

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 19, 2010

CULTURAL TOURISM SPECIALIST STEVEN THORNE TO GIVE LECTURE AT ESPLANADE

MEDICINE HAT, AB – The City of Medicine Hat, along with the Medicine Hat College, the City Centre Development Agency, and Tourism Medicine Hat, is pleased to announce a special breakfast presentation by Cultural Tourism Specialist Steven Thorne at the Esplanade Wednesday, Jan 27 at 7 a.m.

Steven Thorne

A Place-Based Approach to Cultural Tourism

Wednesday, January 27, 2010, 7 a.m.

Studio Theatre, Esplanade Arts & Heritage Centre, 401 First Street SE

\$15 Registration Fee

Currently living and working in Waterloo, Ont., Steven Thorne is a leading Canadian specialist in the field of cultural tourism. He has pioneered strategies to help cities and regions to realize their potential for cultural tourism and has directed cultural tourism initiatives for three Canadian provinces. Steven is also an arts educator with a decade of university teaching experience, a published author in the field of heritage preservation, and a frequent speaker and workshop leader at tourism, arts, heritage, and economic development conferences. His clients have included Parks Canada, Tourism British Columbia, Ontario's Ministry of Tourism, and the Province of Prince Edward Island.

When visiting Medicine Hat, Steven Thorne will discuss "place-based cultural tourism" and how Medicine Hat should attempt to capitalize on the unique cultural character and sense of place that distinguishes one place from another. Anyone is welcome to attend, but **this session will be of particular interest to city leadership, city planners, economic development professionals, cultural workers, and local business and tourism operators.** A \$15 registration fee will be charged at the door to cover the cost of the breakfast.

In a recent Creative Cities conference in Fredericton, NB, Thorne outlined a few reasons for a place-based approach to cultural tourism:

"Canada's tourism industry has enjoyed remarkable success in marketing Canada as a nature-based destination but not as a cultural destination. According to the World Tourism Organization, cultural tourism is growing globally at a rate of 15 percent a year, while 37 percent of trips now contain a cultural component. That said, the essence of cultural tourism isn't about visiting museums, or galleries, or historic sites, or attending cultural events or festivals. The essence of cultural tourism is about encountering a destination's history and heritage, its stories, its people, its landscape, its townscape, its culture. It is about discovering what makes a destination distinctive, authentic, and memorable. It is about the experience of place." ~ Steven Thorne, 2009

Anyone interested in attending the \$15 breakfast lecture is encouraged to register by Jan. 22 as space is limited. Contact Terry Gill, *Cultural Development, City of Medicine Hat*, at 403.502.8795 or terqil@medicinehat.ca.

— 30 —

For further information, please contact:

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