


Ground-breaking ceremony held for new sealers memorial centre



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Premier Kathy Dunderdale is in Elliston today where a ground-breaking ceremony was held at the site of the new Sealers Memorial Interpretation Centre in Elliston, Trinity Bay. The centre is being constructed as part of the Home from The Sea campaign.

"The sealing industry has and continues to play a significant role in the lives of many people throughout Newfoundland and Labrador," said Dunderdale. "Today's groundbreaking ceremony marks a pivotal step in the Home from The Sea campaign. I commend the campaign committee and the Elliston Heritage Foundation for their commitment to this project. The Sealers Memorial Interpretation Centre and the Memorial Statue will be a lasting symbol and will serve as a permanent tribute to the many lives lost and of the sealing industry."

Since the Home from The Sea campaign was launched in December 2011, the campaign committee has worked toward raising \$2.5 million to build the memorial statue, designed by artist Morgan MacDonald, an educational interpretation centre and a walking path that will honour sealers.

The province has contributed \$500,000 toward the project. The site will recognize the loss of life from the 1914 sealing disasters and commemorate the lives and work of all sealers and their historic contribution to the culture, economy and development of communities throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

The federal government also provided funding of \$500,000 for the memorial through the Building Communities Through Arts and Heritage program of the Department of Canadian Heritage.

Also attending the ceremony were Lt.-Gov. John Crosbie and Home from The Sea Campaign patron, Peter Penashue, minister of intergovernmental affairs, Myrtle Stagg, chairwoman of the Elliston Heritage Foundation, Fisheries Minister Darin King and Glen Little, MHA for Bonavista South.

"The seal fishery has played a significant role in the culture and heritage of our province as well as the economic success of communities across Newfoundland and Labrador," Penashue said. "The centre that will open in 2014 will be a signature building for the area and will ensure that all visitors understand the seal fishery and how it has shaped our communities and province."

"Our government is pleased to support this very worthwhile campaign," said King. "The campaign committee, and His Honour, Mr. Crosbie, have been driving forces behind the success since the beginning. I offer them my sincere appreciation for their work and commend them on such a wonderful undertaking paying homage to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who have lost their lives and to the province's sealing industry as a whole."

The memorial site is being constructed in anticipation of the 100th anniversary of the SS Newfoundland and SS Southern Cross sealing tragedies in 2014.

"The sealing industry has had an enormous impact on the province and the communities in the Bonavista and Trinity

Bay region,” said Little. “I am pleased by our government’s commitment toward this project. It will enshrine our history for all to see, and I personally look forward to the unveiling of the centre and memorial in 2014.”

More information on the Home from The Sea Campaign can be found by visiting www.homefromthesea.ca.