

NEWS RELEASE

CANADIAN FOOTBALL HALL OF FAME INDUCTION WEEKEND 2009 TO BE HELD IN

WINNIPEG



Manitoba Lotteries presents a ground-breaking celebration of Canadian football



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WINNIPEG – Excitement is rising about the Canadian Football Hall of Fame Induction Weekend, presented by Manitoba Lotteries, which will be held in Winnipeg for the first time from September 24-26, 2009.

An annual celebration of the best in Canadian football, the Hall of Fame Induction Weekend honours players chosen by a selection committee of football professionals from across the country and features a number of exciting events, culminating in a gala dinner celebrating the new inductees. The Canadian Football Hall of Fame will announce their 2009 inductees on April 7th, 2009.

The 2009 Induction Weekend marks only the second time that this prestigious event has been held in a city other than the Hall's hometown of Hamilton and the first time that it has taken place in Manitoba.

Mark DeNobile, Executive-Director of the Canadian Football Hall of Fame said that when the Hall decided to take their signature event on the road, they chose Winnipeg "because of the passion Manitobans have always shown for our game, and their proven ability to host tremendous festivals and celebrations. He added, "The early response here in the province has been overwhelming. We're very excited about everything that's planned and we're looking forward to what is shaping up as one of the most successful induction weekends in our 46 year history."

Mark Cohon, Commissioner of the Canadian Football League, commended the Canadian Football Hall of Fame's board for its decision to share this event with their fellow Canadians. He said, "While the people of Hamilton have always warmly welcomed new inductees and their families, the Hall has recognized the potential to increase its national profile and further promote our game by inviting other cities to host the induction weekend, and Winnipeg is an excellent first choice."

Lyle Bauer, President and CEO of the Winnipeg Blue Bombers, said that he has no doubt that Manitobans will embrace the Hall of Fame and their Induction Weekend celebrations. He also said that everyone associated with the team is greatly looking forward to the big weekend and its events. "The Bombers, who have been such an integral part of the history of Winnipeg and Manitoba, are thrilled to be part of history," he said, "and that's what the first Hall of Fame Induction Weekend here in our hometown really is, a bit of football history."

Although the relocation of the Hall of Fame Induction Weekend to Winnipeg is an exciting "first," it is actually only one of several for the event. The 2009 Induction Weekend is also the first time that the event has featured a presenting sponsor, with **Manitoba Lotteries'** stepping in to partner with the event's organizing committee.

"Manitoba Lotteries is proud to be Presenting Sponsor of the 2009 Canadian Football Hall of Fame Induction Weekend," said **MLC President and CEO Winston Hodgins**. "Manitoba is a passionate football province and excited to host this prestigious event, a first for Winnipeg. Manitoba Lotteries is a long-time supporter of our Winnipeg Blue Bombers and we look forward, along with their fans, to welcome current and past Hall of Famers during September's Induction Weekend."

Another first for 2009 is the inclusion of Hall of Fame Member **Paul Bennett** (former Toronto Argonaut, Winnipeg Blue Bomber and Hamilton Tiger-Cat great) as chair of the organizing committee. His involvement marks the first time an existing Hall of Fame member has been able to welcome new inductees into the Hall.

"As a former CFL player, a proud member of the Canadian Football Hall of Fame, and an even prouder Manitoban, this means the world to me," said Bennett. "Next to the Grey Cup, this is the biggest celebration of Canadian football. Along with honouring the inductees, we want this to be a true celebration of our game, and our province, and what the two have always meant to one another."

City of Winnipeg Mayor Sam Katz was also enthusiastic about Winnipeg's opportunity to show its passion for the game. "Hosting the Canadian Football Hall of Fame 2009 Induction in Winnipeg is an incredible opportunity to showcase some of Winnipeg's best qualities: the hospitality of our citizens, the spirit of our citizens, and the energy of a city that loves football," said Katz. "It is certainly an honour to host this wonderful event in our great sports city."

Stuart Duncan, President Destination Winnipeg Inc. is also very excited to be involved. "We congratulate Paul Bennett and the organizing committee for bringing this major event to our city. Destination Winnipeg and Travel Manitoba are excited to support the Canadian Football Hall of Fame weekend in Winnipeg, and are co-sponsoring the Welcome to Winnipeg Breakfast. In addition, we will be supporting the event with welcome packages to visiting VIPs and promoting the event through our website and channels."

Hall of Fame Induction Week events will take place from September 24-26, 2009. Events include:

The Hall of Fame Golf Tournament

Niakwa Golf Country Club, September 24, 2009. At this fundraising tournament, participants will be able to golf alongside new inductees, Blue Bomber Hall of Fame members and local alumni.

The Welcome to Winnipeg Breakfast

Delta Winnipeg Hotel, September 25, 2009

Hosted jointly by Manitoba Tourism and Destination Winnipeg, the morning will be dedicated to welcoming out-of-province guests to Winnipeg, in addition to recognizing event sponsors and special guests.

The Unveiling of Inductees Busts and presentation of Canadian Football Hall of Fame Jackets

McPhillips Street Station Casino, September 25, 2009

Busts of the new inductees are unveiled for the first time, after which they will be placed in the Canadian Football Hall of Fame and Museum in Hamilton for all to see.

The Gala Induction Dinner

The Winnipeg Convention Centre, September 25, 2009

This is the annual dinner where the new inductees are formally inducted into the Hall of Fame. The event features video highlights of each inductee and their speeches in response to being inducted.

The Hall of Fame Football Game

CanadInns Stadium on September 26, 2009

The new inductees and Hall of Fame guests will be honoured during a half-time presentation, which will be televised nationally on TSN.

Blue Bomber season tickets are now available and tickets for single games, including the Hall of Fame Game, will go on sale in June. Registration for the Hall of Fame Golf Tournament and tickets to the Gala Induction Dinner will be available online at www.bluebombers.com To discuss sponsorship opportunities, contact Paul Bennett at 795-2992. For more information the Canadian Football Hall of Fame Induction Weekend, visit www.cfhof.ca

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