



Heritage Park Welcomes the Little Synagogue on the Prairie

Calgary – In the early morning hours on Wednesday, November 26, 2008, one of the last surviving rural Alberta synagogues travelled through the quiet Calgary streets and arrived, by truck, at the entrance of Heritage Park Historical Village. At 7:30 am, the little synagogue was welcomed onto the park, where work will now begin to place it on its permanent foundation. The Montefiore Institute, as the synagogue was originally known, will join Heritage Park’s historic building collection, telling a broader story of “*How the West was Once.*”

The Little Synagogue on the Prairie Project Society is a not-for-profit volunteer organization that has spearheaded this grassroots effort to rescue, move, restore and interpret the Montefiore Institute, a synagogue that once served a small Jewish farming settlement in eastern Alberta near the Saskatchewan border. This is an independent community project that is entirely volunteer-initiated and has been undertaken in partnership with the board and staff of Heritage Park Historical Village. Once the Montefiore Institute arrives at Heritage Park, ownership will transfer to the Heritage Park Society, which will operate and maintain it in perpetuity.

“We are incredibly proud to offer the Montefiore Institute as a gift to Heritage Park,” said Irena Karshenbaum, the volunteer President of The Little Synagogue on the Prairie Project Society. “We believe the synagogue will serve to create bridges of understanding among all Albertans and we hope the park will use the little synagogue to plant seeds of tolerance and compassion in all who visits it.”

“We are very excited to be telling this little known chapter of Alberta history, that the Jewish people were among the province’s earliest settlers,” said Alida Visbach, President and Chief Executive Officer of Heritage Park. “It’s a story whose time has come.”

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