

Oak Hammock Marsh Interpretive Centre wins national tourism award

Oak Hammock Marsh Interpretive Centre, Man., October 23, 2006 –The Oak Hammock Marsh Interpretive Centre (OHMIC) added another significant honour of prestige to its trophy case, taking home the 2006 Tourism Industry Association of Canada (TIAC) National Award for Tourism Excellence, held last night in Jasper, Alberta.

“To the thousands of Manitobans and visitors from around the world who flock to the Centre each year, this award is welcome recognition of the Centre’s efforts to educate and foster public awareness of the values of wetlands and associated ecosystems,” said Conservation Minister Stan Struthers.

“We owe this award to the dedication and hard work of many people,” said Bob Laidler, OHMIC General Manager. “Our knowledgeable, friendly staff help make our visitors’ experiences memorable. Our many partners ensure that we can continue to deliver the highest quality ecotourism available. And we continue to be inspired by the many wonderful tourism organizations in Manitoba. We’re very grateful to the TIAC for recognizing the high caliber of tourism programming at OHMIC and within Manitoba.”

The National Awards for Tourism Excellence, presented by the Globe and Mail, were developed by TIAC in 2003 to recognize and foster excellence within a dynamic industry valued at \$61.4 billion across Canada per year. The finalists for each of the 13 awards were chosen by a judging panel of tourism industry leaders. Awards were presented at a gala dinner on October 23 at the Jasper Park Lodge in Jasper, Alberta, during Canada’s Tourism Leadership Summit.

Oak Hammock was recognized in the Air Canada Business of the Year – Single Unit category, which evaluated visitor satisfaction, human resources, business results, positive contribution to Canada’s tourism industry, involvement in the tourism community, and vision for the future.

“The Interpretive Centre attracts visitors of all ages from across Manitoba and around the world and is a truly a showpiece of our province,” said Culture, Heritage

and Tourism Minister Eric Robinson. 'It is most fitting that the Centre and the staff should be honoured with the award.'

Through their work to foster public awareness and knowledge of the inherent values of wetland ecosystems throughout North America, the centre has a growing list of community, national, and international awards, including: Interlake Tourism Association's Sustainable Tourism Award (2006); The Canadian Network for Environmental Education and Communication Award of Excellence for Environmental Education (2004), Green Roof Award for Excellence (2003); British Airways Tourism for Tomorrow, Global Winner, Environmental Experience (2002), Canada's Best Outdoor Site (2000) .

The Oak Hammock Marsh Interpretive Centre is a joint project of Ducks Unlimited Canada and the Province of Manitoba. The year-round attraction located north of Winnipeg, features a restored prairie marsh, aspen-oak bluff, waterfowl lure crops, artesian springs, 30 kilometers of trails and some of Manitoba's last remaining patches of tall-grass prairie - an endangered habitat. The Centre offers interactive exhibits, and creative and informative daily programs and activities.

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