

# **Heritage Marketing Program**

## **Marketing Strategy Outline**

**Prepared for:  
Museums Association of  
Saskatchewan  
SaskCulture Inc.**

**March 2004**

# Introduction

This document sets out a marketing plan to support Saskatchewan's heritage sector in advancing awareness of our province's heritage.

The marketing plan has been prepared as the conclusion of the short-term research and development phase of a heritage marketing project commissioned in late 2003 by the heritage sector through the Museums Association of Saskatchewan.

The research and development project included extensive study into perceptions of, and attitudes toward, heritage both within the heritage sector and among the general public. Results of that research are key drivers in shaping the marketing strategy outlined in this document.

# Background

## The Issues

As evidenced by internal discussions, forums, and documents over the last four years, individuals and organizations in Saskatchewan's heritage sector have been concerned that:

- ◆ Heritage is not highly valued by the public at large.
- ◆ The contribution heritage makes to quality of life is poorly understood.
- ◆ Strategies are needed to
  - create a broad awareness of heritage and its value;
  - create an environment in which heritage sector partners more effectively market; and
  - capitalize on the marketing opportunity represented by the 2005 provincial centennial.

## Action Program

In 2003, the heritage sector decided to address these concerns by embarking on a multi-phase program that will

- ◆ research and design a marketing strategy;
- ◆ deliver a campaign based on the strategy, and
- ◆ evaluate the campaign's impact.

The first phase of the program is outlined in this and the documents appended to it. The work in this phase included

- ◆ conducting an appraisal of the meaning of heritage to people in Saskatchewan;
- ◆ determining the optimal positioning for heritage to take in the 2005 centennial;
- ◆ using the appraisal's findings to drive an outreach campaign that would:
  - focus on the 2005 centennial, and
  - build capacity for heritage organizations by creating broad awareness of heritage and its value to communities.

## **This Document**

Outlining the results of the work commissioned by the heritage sector, this document:

- ◆ summarizes the major findings of the appraisal;
- ◆ describes a positioning for heritage to take best advantage of perceptions;
- ◆ outlines a framework for a marketing project that will establish the desired positioning in the public consciousness.

In this document, we use the following as a shorthand definition of heritage:

*“Heritage is what we have received from the past. It shapes our present identity and provides insight for our future.”*

The mandate for this report is oriented to outreach – identifying opportunities and strategies for heightening the community profile of heritage. In this regard, the social function of heritage most relevant to the current situation is that it can help provide a *“sense of place, a sense of self.”*

## **Research Phase**

The research phase of the project was mandated to:

- ◆ identify levels of understanding and appreciation of heritage;
- ◆ highlight selected behavioural patterns where heritage is a factor; and
- ◆ profile the perceived characteristics of the Saskatchewan community.

Results from the research phase are summarized in the following section, and are examined in detail in the Survey Summary Report appended to this document.

## **Campaign Development Phase**

The objective of the campaign development phase, which constitutes the bulk of this document, is a marketing program that will take advantage of the 2005 centennial to:

- ◆ create positive perceptions of heritage;
- ◆ define the role heritage plays in the ongoing life of the province; and
- ◆ link this positive perception to the heritage sector partners.

In terms of content, the heritage campaign should:

- ◆ pinpoint key heritage values;
- ◆ demonstrate how they shape Saskatchewan's collective identity; and
- ◆ showcase how these values drive our present and future.

# Research findings

The research phase consisted of two segments, qualitative, and quantitative.

The qualitative segment included a half-day scoping session that probed experience within the heritage sector, followed by a focus group session involving the general public, held in Prince Albert. (Report attached as Appendix A.)

The quantitative segment used a sample survey of 600+ completed interviews with people province-wide. (Report attached as Appendix B.)

## Key results

- ◆ Contrary to expectation, heritage is not undervalued. Rather, it tends to be narrowly defined in terms of the historic and the physical, at the community and provincial levels. At the personal level, heritage is more focused on values and beliefs, which are prized.
- ◆ Family, ethnicity and community of origin are cited most often as top-of-mind “heritage.”
- ◆ The natural environment ranks highest as needing to be preserved. Next highest is values and beliefs. Others ranked below the average for all factors.
- ◆ Heritage as an entity generally tends to be viewed as historic, about the past. Typically it is pictured as something rooted in the time prior to the Depression, or possibly, ending with the Depression. It is not generally seen as unfolding today.
- ◆ Despite the uncertainty over heritage’s impact on the province, there is a strong sense that heritage shapes “who I am.” Nearly seventy percent say they maintain aspects of their heritage in their daily lives. The largest facet of heritage that is maintained is beliefs and values.
- ◆ Despite a poorly articulated self-concept as a provincial community, three quarters believe we share a common heritage as a province. The values we share might be summarized as “grit” and caring.
- ◆ Many of the characteristics which may have commonly been thought to be part of our heritage are no longer perceived to be vital in today’s provincial community. The next section outlines how the shift in perception.

