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Toronto named Host City for World Pride 2014

Toronto has been named the host city for World Pride 2014. The announcement was made today in St. Petersburg, Florida at the annual InterPride 2009 Conference. InterPride is the International Association of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex Pride Coordinators.

The presentation of the Toronto bid took place yesterday during a plenary session at the conference, and included the screening of a video filmed for the occasion as well as public addresses by **David Whitaker, President of Tourism Toronto, Scott Mullin**, VP Government and Community Relations, **TD Bank Financial Group** and **Toronto Police Services** LGBT Liaison Officer Constable **Thomas Decker**. The city of Stockholm was also bidding to host the event.

“We are delighted to have been awarded this opportunity to bring the world to Toronto,” said Mark Singh, past co-chair of the organization and current chair of the World Pride committee. “In this exceptionally diverse city, the advent of a festival like this is an opportunity to highlight the acceptance of the queer community by Canadians, and to raise awareness of other countries where queers are still discriminated against.”

World Pride 2014 aims to promote lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) issues on an international level through parades, festivals and other cultural activities. The provisional program for the festival includes an opening ceremony with a parade of nations, an international human rights conference, a wall of remembrance in honour of the 45th anniversary of Stonewall, and an exhibition and networking fair. A gathering of all Pride Toronto’s former International Grand Marshals will take place, an AIDS Candlelight vigil will be held, and three parades including a Trans March, a Dyke March and Pride Parade. Cultural events will be scheduled to celebrate Canada Day and the US Independence Day, and a closing ceremony will be held immediately following the Parade.

“All the usual aspects of Toronto’s Pride Week will remain,” said Singh, “such as the Family Pride and FreeZone (an alcohol and drug free environment), and world class entertainment and performers will appear on multiple stages during the festival.”

Pride Toronto’s 2009 festival drew over a million people and brought an economic benefit to the city of over \$100m. Now in its 30th year, the festival is recognized as being one of the leading cultural events of its kind in the world and continuously strives to become more inclusive. With a volunteer force in excess of 1000 people, the organization’s profile is evidence of its payoff line ‘You Belong’.

With the World Pride bid firmly now in its grasp, Pride Toronto has plenty of work ahead. 2010 is its 30th anniversary year, and a variety of new initiatives is planned including the introduction of year-round events, beginning with a Fall program that includes a Halloween Party on Saturday the 31st of October.

Singh says that “planning for World Pride will begin immediately.”

Pride Toronto is the not-for-profit organization that hosts Pride Week, an annual festival held during the last week of June in downtown Toronto. Pride Toronto exists to celebrate the history, courage, diversity and future of Toronto's LGBTTIQQ2S communities (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer, Questioning, Two-Spirited) and is one of the leading cultural events of its kind in the world. Toronto's Pride Week has been named the Best Festival in Canada by the Canadian Special Events Industry, is recognized as one of only Eight Signature Events in the city of Toronto, and is ranked as one of the TOP 50 festivals in Ontario by Festivals and Events Ontario. www.pridetoronto.com.

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