

2012-2013 budget appropriation for Québec religious heritage restoration

Montréal, June 20, 2012 – The Minister of Culture, Communications and the Status of Women, Christine St-Pierre, has announced a new budget appropriation to fund religious heritage restoration efforts in Québec. The amount awarded to the Conseil du patrimoine religieux du Québec for fiscal 2012–2013 is \$14 million. This new funding clears the way for 89 restoration projects across the province. The announcement was made in the presence of Conseil President Michel Lavoie and the Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Montréal, Msgr. André Tiphane.

“For the past 17 years, the Conseil du patrimoine religieux du Québec has nurtured a partnership with the Ministry of Culture, Communications and the Status of Women that speaks to the Government’s willingness to work with communities and encourage them to take greater ownership of their heritage,” Mr. Lavoie said. “The Conseil employs a highly progressive, decentralized collaborative infrastructure, and we are more than pleased to see how it is benefiting religious heritage.”

Of the total amount for 2012–2013, \$13,072,562 will go toward the restoration of 76 places of worship and other religious buildings dating from before 1945 and deemed to have significant heritage value. A further \$527,438 has been earmarked for restoration of pipe organs, works of art and furnishings inside those buildings.

This financial aid supports initiatives to restore buildings that are part of Québec’s religious heritage, as well as the furnishings, works of art and pipe organs inside them. The Government of Québec has invested more than \$271 million in this area since 1995, and its initiative has spurred additional private investment of \$128 million. This in turn has enabled the maintaining of — and indeed an increase in — the number of religious buildings on the list of the province’s tourist attractions. Today’s announcement is a major show of support for the many local communities that are dedicated to safeguarding their religious heritage.

The Conseil du patrimoine religieux du Québec, already considered the organization of reference when it comes to religious heritage restoration, intends to be a leader in sustainable adaptive re-use of Québec’s religious buildings and to become the key point of contact on this issue for local, regional and national authorities. This vision is clearly expressed in its new strategic plan.

The actions undertaken pursuant to this plan include evaluating the economic benefits of the financial assistance provided to religious heritage restoration efforts since 1995. Initial findings of a one-of-a-kind study commissioned from the firm SECOR are quite impressive:

- More than 4,000 direct and indirect jobs have been created;
- Added value for the Québec economy has been calculated at \$300 million, and this has generated more than \$21 million in revenues for the Québec government;
- The benefits are more significant than those in some other areas of the economy because of more intense labour-force activity: restoration work requires a greater share of working hours, calculated at nearly 60% of the average cost of work sites;
- Lastly, the study results emphasize the importance of the other benefits of financial assistance for religious heritage restoration, including engagement on the part of local communities, professional development in heritage-related trades, and enhancement of Québec's tourism supply, to name only a few.

The Conseil du patrimoine religieux du Québec is a province-wide non-profit organization. Its main mission, among other things, is to support and promote conservation and enhancement of Québec's religious heritage.

– 30 –

Source: Jocelyn Groulx, Director
Conseil du patrimoine religieux du Québec
Phone: 514 931-4701 / 1 866 580-4701
Fax: 514 931-4428
E-mail: jgroulx@patrimoine-religieux.qc.ca

100 Sherbrooke Street East, Suite 3300
Montréal, Québec H2X 1C3