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THEMUSEUM to Expand, Doubling in Size BMO Sets Stage for Critical Mass of Arts & Culture Downtown Kitchener

Kitchener, ON – THEMUSEUM has announced its intention to acquire the neighbouring Bank of Montreal building at 2 King Street West, Kitchener.

“We’re thrilled to announce this sole purchaser agreement with THEMUSEUM and be a part of this important campaign to help bolster the burgeoning arts and culture community of this growing region,” said Julie Barker-Mertz, Senior Vice President, South Western Ontario Division, BMO Bank of Montreal.

“And to further assist, BMO has pledged a \$1,000,000 donation to help transform downtown Kitchener’s cultural connection to the community and be a catalyst for renewal of arts and culture in the heart of the city.”

The acquisition comes at a crucial time, helping secure long-sought sustainability for THEMUSEUM while helping achieve a critical mass for arts and culture, just as downtown Kitchener continues to rejuvenate and reinvent.

“THEMUSEUM has helped create a cultural nexus at King and Queen as the community has consistently demonstrated an appetite for our brand of creative engagement,” said Frank Boutzis, President of THEMUSEUM Board of Directors. “Our board identified capacity and sustainability issues eight years ago and this decision not only aligns with our plans, but allows us to flourish and evolve.”

Today's announcement was warmly received by the Mayor of Kitchener, who has been a strong advocate of THEMUSEUM. “THEMUSEUM has come to play a vital role in the rejuvenation of Downtown with its 100,000+ annual visitors,” said Kitchener Mayor Berry Urbanovic.

“With the LRT slated to connect our communities like never before by later this year, an expanded museum that offers increased arts, culture and STEAM programming will create a virtually endless stream of possible collaborations in the future. It will add to the quality of life for our residents and also assist in attracting and retaining talented individuals and their families to our community.”

In 2017, the family of David Marskell, CEO of THEMUSEUM donated \$1,000,000 to the organization. He believes so wholeheartedly in THEMUSEUM's vision that he dedicated his parent's legacy to its continued growth and success. "As we celebrate our 15th anniversary, I am thrilled with the opportunity to build on our original motto of *Art, Science & Technology at Play...*

"We will continue with what we have become known for – from pop culture and branded large exhibitions – to family experiences, STEAM programming and Museum After Dark events for young, culture-craving urbanites," said David. "We are, as always, open to collaborating with other groups to create something truly unique that celebrates the DNA of this community. Exciting times are ahead and I urge the community to stay tuned!"

Also announced, THEMUSEUM will now enter a period of consultation which includes connecting with funders and interested groups. Seeking input from local stakeholders will ensure that what is created will effectively support the needs of the community in an accessible and impactful way.

The purchase of 2 King Street West is expected to close later this year.

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Additional Quotes:

"I am excited by the THEMUSEUM's plans to expand its physical footprint within our downtown core. THEMUSEUM continues to provide a vibrant and vital role in the heart of Kitchener's arts and cultural community and this expansion reflects THEMUSEUM's desire to evolve and grow to meet our community's needs. The federal government is committed to prioritizing arts and cultural funding. We recognize the importance that arts and culture plays in our local economy, helping to attract and retain global talent and making our community a great place to live, work and play."

- Raj Saini, Member of Parliament for Kitchener Centre

"This is outstanding news for the entire Waterloo Region community. THEMUSEUM is a vital part of our thriving arts and culture scene and this expansion will mean great things for Kitchener's downtown core. It will bring our community together in exciting new ways, will allow us to further celebrate our similarities and differences, and will draw people from across the province to enjoy all that our region has to offer."

- Daiene Vernile, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport