

New Royal Alberta Museum

Edmonton, Alberta

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Check against delivery

Ladies and gentlemen, as you walked in today, you were handed a piece of Alberta's history. A relic of our province's past; testament to a time beyond memory. You were asked to keep it close. Now, I ask you to hold it in the palm of your hand. Close your eyes and take a moment to wonder where it came from.

This fossil was once part of a living tree. Feel the warmth of the sun and the wind on its leaves as it stood strong so many years ago. Feel the coolness, the darkness and the pressure that transformed it from wood to stone.

Now, feel its weight, its texture, its temperature. Ask yourself how long it has existed, what it has witnessed? The answers to these questions are almost mind-boggling.

To me, that is what museums are all about. Museums use artifacts to bring the past to life. To stretch our imaginations and help us understand the magnitude of where we came from; that today, right now, we are the sum total of everything in the past.

As part of our natural history, the journey these stones have been on is already a remarkable one. Compared to them, Alberta's cultural history is very young. Our province's story is still unfolding. As one generation makes way for the next, our cultural identity grows. And our new Royal Alberta Museum will be there every step of the way, capturing and preserving our treasures and memories as we build our history. This new museum will enthrall you with the chapters already written, and provide the necessary space as our story continues to unfold. And for this reason, it will be a museum that keeps you coming back. Reflecting the passion of all the friends of the museum, one thing is for certain; our new museum will continue to inspire you.

Like our province, we will welcome the best of what the world has to offer. This museum will have the right technology and controlled climate, to attract internationally acclaimed exhibits. If in the past you have been an "occasional visitor" this museum will be sure to keep you coming back. The rotating exhibits will satisfy your thirst for knowledge and stimulate your creativity. Inquisitive minds both young and old will have the opportunity to explore and be a part of the displays; to experience our past in a way they never could have dreamed possible.

Coming to our museum will broaden the minds and the worlds of generations to come. In experiencing our past, we will be inspired to make history. Albertans

have so much to show the world. This is our opportunity to discover where we've been and find out who we are.

We will be challenging the most talented of Alberta's architects and engineers to design a museum that reflects the possibilities of who we will become. A building that houses our dreams for our future as much as the history of our past. With each day that passes, Albertans are writing that history. We must live our lives with the knowledge that one day our great-great grandchildren will be standing in the Royal Alberta Museum, looking in amazement at the dioramas depicting our day-to-day lives, and wondering how we managed to get by. Now that's a humbling thought.

To me, this piece of history, this petrified wood, represents that idea, of Alberta's history in motion. As each of us goes our separate ways today, these pieces of petrified wood will go with us. In that sense, these stones are still alive. We will continue on our unique journeys, making our mark, contributing to the future of our province, making tomorrow's history.

What you choose to do with your stone is up to you. You could put it in a plant pot, or on your mantel. Or like me, simply keep it in your pocket and when you think of it, turn it over in your hand, feel its smoothness and its shape, and think about where it came from.

Think about where we have come from. Think about who we are. Think about who we can become. Think about how we can learn from the past to help

understand the present to build on our foundations and set the course for the future. That is what this new Royal Alberta Museum is all about.