



August 26, 2011

NEWS RELEASE

Bringing the History of the Original Tay Canal to Life

PORT ELMSLEY, ON – Mention the Tay Canal, and most people think of Beveridge Locks. But the *original* Tay Canal, built in 1834, has five locks, and winds through the Village of Port Elmsley.

The Friends of the Tay Watershed and the Township of Drummond / North Elmsley invite the public to celebrate the history of the canal and the unveiling of a new interpretive plaque overlooking Lock 2 on Sunday, Sept. 11 at 1 p.m.

The move to install a plaque developed from the very successful Port Elmsley Festival and Tay Canal 175th celebrations held in July 2009. That event attracted 350 people and brought the original canal to light with tours to Locks 1 and 2. “We never knew what was in our own backyards,” said newcomers and older residents alike.

The new interpretive plaque will allow viewers to pinpoint the lock locations and envision the buildings, industry and people of the early years of this prosperous and bustling hamlet, first known as Barbadoes, then Pike Falls and finally Port Elmsley.

The event festivities will take place at the Drummond / North Elmsley Municipal Office at 310 Port Elmsley Road. Drummond / North Elmsley Reeve Aubrey Churchill and David Taylor of the Friends of the Tay Watershed will co-host the event. MP Scott Reid, MPP Randy Hillier and Parks Canada Superintendent Don Marrin have been invited to participate in the unveiling.

The Perth 42nd Pipe Band will entertain participants, the 1st Elmsley Scouts will engage children with period games, and refreshments will be provided.

A horse-drawn wagon will tour participants to the bridge and the interpretive panel overlooking Lock 2.

Participants are invited to view displays of historic artifacts and documents associated with the original canal, Port Elmsley, and the region. As a special attraction, participants are invited to bring in any artifacts or documents they would like assessed by a Master Conservator in the manner of ‘Antiques Roadshow.’

Funding for the commemorative sign has been provided by the Canadian Heritage Department, through the Friends of the Tay Watershed. The grant will also provide for the placing of a second, complementary sign in Perth, designating the top of the Tay Canal. The Department also assisted in the funding of the year-long celebration of the Tay Canal’s 175th Anniversary in 2009.

The original Tay Canal was completed in 1834, through the efforts and financing of enterprising Perth and area business people, to provide a commercial transportation link to the newly completed (1832) Rideau Canal system. The Tay’s original route connected the Lower Rideau Lake, through the hamlet of Port Elmsley, to the village of Perth – a distance of 10 miles (16 kilometers). Its five rubble locks and associated dams and, later, log raft slides, brought new access for Perth-and-area products, and numerous factories to Port Elmsley. However, the under-financed canal had been built to minimum standards, and endured only to the mid-1860s, when canal traffic stopped. In the 1880s, the federal government took control of the canal, and re-built it, by-passing Port Elmsley for the current route commencing at Beveridge Bay, on the Lower Rideau Lake.

More information on the original Tay Canal can be found at <http://www.drummondnorthelmsley.com/> and www.tayriver.org

You are invited to attend:

2nd Port Elmsley Canal Festival

Sunday, Sept. 11

1 – 3 p.m.

Drummond / North Elmsley Municipal Office

310 Port Elmsley Road



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