



MEDIA RELEASE

Honorary Chair of the 2008 Emerald Awards and Special Achievement Award Announced

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April 15, 2008 (Edmonton) – The Alberta Emerald Foundation announced today that Edmonton Mayor Stephen Mandel has accepted the role of Honorary Chair for the 2008 Emerald Awards.

The Mayor's first official duty as Honorary Chair will be to announce the finalists for the 2008 Emerald Awards for environmental excellence on April 15, 2008 at 5:30 p.m. at Edmonton's City Hall.

"We are honoured to have Mayor Mandel's support for the Emerald Awards," said Ron Kruhlak, Chair of the Alberta Emerald Foundation. "His enthusiastic acceptance of this challenge speaks to his commitment to the environment, an important issue to all Albertans. We are also excited to announce that the Emerald Awards will stay in Edmonton for 2009 in order to partner with the ICLEI World Congress which Edmonton will be hosting June 14-18, 2009. Mayor Mandel will remain as Honorary Chair for 2009 Emerald Awards as well."

"Edmontonians are proud of the role they take in caring for the environment," says Mayor Mandel. "They know that the environment affects every aspect of our lives, so they work hard to ensure they make as little impact on it as possible. The Emerald Awards recognize the wonderful environmental work being done by individuals and organizations from across this province, and I am thrilled to be part of the celebrations. In addition, hosting the ICLEI World Congress is a great honour and our successful bid means Edmonton will continue to take a leadership role in municipal environmental excellence."

The 2008 Emerald Awards will be presented on the Shoctor Stage at the Citadel Theatre in Edmonton on June 3, 2008. Twelve individuals and organizations will be recognized and their achievements in environmental excellence celebrated during the course of the evening. Program and ticket information will be available soon.

In addition a Special Achievement Award will be presented to long-time environmental activist Dr. Martha Kostuch. Dr. Kostuch's personal integrity and commitment are beyond reproach. She has worked tirelessly as a volunteer, always focusing her efforts on the content and the issue rather than the person. This has given her credibility and respect, even from those who don't always agree with her. One of her key contributions has been her ability to empower others by mentoring the next generation and teaching them to be effective within public processes (see complete backgrounder at www.emeraldfoundation.ca/media).

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Backgrounder: Alberta Emerald Awards

It is critical for Albertans to be passionate about balancing the development of this province's rich resources with environmental stewardship. The Emerald Awards recognize and reward the excellent environmental initiatives undertaken by large and small corporations, individuals, not-for-profit associations, community groups and governments.

Each year the Alberta Emerald Foundation receives over 100 nominations in a number of categories. A panel of knowledgeable judges, with cross-sectoral experience, carry out an independent evaluation based on criteria outlined in the nominations package.

In June each year, over 600 guests gather for a gala event that alternates between Edmonton and Calgary to celebrate environmental excellence in Alberta and provide recognition to those individuals and organizations whose commitment to our environment truly demonstrates leadership. Because of their ingenuity, dedication and hard work, others will follow, what is now innovative will become the norm, and all Albertans will benefit from a healthier, cleaner environment.

The Foundation website (www.emerald.foundation.ca) includes a searchable database of all 1,700 environmental projects nominated over the past 17 years. The database includes contact information for most nominations and is a rich resource for those looking to determine what they can do, as individuals and organizations, to make a difference.

Criteria

Nominations are judged on the basis of:

- Commitment to preservation, protection, enhancement or sustainability of the environment.
- Positive, tangible and long-term impact on:
 - Quality of air, water or land
 - Preservation of biological diversity
 - Climate change/greenhouse gases
 - Public or corporate attitudes towards the environment.

Where appropriate, judging acknowledges efforts that reflect collaborative, team- or partnership-based approaches that have contributed to the success of the activity or initiative.

Categories

Business: Large
Business: Small
Climate Change
Community Group
Corporate or Institutional Leadership
Education: Organizations
Education: School or Classroom
Government Institution
Individual Commitment
Not-for-Profit Association
Research & Innovation
Youth