

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: May 1, 2015

CANADA – ISRAEL: CITIES APPLY INNOVATION FOR GLOBAL GOALS

PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE, VALLEY OF SPRINGS, and TEL AVIV - A Sister City Agreement was signed today between the City of **Portage la Prairie** in Manitoba, Canada, and the **Valley of Springs** Regional Council in Israel. The agreement was signed simultaneously at the Embassy of Canada in Israel, and in the City of Portage la Prairie. The two cities have joined together to apply innovation in meeting global goals of food security, environmental protection and enhanced agricultural technology.

Bridgmer Ltd, a Canadian–Swiss group, arranged the municipal pairing to help realize the global potential of these regions. Bridgmer searches globally for innovation in agricultural production, processes and technology to bring newly-developed ideas to market.

Each Sister City intends to facilitate projects in agriculture, education and environmental tourism. According to Daniel Shindleman, President of Bridgmer, “Respect for nature comes both through conservation and improving agricultural technology, enabling society to benefit most from nature’s resources. These are everyday practices for each of the new Sister Cities.”

The Portage la Prairie region is a major agricultural centre of Canada. It is a key breadbasket of Canada, and indeed the world, given the export markets supplied including India, China, Russia and others. The surrounding farmland is very fertile, with soils abundant in nutrients producing a wide array of grains, pulses, oilseeds, vegetables and berries. Mayor Irvine Ferris said “When the City was presented with becoming a Sister City to pursue farming and technology, as well as environmental tourism, it was a natural fit.”

In Valley of Springs, the Eden Experimental Farm conducts field testing of new crop varieties in association with the world renowned Volcani Center. For its part, Portage la Prairie has a history of field crop experimentation. The Portage Food Development Centre serves as a research and food product development branch of the Province of Manitoba. The Sister Cities will now have a basis to pursue cooperation between these entities, as well as promote school exchanges so that students and future leaders can learn more about each other. As Portage City Councillor, Liz Driedger said “The world is growing smaller and there is a desire to be better neighbours for one another.”

Valley of Springs

The Valley of Springs Regional Council extends from the Jordan Valley in the north to Nahal Bezek in the south; from Mt. Gilboa in the west to the Jordan River in the east. The council contains 24 local communities consisting of kibbutzim, moshavim and

one village. The mayor of the Regional Council, Yoram Karin: "The Valley of Springs is founded on unique and advanced agriculture, warm communities, and quality education. This is a highly demanded region in terms of tourism, with its multiple springs and its bird watching center—located at an important destination for migrating birds between Europe and Africa. Each year, a variety of different birds stop to rest here on their long annual journey. Additionally, the Valley includes historical archaeological sites of major importance as well as a unique geological placement that attracts researchers and tourists."

The region is known for its 'tranquil tourism' and Gan Hashlosha, a major water park that was once described by *Time Magazine* as one of the world's most exotic spots. The Valley of Springs is a region in Israel in which one can travel, take a dip in one of its springs, and experience a personal Garden of Eden.

Portage la Prairie

The City of Portage la Prairie is an agricultural hub on the Canadian Prairies. It has the most sunny days during the warm months in Canada. A prime location for crop production to feed the world.

Delta Marsh, part of the surrounding area of Portage la Prairie, is recognized as an important bird area, and part of an international conservation initiative. Tranquil tourism integrates well in this region too.

Bridgemer

Bridgemer is an investment and advisory firm focused on agriculture, infrastructure and real estate. Daniel Shindleman at Bridgemer stated "Our agriculture partners have the ideas and innovations to improve productivity with less impact on our world's limited resources. We contribute by implementing those innovations and facilitating their use on farms to benefit societies around the world."

End

For further information, please contact:

Portage la Prairie www.city.portage-la-prairie.mb.ca -- Irvine Ferris, Mayor,
Tel +1 204 856 3486, iferris@city-plap.com,

Valley of Springs www.maianot.co.il --

Bridgemer www.bridgemer.com -- Daniel Shindleman, President,
Tel +41 79 796 9769, Daniel.shindleman@bridgemer.com

Photographs are available upon request.