



RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS FORUM BEGINS ON FRIDAY

St. John's - June 05, 2008 - The Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador (HFNL) is hosting "Our Historic Religious Buildings: A Stewardship Forum" in St. John's on June 6th and 7th. International speakers will join panellists from throughout the province to stimulate the formation of strategies and solutions to the challenges of maintaining our historic religious buildings.

"Our religious buildings are important symbols of the values, beliefs and aspirations of our forefathers. They are the most permanent features in our outports and townscapes. They are beautiful and represent a high quality of design and local craftsmanship that is hard to find today. We need to foster a greater appreciation for their heritage value," says HFNL Executive Director George Chalker.

Chalker says guests, panellists, and registrants will be sharing their concerns and experiences with keeping historic religious buildings open. They will discuss the maintenance and energy efficiency of deconsecrated historic buildings and the adaptive reuse of historic religious buildings.

The keynote speaker is Sarah Peveler from "Sacred Places," a national, non-sectarian, non-profit organization dedicated to the sound stewardship and active community use of historic religious properties in the United States. Ms. Peveler will introduce the broad issue of why church preservation is important and address challenges faced in keeping historic churches on the landscape.

Dr. Frederick O'Dwyer, Senior Architect with the Irish Government's Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government, will speak on the topic of redundant churches and adaptive reuse. Other speakers include Andrew Powter and Mike Paterson, who specialize in wooden building maintenance.

Chalker says members of religious organizations and community groups from across the province, along with private property owners, will participate in panel discussions on keeping historic churches open for public worship and the adaptive reuse of buildings no longer used by congregations.

The forum is taking place at the Lantern on Barnes Road in St. John's. More information can be found at our webpage www.heritagefoundation.ca.

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