



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Lights, camera, action!**

#### *Main Street Bridge Lighting Ceremony*

NIAGARA REGION – July 21, 2008 – Like the candles on a birthday cake, Welland's Main Street Bridge will light up the evening sky on Wednesday, July 23, a prelude to the city's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations. Residents are invited to Merritt Park at 9:30 p.m. to attend a short ceremony and witness the illumination of the bridge as the new lights are switched on.

"Regional Council values the historical significance of Welland's East Main Bridge and has acknowledged that by funding this multi-million dollar restoration project," said Regional Chairman Peter Partington. "The Welland Canal and this bridge are synonymous with the City so it's wonderful that we have been able to co-ordinate this special lighting ceremony with their 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations."

The bridge was designated an historical landmark by Heritage Welland (formerly LACAC - Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee), and has been undergoing major renovations at the direction of Regional Council since May, 2006. The work completed to date has been in keeping with the original architecture, and includes: deck and substructure concrete repairs, sidewalk replacement, structural steel repairs and painting, replacement of splash guards with a new traffic railing, new roadway lighting, and new decorative pedestrian lighting. The latest renovations included a \$30,000 lighting system that was designed to prominently feature the bridge towers.

"Welland is excited to be celebrating its sesquicentennial on July 24, 2008, and this bridge-lighting event happening the day before our anniversary is just one more way we can celebrate the rich heritage of our wonderful City," stated Welland Mayor Damian Goulbourne.

Regional Councillor George Marshall, a vocal advocate for the bridge's restoration, said, "The Main Street Bridge is an important and unique landmark. I believe the restoration work done by the Region has been a valuable investment and it's great to know that the bridge will continue to be part of our City for generations to come."

The bridge was built in 1927-1930 during the construction of the Fourth Welland Canal (1913-1933) and was one of the three largest vertical lift bridges on the Canal. From its beginnings, the East Main Bridge played an integral role in the lives of Welland residents as it was the only link between the downtown east and west limits of the City. The bridge's height and central location make it a dominant element in the downtown core; it has always been the most recognizable landmark identified with the city as a whole.

"The East Main Bridge boasts unique architecture," said John Mastroianni, Chair of Heritage Welland. "It is the only one of the bridges that is not perpendicular to the Canal and was the only one to have had three lanes. The bridge is the most recognized landmark in our City and I encourage everyone to come out and celebrate the lighting ceremony."

The bridge-lighting ceremony leads into the City of Welland's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary weekend celebrations that start on July 24 and run through to July 27.

- 30 -

For more information, contact:

George Marshall  
Regional Councillor  
905-734-4851

and

Mayor Damian Goulbourne  
City of Welland  
905-735-1700