



For Immediate Release

Werklund Centre Announces Naming of Ethical Gathering Space, the BMO Lodge, within the Expansion Phase

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Werklund Centre is delighted to announce the naming of the BMO Lodge, a vibrant public space connecting the new 1,000-seat Osten-Victor Playhouse and the flexible 200-seat performance space, both part of the Werklund Centre Transformation Expansion.

The naming is in recognition of BMO's \$2 million donation over 10 years in support of the expansion. Conceptualized in consultation with members of the Indigenous communities that live around Treaty 7 territories, the BMO Lodge is a powerful expression of connection, welcoming Calgarians into a shared public space that sparks cross-cultural dialogue, celebration, and exchange, as a way of making relatives (siim'ohkisin).

The announcement of the BMO Lodge will be validated through a pipe ceremony led by Blackfoot (Niitsitapi) Elders Reg and Rose Crowshoe, followed by teachings of Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing, shared with BMO staff and Board, and Werklund Centre staff, Board, and resident companies. This will be done using the Blackfoot circle structure, which promotes a traditional, holistic way of life and governance, fostering equality, respect, and interconnectedness.

"We are honoured to be part of this event and are pleased that BMO and Werklund Centre want to announce their decision to make relatives, in ceremony," said Elder Reg Crowshoe. "This is more than a donation. This support is a commitment to make and sustain deep bonds based on mutual care and respect."

In every detail of its sustainable design, as well as its programming and operational mandate, the BMO Lodge is set to become the newest manifestation of Werklund Centre's commitment to truth and reconciliation. It is designed to be one of many gathering spaces inspired by Werklund Centre's pledge to move forward in Ethical Space (aipootsi'naimotsiyop), with Sanctified Kindness (kimapi'pitsan), and with a commitment to Making Relatives (siim'ohkisin). These guiding principles were gifted to Werklund Centre by the Making Relatives Advisory Circle, made up of Elders and knowledge keepers from around Treaty 7, as part of the Werklund Centre Reconciliation Strategy, which was ultimately validated in ceremony.

"We're excited to see this beautiful gathering space take shape as a place designed to welcome artists and audiences, spark storytelling, creative expression, and create moments of connection," said Paul Seipp, Regional President, Prairies Central Region, Canadian Personal Banking at BMO. "Werklund Centre's leadership in reconciliation, access to the arts, and inclusive community building reflect values we deeply share. We're honoured to support a space that will serve the community in lasting ways, and proud to



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have it named the BMO Lodge as a symbol of our shared commitment to building stronger communities.”

While the lodge is specifically outlined to represent Indigenous knowledge and tradition, the entire building has been infused with Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing, as part of the original project mandate.

The new BMO Lodge will have a bright, wood-lined interior and wood beams, a large circular oculus that filters light down into the space, and a gentle curve of the corner of this section of the building, a reference to Indigenous lodge typologies which includes tipis.

KPMB Architects, HINDLE Architects, and TAWAW Architecture Collective describe the lodge as “opening to embrace the adjacent public plaza and capturing natural light from Alberta’s expansive sky.” The BMO Lodge can be formally or informally programmed, functioning as a place for both storytelling and creative expression.

“Werklund Centre’s commitment to reconciliation means we have both the responsibility and the privilege to hold space for truth-telling and Indigenous-led knowledge-sharing,” says Alex Sarian, President and CEO of Werklund Centre. “The BMO Lodge is a physical manifestation of that commitment, made possible thanks to the guidance of Elders, as well as BMO’s exceptional support. This partnership sets the stage for future connections that will inspire and educate. Together with BMO, we look forward to welcoming all Calgarians and making relatives in this beautiful space.”

Now in its second year of construction, the Werklund Centre Transformation Expansion is being led in partnership by Calgary Municipal Land Corporation, The City of Calgary and Werklund Centre. Outside of adding two new performance venues to Calgary’s ever-growing community, Werklund Centre expansion integrated with the newly redesigned Olympic Plaza to support a contiguous indoor/outdoor space for cultural activations.

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Werklund Centre

Werklund Centre (formerly Arts Commons) is the steward of Western Canada's largest arts centre and the artistic and civic cornerstone of Calgary's downtown core that fosters the arts through live performance, educational opportunities, and artist development programs. For 40 years, it has been a key contributor to the social, economic, cultural, and intellectual life and well-being of Calgarians—a commitment that is being renewed through the Werklund Centre Transformation project, the largest cultural infrastructure project in Canadian history. It is home to five resident companies, including Alberta Theatre Projects, Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra, Downstage, Theatre Calgary, and One Yellow Rabbit. It houses six gallery spaces, five theatres, a concert hall, rehearsal and education spaces, costume and scene shops, and a restaurant.

BMO Gives. Good grows here.

Helping communities thrive by supporting the organizations that sustain them and encouraging employee giving and volunteerism is at the heart of BMO's Purpose, to Boldly Grow the Good in business and life.

In 2025, we directed more than \$124 million to drive progress for communities, which included \$115.7 million in philanthropic contributions to hundreds of charities and nonprofit organizations across North America.

Our colleagues spent over 65,000+ hours volunteering in the community and contributed more than \$40.3 million of donations through employee-driven giving in our annual campaigns.

For more information, please visit [BMO Gives](#).