

May 17, 2011

WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT CORP.--Cable Wharf History Highlighted on Halifax Waterfront

The role that Halifax and Nova Scotia played in connecting the world through transatlantic cabling was showcased today, May 17, on the Halifax waterfront.

Waterfront Development Corporation, local family business Murphy's The Cable Wharf, and Maritime Museum of the Atlantic launched the Cable Wharf interpretive walkway project.

Ten panels located around the wharf highlight the stories of ships and crew that were part of the cabling era in the 1900s. The Cable Wharf was a prominent feature of the city's waterfront and a thriving enterprise for more than 50 years.

Cable ran along the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean connecting Europe and North America via Newfoundland. Messages were carried along a cable by signals transmitted in Morse Code. A sample Morse Code telegraph launched the interpretive walkway project.

"The Cable Wharf interpretive panels will inform visitors and residents of Nova Scotia's prominent place in the history of global communications," said Percy Paris, Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism.

"Today we continue to use innovative ways to remain at the forefront of the industry. Initiatives such as our broadband project, which connects all Nova Scotians to the rest of the world, create good jobs that grow the economy."

The Cable Wharf, located at the bottom of George Street, was built in 1913 by the Western Union Telegraph Company. It is one of the last original structures on the waterfront.

"This important piece of waterfront history provided a gateway to how the world communicated," said Colin MacLean, president and CEO, Waterfront Development Corporation. "From texting to downloading the web via our wireless waterfront, the global network we cherish relies on cables at the bottom of our oceans."

Halifax was the Atlantic seaboard's primary cable ship port and service call depot for the transatlantic cable. Large spools of cable were stored in the bottom of The Cable Wharf.

"For more than 28 years, Murphy's The Cable Wharf has been a part of the

history of the waterfront and the Cable Wharf," said founder Gerard Murphy. "We are proud to play a role in the education of the history of this building."

Project partners also include Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, home to an expanding cable history exhibit, and Julian Bloomer, whose father, Captain Henry Bloomer, navigated cable ships.

Mr. Bloomer shared research, family stories and images that are now part of the museum's collection. Cpt. Bloomer invented the submarine cable plow in the 1930s that could simultaneously dig a trench and bury cable under the ocean floor.

Cable ships, known as the sea's workhorses, were designed to lay and maintain cables. Crews often worked in treacherous weather conditions. The ships based at Cable Wharf were Cyrus Field, Lord Kelvin, and Minia, which was part of the Titanic recovery.

Before the 1850s, intercontinental communications were restricted by how quickly a ship could travel. Modern day cable ships use fibre optic cables.

May 17 is also World Telecommunications and Information Society Day, established to highlight what the Internet and other information and communication technologies can bring to societies and economies.

Waterfront Development is a provincial Crown corporation developing the strategic potential of the Bedford, Dartmouth, Halifax and Lunenburg waterfronts. Revenues are reinvested in the waterfronts to drive economic opportunity, enhance tourism, experiences and reflect and protect marine heritage.

FOR BROADCAST USE:

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Waterfront Development Corporation, Murphy's The Cable Wharf, and Maritime Museum of the Atlantic launched the Cable Wharf interpretive walkway project.

Panels located on site highlight the stories of ships and crew that were part of the ocean floor cabling era in the 19-hundreds.

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