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February 11, 2013

City of Lethbridge
910 - 4th Avenue South
Lethbridge, Alberta T1J 0P6

Dear Mayor & Council Members:

I am writing to you on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Canadian Association of Fairs and Exhibitions (CAFE) to voice our strong support for the proposed redevelopment project at Exhibition Park in Lethbridge.

As the national voice for the fair and exhibition industry across Canada, CAFE represents agricultural societies, exhibitions and associated businesses in communities large and small. Lethbridge and District Exhibition is one of 790 agricultural societies across Canada, and is an active and prominent member of our Association.

The CAFE Board has studied the redevelopment plan for Exhibition Park, and feels confident that it will position Lethbridge as a destination for conventions and other major events. You are no doubt aware that today's major conventions seek venues which can accommodate all components of their events (trade shows, banquets, meetings, etc.) under one roof. (Our own national CAFE convention is a prime example of this trend to one-stop shopping; we only use venues where all our conference activities can be accommodated on a single site.) These conventions bring hundreds of thousands of dollars to communities through venue rentals, hotel nights, restaurants, banquets, shopping and other spinoffs. The redevelopment model that is proposed for Exhibition Park will create a valuable community asset which will attract events and visitors and generate tremendous economic impact for Lethbridge.

According to a recent National study conducted by a third party agency, the combined impact of Canadian Fairs is estimated at \$1.0 Billion and the average medium-sized fair in Canada has a \$2.7 Million impact on its local economy. However, fairs produce other benefits that are just as significant as the economic ones...they create a sense of community that grows social capital and quality of life, and they provide deep cultural, traditional and emotional connections to the people of the local area. I tell you this because it gives you some idea of what your local exhibition is already doing for your community. Now imagine how that impact will grow with the development of this complex.

As Canada's rural population continues to evolve and develop, fairs and agricultural societies also change and evolve to reflect their own communities. They educate the public about the importance of agriculture in their lives and play an important role in tourism, recreation and development of community identity

and pride. Fairs and Agricultural Societies continue to be some of the most significant organizations in our communities.

Capital investment in community infrastructure by all levels of government is crucial to keep our communities vibrant and competitive in today's changing society. The City of Lethbridge has an opportunity to invest in a tremendous asset which will serve your residents for generations to come. We urge you to support this important redevelopment initiative!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen Oliver". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Karen Oliver, President
Canadian Association of Fairs & Exhibitions