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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

A Centre that Walks the Environmental Walk

WINNIPEG: Almost everyone talks about recycling while many actually do it. Several building managers talk about environmental impact while a few actually do it. **The Winnipeg Convention Centre** is proud to *walk the walk* by making a commitment to developing and sustaining an overall *greener* facility.

As Canada's oldest Convention Centre at 35 years, the Winnipeg Convention Centre is working hard at keeping itself and its patrons healthy – inside and out.

“In 2007, we were honoured to be awarded the BOMA BEST (Go Green) certification by the Building Owners and Managers Association. BEST stands for Building Environmental Standards and is a national environmental certification recognizing responsible practices in building operations”, explains Klaus Lahr, WCC President and CEO and spearhead of the WCC environmental initiatives. “We continue to monitor our resource consumption, expand and improve our processes and implement new technologies that support a greener facility.”

Since 2004, the WCC has spent \$600,000 on energy upgrades. These improvements have resulted in a reduction of gas consumption of approximately \$23,000 annually, a reduction in electrical of approximately \$15,000 - \$20,000 annually and a reduction in water consumption of over 20%. In addition, the Centre has reduced its greenhouse gas emissions by nearly 1,000 tonnes a year. Due to its diligent environmental management, the Centre has received rebates from Manitoba Hydro exceeding \$170,000.

In its quest to become more environmentally conscious, current initiatives undertaken by the Centre include:

- A \$100,000 investment in a new computer system that monitors all of the engines in the facility, turning them off during off-peak hours (in unused space or overnight).
- Installation of additional electrical circuits in order to turn off lights/power in stages.
- Replacement of all incandescent and mercury light fixtures with energy efficient options that not only utilize less energy but require replacement less frequently.
- Installation of timers to operate the parkade lights (reduced during off-peak hours).
- Installation of recycling bins throughout the building for both public and staff.
- Installation of a compactor to compress kitchen waste for composting, reducing the amount of material headed for the landfill by 60%.
- Automation of trade show service forms, eliminating printed materials, envelopes and postage required to mail the thousands of packages to show managers and exhibitors.
- Installation of 6.5 million dollar cladding surrounding the building, quadrupling the insulation level.
- Donation or sale of used materials/items in any remodelling processes (all fixtures, wiring, furniture are donated or sold at a reduced rate).

- Installation of a hybrid heating system that uses real time intelligent controls to track and manage heating demand and automatically switches between fossil fuel based heating sources and electric heat to reduce energy costs, decrease green house gas emissions and increase efficiencies. By utilizing this system, the WCC has received 'offset' credits through Environment Canada that can be sold in the market for \$3 per tonne. The Centre is anticipating total credits valuing \$350,000, with \$40 - \$50K realized within the next 3 – 4 years. This will be invested in sustaining and further developing this environmentally-friendly facility.

In addition, the Convention Centre is focussed on supporting local food producers and further reducing its carbon footprint by implementing a *Five Hour Drive Menu* for all food services. Wherever possible, preference for all ingredients will be on items grown or produced within a five hour drive from Winnipeg.

The Centre is also committed to assisting its clients looking to host more environmentally and socially responsible events; for example, gone are the plastic water bottles at each table setting which have been replaced with water stations; delegates can use the biodegradable cups or fill their own reusable bottles.

“We have a responsibility to create the healthiest, most efficient environment possible - for today - for the future. This is always at the forefront of our plans”, notes Lahr.

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