

Franco-Ontarians celebrate big at *Fêtes de la Nouvelle-France SAQ* in Quebec city this August

Ottawa, July 18 2014 – With an important Franco-Ontarian delegation in Quebec city, L'Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario (The Assembly) announced today its participation to this year's edition of *Les Fêtes de la Nouvelle-France SAQ (Fêtes)*. The annual *Fêtes* is a yearly festival, celebrating French presence in Canada, lasts 5 days and attracts 130,000 visitors from around the globe, flocking to the capital to celebrate in regalia of the 1700's.

This year, Ontario will be part of the program of the *Fêtes* to underline 400 years of French presence and achievements in Ontario*. Consequently, from August 6 to 10, several prominent Franco-Ontarian artists, tourism representatives and prominent members of the French community will be participating in the *Fêtes* to promote French culture in Ontario and, most of all, to promote tourism in Ontario in 2015.

The Ontario programming at the *Fêtes* can be found at www.ontario400.ca/fnf and the *Fêtes'* general program, at <http://www.nouvellefrance.qc.ca/index.php/fr/programmation/programmation-2014.html>

From August 6 to the 10th, the Assembly and its partners plan to highlight the best of Franco-Ontarian culture from yesteryear to today with shows, folk tales, legends and storytellers, dance performances, conferences, live and interactive demos, concerts as well as a unique Franco-Ontarian themed float in the opening parade. On August 8th, Ontario will be the main focus of the festival with a special evening dinner and show as well as a live performance on the festival's main stage by Franco-Ontarian pop hit sensation, *Damien Robitaille*. All of these will showcase the high points of historical French presence and contributions, across Ontario from the 1700's to today.

« The *Fêtes de la Nouvelle-France SAQ* offer us an amazing platform to present ourselves to Quebec and the thousands who visit the *Fêtes* every year. The Assembly has been working diligently towards organizing some amazing moments for 2015 and wishes to promote them to our friends in Québec. Our wish is to celebrate this most important benchmark in Ontario's history with all Ontarians and Canadians. We want our upcoming showcase at the *Fêtes* and all the events of 2015, held across the province, to provide a deeper understanding of French history in Ontario and its important contribution to the province's economic development » explains the Assembly's president Denis Vaillancourt.

Spearheaded by the Assembly, in collaboration with partner organisations *L'écho d'un peuple* (historical programming) and *Direction Ontario* (tourism development), it is the first time in 30 years that such an important Franco-Ontarian delegation traveled to Quebec.

To get a better grasp on what is *Ontario 400*, visit www.Ontario400.ca or follow it on Twitter @ontario400 or on Facebook at Ontario 400.

Today, more than 600 000 francophones live in Ontario, making up the most significant French language community in Canada outside of the province of Quebec.

This initiative is produced in part with the support of Heritage Canada and the Office for Francophone Affairs.

**Ontario 400* is a showcase of province-wide events to commemorate an event of great historical importance to the province of Ontario: the passage of explorer Samuel de Champlain on the Ottawa River (1613) to Huronia (1615). Champlain is considered as the founder of New France, which in the 17th century included the geographic territory we now call Ontario. *Ontario 400* follows in the footsteps of similar 400 years' commemorative celebrations held in Acadia in 2004 and Quebec city in 2008, following Champlain's historical explorations into the Canadian land.

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L'Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario (the Assemblée) brings together and acts as the political voice for French-speaking Ontario. Its mandate is to unite the province's Francophone population and to speak on their behalf, to protect the rights of all 611,500 Franco-Ontarians.

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