Jim Durrell, Chair of the OCC Board, Mary Pitt, OCC Board member, Minister Jim Watson, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and Andrew Haydon, former OCC Board member share memories of past events at the OCC while celebrating the launch of the new brand of the Ottawa Convention Centre. The government of Ontario provided \$50 million in funding for the project

...New Brand continued

"The soft curves of the logo imply a safe, welcoming, service-inspired atmosphere within the new OCC," said Jim Durrell, Chair of the OCC Board. "I think it speaks well to the gentle but dynamic ambiance of the city."

The new visual identity, suggestive of a tulip, is the first explicit element of the new branding for the facility.

A second key element is a minor name change. A research study of key stakeholders throughout North America resulted in a change of designation for the new facility from the Ottawa Congress Centre to the Ottawa Convention Centre. Surveyed experts in the field agreed that it was important to specify the location of the site and that the word "convention" adhered more closely to recognized international industry standards.

Beyond the visual identity and name, the new brand heralds an innovative marketing strategy that reaches, for the first time, into American and European markets. Given the expansion of space and the inventive room flexibility in the new building, the OCC marketing team has made significant inroads into international meeting planner associations who are keen to bring their conventions to Ottawa for the first time.

The Ottawa Convention Centre is currently undergoing demolition with construction to start in March 2009. The facility is on schedule, within budget, and set to open in April 2011.

New Markets Excited to Come to Ottawa

IMN Solutions, a Washington, DC corporation who coordinate all aspects of meetings, travel and trade shows, is just one of many major organizations outside Canada whose head is turned with great interest toward the OCC redevelopment project.

"Ottawa as a destination will be at the top of our list, for the first time ever," said Brian Knapp, executive vice-president of IMN Solutions. "Ottawa is a gem that has not been accessed before because of the limitations of the old facility. The city is uniquely beautiful in all seasons, and the new convention centre is uniquely designed. We are very excited about the potential that now exists, and the city should be as well."

Mr. Knapp added that the visibility both in and out of the new facility is a distinctive feature that allows convention activity to be seen outside by passersby, while the interior allows for stunning views of Parliament Hill, the Rideau Canal, the National Gallery of Canada and the downtown core. He also emphasized the priority now placed on green buildings and environmentally-friendly operations at conventions and meetings by associations and organizations, a significant factor in the selection of a destination.

"Once the big conventions start coming to Ottawa, word quickly spreads that the destination is unique, eco-friendly and desirable," Mr. Knapp said. "The value of a large convention is worth millions in facility rental, room rentals, and ancillary spending by the visitors. In this economy, the timing to redevelop Ottawa's convention facilities couldn't have been better."



(L-R) Jim Durrell, Chair of the OCC Board and Daniel Laliberté, Chair, Ottawa Tourism Board mark the launch of the new OCC brand by signing a cooperation agreement that provides for joint collaborative marketing efforts. The cooperation marks a major step forward in the establishment of an effective, dedicated collaborative to increase tourism and special events in the city of Ottawa.

