

Theme Days Selected for Geography Awareness Week 2007 in Canada

Geography Awareness Week is held in a number of countries around the world, but from November 12-16, 2007 Canada will be the first country to dedicate special days to a topic of national interest.

Dr. Barry Wellar, Director of Geography Awareness Week for the Canadian Association of Geographers, and Professor Emeritus at the University of Ottawa, says that this is a major achievement.

“November 12 is Weather and Climate Day, November 13 is Water Day, November 14 is GIS Day, November 15 is Transportation Day, and November 16 is Food and Health Day. Each Day is on a topic that directly affects all Canadians.”

According to Dr. Wellar the five themes chosen for Geography Awareness Week 2007 are important to every person and organization in the country. However, he emphasizes that there is a large ‘geographical gap’ to be overcome.

“Canada has a huge amount of geography, but much of it is unknown to politicians, business people, and adults in general, and certainly Canadian teens and children have a lot to learn about this country. Moreover, even members of the media do not seem to know as much as they should about the geography of areas and regions that are in the news. Indeed, it has been said that those seeking to immigrate to Canada have a greater awareness of their chosen land than the people who live here.”

The Canadian Association of Geographers is developing a national program to increase geography awareness in every region according to Dr. Wellar.

“We have identified the themes for 2007, and we will have a major organizational meeting in Saskatoon at the end of May. We are working with groups such as Transport 2000 Canada, and the Canadian Meteorological and Oceanographic Society, and will involve schools, colleges and universities. Our intention is to make Canadians the most geographically aware people on Earth.”

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