

Improving Albertans' quality of life

May 2, 2007

Rare aboriginal artifacts return home to Royal Alberta Museum

Edmonton... After 150 years, Albertans now have the opportunity to view a diverse collection of western Canadian Aboriginal artifacts that will be showcased at the Royal Alberta Museum's newest exhibit, *Stories from the Southesk Collection: A 150-Year Journey*.

With artifacts representing a wide range of First Nations and Métis cultures, the Southesk Collection is considered to be one of the most significant collections of Northern Plains ethnological artifacts in the world.

"The Southesk Collection represents a vital part of the story of our First Nations and Métis people, Alberta and western Canada," said Hector Goudreau, Minister of Tourism, Parks, Recreation and Culture. "We are proud to acquire this historic collection and bring it home, allowing Albertans to learn more about our proud past."

The First Nations and Métis artifacts had been collected in 1859-60 by James Carnegie, the Ninth Earl of Southesk, during a trip through western Canada. The collection had been kept in the family's castle in Scotland for 147 years before being offered for sale in May 2006 at Sotheby's auction house in New York.

With letters of support from First Nations and Métis representatives, the Royal Alberta Museum was the successful bidder for 33 of the 43 objects at the auction for a total price of \$1.1 million. The purchase of the artifacts was made possible with financial support of \$600,000 from the Government of Canada and \$486,000 from the Alberta government.

Among the artifacts purchased by the museum are a Blackfoot dress made of mountain sheep's skin, a rare finger-woven Métis sash, a beaded Plains Cree pad saddle and the Earl's journal. The Earl kept a journal recording his travels, containing information on where and when he acquired the artifacts and, in some cases, from whom. The acquisition of the artifacts will enhance the history galleries of the Royal Alberta Museum and provide research opportunities for scholars and students throughout North America.

Promoting our heritage is part of Premier Stelmach's plan to improve quality of life for Albertans. Other priorities for the government are to govern with integrity and transparency, build a stronger Alberta, manage growth pressures and promote safe and secure communities.

The *Southesk Collection - A 150-Year Journey* runs May 5 - July 2 at the Royal Alberta Museum. The museum is located at 12845 - 102 Avenue in Edmonton. For more information, visit www.royalalbertamuseum.ca or call (780) 453-9100 or toll-free at 310-0000.

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Editor's Note:

Media are invited for a preview of the Southesk Collection on Thursday, May 3 from 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Media inquiries may be directed to:

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