## Loss of heritage characteristics

A striking finding in the research is the disparity between key characteristics often associated with Saskatchewan's heritage, and the existing perception people in the province hold of each other today.

Large majorities chose the following as characterizing the province:

- ◆ Security conscious, not risk-taking
- ◆ Conservative, not innovative
- ◆ Traditional, not modern
- ◆ Conventional, not pioneering
- ◆ Reactive, not proactive

(Full details on page 78 of the quantitative research report, Appendix B.)

This finding shows a marked difference between how Saskatchewan people see each other today, and how they would almost certainly have described the province three or four generations ago.

The disconnect between key perceptions today and yesterday signals a break with our roots. The break may be largely unrecognized. It no doubt contributes greatly to the view that heritage is less than relevant.

# Situation analysis

## Strengths

**Heritage is valued:** Perhaps the greatest asset available to the heritage sector is the value people impute to heritage. Large numbers believe it is important to preserve their heritage. Many report that they do so at the personal level.

**High level of perceived participation:** Nearly half of the population reports someone from their household as participating personally in a heritage activity in the last year. Over half report attending a heritage event, and two thirds report visiting a facility or site. These high rates of contact and activity provide a huge base for growth.

**Belief that we share a common heritage:** Three in four believe there is a shared heritage in this province. The understanding of what the shared bonds may be is poorly articulated, but the fact that a large majority across demographics and geographic boundaries senses a shared heritage means there is receptivity to a campaign that seeks to define the bonds.

**Large numbers sustain heritage in their daily lives:** Over two thirds indicate they carry forward facets of personal heritage in their daily lives. Linked with the high participation rate for heritage activity, and the level of agreement that common bonds exist, this fact highlights the substantial existing infrastructure already in place, around which a heritage marketing project can be built.

**Wide network of heritage facilities (museums) and volunteers:** Virtually all communities of consequence have heritage facilities and volunteers in place.

## Weaknesses

**Perception of heritage as “old stuff” – artifacts of a past that is disappearing:** The combination of the perception of disappearing with the sense that it may not be replaced with something better can lend a distasteful flavour to heritage. Heritage may risk being reduced to mere sentiment, or even to impediment, if interest in the past is seen as getting in the way of growing and prospering in our time.

**Decline in perception of heritage values as characterizing the province today:** Noted earlier in research findings, values that have long been considered mainsprings driving the Saskatchewan character are not perceived by people when they are asked to look around themselves and indicate which features they see. This phenomenon may explain why heritage seems undervalued. People who see a culture in decline may find celebrating its features futile or unproductive. The phenomenon clearly explains why heritage is seen as “past” – many core values are no longer perceived to be prominent.

**Weak sense of building a heritage today for the future:** A sense that the best years may be behind us is a disincentive to spend a great deal of attention on them. And in the same vein, a weak sense that heritage is being carried forward today, or that what is happening today is the heritage of tomorrow, is further disincentive; few people seek out a story with unhappy overtones. These factors work to the disadvantage of heritage promotion.

**Weakened sense of community, of how beliefs and values apply to all of us, beyond family:** Research highlights the indistinct perception of heritage (aside of old buildings) at the community level, and contrasts that with the much stronger perception of heritage being alive at the personal level. This is both a weakness and an opportunity, for it profiles the possibility of extending the personal to the community and thus creating broader new interest in heritage.

## **Opportunities**

**Strong desire to preserve values and beliefs:** Next to preserving the natural environment, preserving values and beliefs is a felt need a heritage marketing campaign can address.

**Need to drive forward, not live in the past:** Our ancestors were driven by values and beliefs that led them to come here to create something new. Aboriginal people are doing this today. A heritage marketing campaign can capitalize on this theme by creating a vision of how the values are meaningful today.

**Preference for activities and media in maintaining interest in heritage:** Respondents to the survey gave relatively high marks to active and verbal ways of preserving heritage. Given tendencies elsewhere to classify heritage as physical, this result is somewhat surprising, and points to possibilities for a strategically sensitive marketing campaign.

# Themes and Directions

## The Challenge

If the high points of the research phase of this project had to be summarized in three sentences, they might be:

- ◆ Heritage is conceived as close to the person: family, ethnicity, customs
- ◆ Heritage is perceived as having ended about 1939
- ◆ Our personal heritage values and beliefs drive us forward today

Aside of their personal beliefs and values, Saskatchewan people tend to view heritage as pertaining to things past. Heritage is connected with country of origin, or first language, or at the community level, with historic buildings. As such, it is interesting, sometimes fascinating, but largely irrelevant.

The inability to link broadly-defined concepts of heritage with the issues of present-day living very likely accounts for a large part of the origin of the feeling that heritage is undervalued.

