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For immediate release

Travel Manitoba launches new tourism brand

Winnipeg, Manitoba, December 12, 2013 – Travel Manitoba is confident tourists will take its invitation to visit the province to heart: the Crown Corporation launched its new brand and marketing campaign today, unveiling the bold slogan: “*Manitoba: Canada’s Heart Beats*”.

Travel Manitoba President and CEO Colin Ferguson said the tourism industry in Manitoba is experiencing tremendous growth and momentum, with significant new attractions opening in 2014, including the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, the Journey to Churchill exhibit in Assiniboine Park, and the development of Upper Fort Garry. “Manitoba is well positioned in the competitive tourism marketplace”, Ferguson said. “But we believe more is possible, and that we must harness Manitoba’s new sense of optimism and transform it into action”.

That action will begin in 2014, with the launch of a multi-media campaign that includes television commercials in such properties as the Olympics, the Juno’s, and worldwide on Air Canada flights. The first four television commercials feature polar bear viewing in Churchill, the northern summer experience of interacting with beluga whales in the Churchill River, fly-in fishing, and the wealth of arts and culture found in Winnipeg. Ferguson said future commercials may include the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, our lakes and rivers, and our distinct Francophone experiences.

“Manitoba has always had lots to offer tourists and now we have even more reasons for visitors and people who live here to explore this province,” said Ron Lemieux, Minister of Tourism, Culture, Heritage, Sport and Consumer Protection. “This new branding perfectly captures the excitement of our cultural features and the incredible range of our outstanding natural attractions.”

The campaign theme: “*Manitoba: Canada’s Heart Beats*” leverages the positive reputation of Canada as a tourism destination, and conveys Manitoba’s unique travel experiences, said Peter George, President and CEO of McKim, Travel Manitoba’s advertising agency. “The brand references our location at the heart of Canada, and the brand promise is that Manitoba offers truly immersive, quintessentially Canadian experiences that will resonate with people on an emotional level,” George said.

The brand is based on research that Travel Manitoba purchased through the Canadian Tourism Commission. Called the Explorer Quotient, or EQ, it is the first research to define traveler types based on travel values, personal beliefs, motivations and the desire for certain kinds of experiences.

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“EQ is the research upon which we now base our marketing decisions, including where we market and who we market to”, Ferguson said. The campaign is focussed on the markets of Manitoba – (Manitobans travelling throughout the province account for 85% of visitors annually), Alberta, northwest Ontario and the U.S. for fishing and hunting. Secondary markets include the long haul U.S., Germany and the UK.

See the accompanying backgrounder for additional information.

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Travel Manitoba is a Crown Corporation under provincial legislation that leads and stimulates sustainable tourism growth in Manitoba’s \$1.45 billion tourism industry. In partnership with the tourism industry, the agency is responsible for tourism marketing, visitor information services, research and public information.