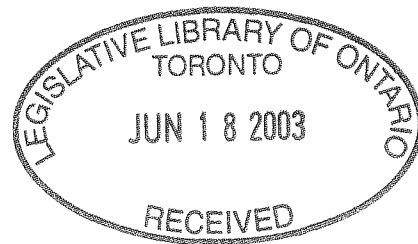



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Eves government unveils new Franco-Ontarian licence plate

OTTAWA, June 13 /CNW/ - The Ernie Eves government unveiled the new Franco-Ontarian licence plate at the annual Franco-Ontarian Festival in Ottawa today. The plate, which features both the Ontario trillium and the fleur-de-lis, can be ordered right away and will be available for delivery next month, announced Tourism and Recreation Minister Brian Coburn, on behalf of Transportation Minister Frank Klees.

"Ontario's French-speaking community is the largest in Canada outside Quebec, and this new licence plate recognizes the long history and cultural heritage of the French language in the province," said Coburn, who presented a billboard-size mock blowup of the new plate to Lucie Boileau, president of the Franco-Ontarian Festival, and the first actual licence plate off the line to Maurice Lamirande, an Ottawa resident who first suggested the idea of the licence plate.

"The francophone community has contributed greatly to our history, our culture, and also to our tourism industry," said Klees. "This new licence plate celebrates over 350 years of the French language being spoken in Ontario."

The unveiling of the new licence plate was made at Festival Plaza, which is the site of the Franco-Ontarian Festival, near Ottawa City Hall. This year is the 28th edition of the event, which lasts through to June 15 and features top performing artists.

The Franco-Ontarian flag was introduced in 1975 and has since been used by Ontario's French-speaking community as its emblem. In 2001, the Ontario government officially recognized the emblem with the Franco-Ontarian Emblem Act.

Backgrounder

June 13, 2003

CELEBRATING ONTARIO'S FRANCOPHONE HERITAGE

The Ontario government's new Franco-Ontarian licence plate recognizes the culture and heritage of the province's French community. The new licence plate features the Franco-Ontarian flag, which has been in use since 1975, and which became an official emblem of Ontario in 2001.

To view Licence Plate please see:

<http://files.newswire.ca/6/LicencePlate.doc>

This emblem consists of two vertical bands of different colours. The first band is medium green with a white lily in the middle. The second band is white with a medium green trillium in the middle. The green in the emblem represents summer and the white represents winter. Together, the two colours

represent the diversity of Ontario's climate. The lily evokes the French-speaking community worldwide while the trillium is the floral emblem of Ontario.

HOW TO ORDER THE FRANCO-ONTARIAN LICENCE PLATE

- Call 1-800-AUTO-PL8 (1-800-288-6758).

Disponible en français

For more information visit www.mto.gov.on.ca

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For further information: Bob Nichols, Communications Branch,
(416) 327-1158; Rosemarie Godina, Minister's Office, (416) 327-1815

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