## The Opportunity

Despite the ruptures in perception at the community and provincial levels, research shows there is a large majority in the province that sustains aspects of heritage in daily life. Values and beliefs figure prominently.

### **Bridging the personal and social**

We need to identify the missing link between these prized personal values, and our social values. The absence of the perceived link tends to atomize individuals, or families, even communities, and discourages the sense of heritage as relevant to our province as a society. We need a greater sense of heritage shared as a group.

### **Creating the heritage of the future**

We need to recreate a living tradition. There is little or no evidence that Saskatchewan people share a sense of heritage being created today. Heritage would appear to function as a reminder that instead of pioneering today, we are going backward, regressing. What we do today is seen as consuming heritage capital rather than creating it.

## **Beyond ethnic: we are Saskatchewan**

We need a sense of heritage as pertaining to this province. As observed when analyzing the 1955 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, there is a difference between outlooks then and now. We are long past the days of settlement and the creation of reserves. We have matured as a people. Over the last century our forebears have done things together and individually that underpin a common heritage of Saskatchewan that is part of each of us today. The characteristics all people share now need to be brought to the fore as a living thing whose relevance is obvious.

# Goal & Objectives

The goal of a heritage marketing campaign must be to demonstrate that heritage is valuable and relevant today.

Heritage must shift:

- ◆ from being seen in terms of old glories to being seen as an expression of who we are today;
- ◆ from being about old things, to being about today's values; and
- ◆ from a focus on the personal, to a focus on what we share.

**As individuals we are nourished by roots in diverse streams of ethnicity. As a community, we share a common heritage. We are Saskatchewanian. We prize our Saskatchewan culture and contribute to it daily.**

Our investment in heritage is not to offer a sentimental view of the past, but to create a vibrant, active life for ourselves that will in turn offer a heritage for tomorrow's generations.

The research points to a route that can be taken to reach this goal. Several milestones or objectives will be critical to success as we move along this route. They include:

- ◆ Showing that key heritage values and beliefs that are prized and sustained personally, are also shared commonly.
- ◆ Shifting the perception of heritage from being associated largely with ethnicity and "old country" to being perceived in association with Saskatchewan and the society that has been created here.
- ◆ Advancing the time frame in which heritage is perceived, so that it moves from being an artifact of the settlement days, into the post-war era, the Sixties, and into our own times.
- ◆ Demonstrating the importance of Saskatchewan heritage themes in daily life today.

# Key Messages

## Past is prologue

Where we have come from, influences where we can go.

Saskatchewan people came from many places geographically, but in terms of motives and values, they shared a great deal in common.

Today our society benefits from the experiences of the early years of the last century, and from those of the last half of that century as well. We understand change. We also understand things that don't change. These are our heritage. Our challenge is to make them our future.

## Pioneering today

Our ancestors faced difficult challenges. Their response was to pioneer new ways of doing things and new ways of living.

Today's challenges are different in kind but very similar in quality. The values that drove our forebears are vibrant and powerful today. Our task is to take these values forward and build the heritage our children will live by.

## Heritage lives

Heritage is about today.

Heritage is not found in physical artifacts from days gone by. These are symbols and reminders of the values and beliefs that are our heritage. To the extent that we are true to these values and beliefs, we honour our forebears, and are pioneers ourselves.

## Our heritage today is more than the old country, it's this country

Saskatchewan people have distinct and unique origins, but today we fit together as parts of the jigsaw mosaic we call Saskatchewan.

Our traditions grow out of those of Europe and Asia and the plains Aboriginals, but increasingly, they are of Saskatchewan. Our roots are here. We share a great deal. We are building our own heritage today.

# Strategy and Tactics

The goal of heritage marketing is to demonstrate the relevance and excitement of heritage today.

## Strategy

The strategy to achieve this goal is to portray the link between heritage values and the driving forces in the province today. Specifically the strategy will:

- ◆ Define heritage as having a distinct Saskatchewan dimension.
- ◆ Identify the major themes of our shared Saskatchewan heritage.
- ◆ Demonstrate the presence and vitality of Saskatchewan heritage themes in daily life today.

The campaign will establish a sense of place and a sense of self, distinct to Saskatchewan. It will show that while this sense is rooted in the experience of days gone by, it is not backward looking, but rather a vital force rich in themes we explore and develop today.

The strategy will make use of the 2005 centennial to mount a multi-faceted campaign that can create the conceptual umbrella for activity by heritage organizations well into the future.

## Tactics

The strategy can be implemented on at least four levels:

- ◆ Media: Use mass and targeted media to project heritage themes and the role they play in Saskatchewan life today.
- ◆ Organizational: Engage heritage sector organizations with their niche audiences to mount their own outreach projects under the umbrella created by the provincial campaign.
- ◆ Community: Using outreach and participation techniques to involve people at the sub-provincial level in elaborating how heritage plays its role today.

