



PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Montréal Rio Tinto Alcan Planetarium

Construction Gets Underway!

Montréal, August 25, 2011 – Today marks the official start of construction work on the Montréal Rio Tinto Alcan Planetarium, a Space for Life.

Everyone is invited to come to the Olympic Park site for a public celebration starting at 5:30 p.m., featuring all kinds of fun: graffiti artists in action on the wall surrounding the work site, a chance to admire the starry sky beneath the dome of an inflatable planetarium, astronomy activities and lots more. Montréal Mayor Gérald Tremblay, Charles-Mathieu Brunelle, Executive Director of the Space for Life, and Pierre Lacombe, Director of the Planetarium, will all be taking part in the event, accompanied by the Honourable Maxime Bernier, Minister of State (Small Business and Tourism), Nicole Ménard, Minister of Tourism and Minister responsible for the Olympic Park, Réal Ménard, Mayor of the Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve borough, and Erik Ryan, Senior Vice-President, Communications and External Relations, Rio Tinto Alcan.

“Montrealers will be proud of the Rio Tinto Alcan Planetarium. The design meets the highest standards of excellence in terms of both architecture and sustainable development. This jewel in the Space for Life will allow Montréal to shine on the international scene and to stand out as a city of knowledge, culture and design,” says Mayor Tremblay.

The \$46 million project is being carried out in collaboration with the Olympic Park and with financial support from the city of Montréal, the Ministère du Développement économique, de l’Innovation et de l’Exportation du Québec, Canada Economic Development and Rio Tinto Alcan.

Charles-Mathieu Brunelle, Director of the Space for Life, emphasizes the importance of the contribution by Rio Tinto Alcan: “The company believed in this project right from the start, back in 2003. Its initial support allowed us to assemble the rest of the funding and to build a Planetarium that we estimate will attract nearly 300,000 visitors a year.”

“One of the main reasons for our association with the Montréal Planetarium is that we want to interest young people in science and encourage them to stay in school. We believe that offering them different kinds of astronomical experiences will help us achieve that goal,” explains Erik Ryan, Senior Vice-President, Communications and External Relations, Rio Tinto Alcan.

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Aside from its spectacular, environmentally responsible architecture, the Rio Tinto Alcan Planetarium will expose visitors to astronomy in a way unlike anything that has been done before or elsewhere in the world. There will be three separate experiences combining science and emotion: a multimedia theatre, an astronomy theatre and an exhibition space. The talent and ingenuity of the duo of Michel Lemieux and Victor Pilon will make for a stunning, unforgettable experience.

The Honourable Maxime Bernier, Minister of State (Small Business and Tourism), speaking on behalf of Denis Lebel, Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for Quebec Regions, which granted funding of \$9 million for the project, agrees: "Our government is proud to support the construction of the Montréal Rio Tinto Alcan Planetarium, which is sure to contribute to promoting Canadian knowledge and know-how on the international scene."

"The presence of the Rio Tinto Alcan Planetarium on the Olympic Park site will create very attractive synergy for visitors and tourists passing through this area with its varied activities. The Quebec government considers it essential to encourage people's curiosity and interest in science, given all its promise for the future. In view of this commitment, the Ministère du Développement économique, de l'Innovation et de l'Exportation contributed \$9 million to the project," notes Nicole Ménard, Minister of Tourism and Minister responsible for the Olympic Park.

The new Planetarium will become a world leader in scientific museology dedicated to astronomy and space science. Starting in spring 2013, it will introduce visitors to major issues in these fields, and emphasize the importance of preserving dark skies, threatened by light pollution.

The winning firm in the architectural competition, Cardin Ramirez Julien, and the consortium of Ædifica, SNC Lavalin, Dupras Ledoux ingénieurs, Fauteux et Associés Architectes Paysagistes and Go multimédia are some of the creative spirits behind the construction of the Rio Tinto Alcan Planetarium. The others are the general contractor, Groupe Décarel inc., and the supplier of specialized equipment, Sky Skan Inc.

The Planetarium on rue Saint-Jacques

The existing Planetarium will be closing permanently after the Thanksgiving holiday, on October 10. All Montrealers are invited to come and bid goodbye to this venerable institution, dating from 1966.