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- NEWS RELEASE -

Burnett Thorne Cultural Tourism launched

Stephen Burnett and Steven Thorne are pleased to announce the launch of Burnett Thorne Cultural Tourism.

Burnett Thorne Cultural Tourism is a Stratford-based firm specializing in planning, developing and marketing cultural tourism destinations. The company - the only one in Canada to specialize exclusively in cultural tourism - will address the need for practical, industry-oriented solutions for destinations seeking to realize their cultural tourism potential.

According to Steven Thorne, "North America's tourism industry has been talking about cultural tourism for years. But most opportunities aren't being realized. Most markets aren't being grown. Cultural tourism hasn't joined the mainstream - where it belongs. Our company will move beyond the research and reports, the studies and conferences, and deliver cultural tourism on the ground."

To help destinations realize their cultural tourism potential, Burnett Thorne Cultural Tourism has devised a 10-step, product development process that the company delivers to its clients. This unique process integrates all the market-ready cultural and heritage experiences found in a given city or region within a single brand and marketing campaign. The result? An entirely new, market-ready tourism product - a Cultural Heritage Corridor.

In the words of Steven Thorne, "By marketing all the cultural tourism experiences of a given city or region within a single brand and marketing campaign, a Cultural Heritage Corridor creates a 'cultural whole' that is greater than the sum of its parts. Not only does this cultural whole reveal the destination's unique history and culture, it makes the destination more intriguing, more textured, more culturally appealing."

Stephen Burnett comments, "Compared with other market segments, cultural tourism requires more sophistication in every facet of product development and marketing. You can't rely on ready formulas that work elsewhere. With Cultural Heritage Corridors, we've devised a product development process that's specific to cultural tourism. At the same time, Cultural Heritage Corridors creates new earned revenue streams for non-profit cultural organizations, and new strategic partnerships between culture and tourism. It's a win/win scenario all around."

Cultural tourism is a fast-growing and lucrative segment of the North American tourism industry. In the United States, 21 percent of all person trips include cultural activities or events. American cultural tourists spend, on average, \$631 in the destinations they visit, compared to \$457 for all U.S. travelers. Among Americans over the age of 55, attending cultural events is the third most popular travel activity. Visiting museums and historic sites is the second most popular travel activity. Only shopping eclipses them both.