- ◆ Intellectual: Expanding on Saskatchewan heritage themes and culture in schools, post-secondary forums, and in the news media.

## Media

Mass media is important to establish the idea that Saskatchewan has a heritage, and to identify its components.

The heritage marketing campaign will leverage the 2005 centennial, a period in which there could be many other similar messages abroad. To have presence, heritage marketing will need mass media: television, radio, and print.

The intent will be to make the heritage sector's marketing campaign the mainstay of the province's centennial. The heritage sector is uniquely well positioned:

- ◆ to deliver a campaign that can have impact in defining Saskatchewan heritage and culture, and
- ◆ be a unifying force across political, social and economic boundaries

For this project to happen at all will require major backing. Support can be sought on the basis that:

- ◆ this project has broad benefit and applicability in mobilizing Saskatchewan people, and
- ◆ while it is not particular to the heritage sector, the sector is a near-ideal body to mount it.

The strategy envisages two waves of a media campaign, one in spring, the other in fall.

- ◆ Phase one would identify heritage themes and values using heritage vignettes.
- ◆ Phase two would link these themes and values to the current day using snapshot examples of values-in-action from the present day.

A logo should be developed to represent the "heritage is alive" theme. It would be used by all sector partners, throughout the campaign, and into the future.

## Organizational

Heritage sector organizations will identify their own initiatives, taking advantage of the profile and conceptual framework offered by the province-level campaign. Sector partners could choose to be part of the community and intellectual aspects of the campaign.

## **Community**

Every community has its example of heritage values in action. Many have local businesses or organizations whose stories embody pioneering, proactive, innovative, community-minded or risk-taking activity.

The tactic at the community level will be to encourage local people to produce short digital productions documenting these heritage-in-action stories. The productions will be posted on a website for easy access.

The top productions could be awarded a prize. Activity can be pursued through high schools as part of social studies, through local historical organizations and through folklore-storytelling functions of libraries or societies. They can also be key part of a sponsoring body's local profile.

## **Intellectual**

A significant component of the task of making heritage a living part of the community is making it part of the community's intellectual discourse.

Intellectual discussion should not be limited to academic circles. There is a wide and growing exchange going on now over the nature of Saskatchewan's heritage, and how it can be carried forward. Heritage marketing is positioned to contribute to it.

The tactic proposed is to commission articles on Saskatchewan's heritage and how it has produced the society we live in today. Working with the Saskatchewan Weekly Newspapers Association and the major dailies, these could become the basis for ongoing discussion in the editorial pages of provincial newspapers.

# Next Steps

## Implementation

To be ready for the centennial, the heritage marketing program will need immediate action.

Several important pieces must be drawn together and managed with some intensity in the near future to move the marketing plan to the next level. They include:

- ◆ Operationalizing the strategic concept
  - elaboration of action plans
  - budgeting
- ◆ Relationship building
  - internally, with heritage sector partners
  - horizontally, with other organizations such as Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce (Action Saskatchewan), Tourism Saskatchewan, media outlets
  - vertically, with government at the provincial level
- ◆ Partnership
  - identifying and scoping prime prospects
  - preparation of presentation packages tailored to the prospect
  - negotiation and closing
- ◆ Materials development
  - working with heritage sector and partners to define content
  - production
- ◆ Project management
  - detailed execution of action plans

A critical component in the near term is sponsorship.

A campaign of the scale envisaged requires external funding. The heritage sector has limited funding currently available. Organizations and businesses are already anticipating the centennial and preparing their own initiatives. Since the heritage sector relies on others, it is imperative to take early action to secure partnerships before other commitments are made.

As implied above, implementing the desired campaign calls for two strategic approaches:

- ◆ Partnership
- ◆ Phasing

## **Partnership**

To address the financial requirement, the heritage sector will need partners that can supply dollars. Prospective partners include:

- ◆ Tourism organizations
- ◆ Businesses
- ◆ Government

The critical next step in delivering a campaign will be taking this strategy to prospective partners with a well-developed solicitation package. It will be important to act on this in the near future before other options for the centennial are selected.

## **Phasing**

Because funding is likely to be limited, implementation should be staged so that action can move forward as funds permit.

The key to visibility will be the broadcast component of the media campaign. The key to achieving a profile in broadcast will be producing the material. Production involves two essential steps:

- ◆ Shaping a coherent and attractive presentation of the Saskatchewan heritage characteristics and those who represent them.
- ◆ Producing the broadcast material.

The core of the strategy is to achieve an effective, good quality presentation of the “heritage is alive” message. Though this could also be the most dollar-intensive facet of the campaign, it should be considered the first phase.

The second phase will be to achieve placement of the broadcast material. A partnership with media outlets may be developed to help reach this objective.

The third phase would include community and intellectual components.