



**MEDALTA**  
in the Historic Clay District

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

For Immediate Release

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### **Friends of Medalta Society acquires Medicine Hat Brick & Tile Site from I-XL Industries Ltd.**

December 22, 2011

Medicine Hat - On Thursday, December 22, 2011, I-XL Industries Ltd. announced that the Medicine Hat Brick & Tile site has been acquired by the Friends of Medalta Society (who act as Stewards of the National Historic Clay District) in an effort to further preserve Medicine Hat's industrial heritage. The plant was flooded in June 2010, and although the site was cleaned up, I-XL announced in September of that year that the plant would not re-open.

The acquisition includes land, buildings and equipment directly related to the Brick & Tile site which represents a total appraised value of approximately \$3M. The balance of the site (north end of the I-XL property) will be retained by the Company.

I-XL Industries Ltd. has owned and operated the Medicine Hat Brick & Tile site since 1929. I-XL Industries Ltd. President Malcolm Sissons announced additional financial support which is intended to maintain and restore the site in the short-term and act as seed money for future cultural development in relation to the Brick & Tile site. The total value of the cash donation from I-XL to the Friends of Medalta Society is estimated at approximately \$4M.

The Brick & Tile site is an important part of Medicine Hat's heritage, with over a century of history, dating back to 1886. Sissons, who is also Chair of the Historical Resources Committee for the City of Medicine Hat, explains, "when the June 2010 flood forced us to cease operating the brick plant, we didn't want to see that industrial story fade away. We feel the Friends of Medalta Society are in the best position to ensure this local heritage lives on through interpretation of Medicine Hat Brick & Tile."

Historic Clay District Executive Director Barry Finkelman echoed Sissons' comments. "A large part of Medicine Hat's story is about the early industrialization of Alberta. That history begins with our community's clay industries and, quite specifically, the site on which Medicine Hat Brick & Tile was built. It would have been unfortunate to lose such a unique piece of our past which is why we are so pleased with I-XL's commitment to preserving this community's legacy."

The vision for the site includes tours of the historic brick plant, the re-creation of a soft mud brick interpretive site, which will explain the brick-making process as it was done in the late 19th Century, as well as residence facilities for visiting artists to Medalta's International Artists in Residence program.

-- More --



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“This is a very exciting announcement,” explains Finkelman,” as it provides us the opportunity to share more of our community’s story in a meaningful, interactive way. We look forward to working with I-XL and other partners over the next number of years to bring this new vision for Medicine Hat Brick & Tile to life.”

The site is currently under consideration as a Provincial Historic Resource and is thought to be the oldest industrial site in Alberta. Of significant interest are the layers of industrial development from hand-made brickmaking to the robotic era. A recent excavation revealed brick rubble from the 1880’s period. The “frozen in time” condition of the facilities represents the operation as it was in 2010.

*The Historic Clay District is a 150-acre National Historic Site in Medicine Hat, Alberta which encompasses a number of historically significant factory sites, including the Medicine Hat Brick and Tile site. One of the centerpieces of the Historic Clay District is the Medalta Potteries National Historic Site, which features an industrial history museum, major industrial archaeological excavation, contemporary ceramic artists-in-residence program and working pottery. It is one of eight major attractors within the Canadian Badlands and receives significant support from the Government of Canada, Government of Alberta and City of Medicine Hat.*

*The I-XL Group of Companies was founded in 1912 as the Redcliff Pressed Brick Company Limited by James Hargrave, Herb Sissons and other shareholders. In 1929, it acquired the Medicine Hat Brick and Tile and moved its head office to that site. Major modernization started in 1953 with the construction of a tunnel kiln, and subsequent additions of automated handling equipment. In recent years, brick manufacturing at the Medicine Hat plant site represented about 15% of the Company’s total sales. As I-XL enters its 100<sup>th</sup> year in 2012, it recalls fondly its brick manufacturing history in Redcliff and Medicine Hat.*

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