



The stars aligned for this year's Syncrude Festival of Trees and Starlight Gala

November 17, 2008 – Fort McMurray, AB – Celebrating its 19th year, the Syncrude Festival of Trees showcased 53 elegantly decorated Christmas Trees. More than 5,000 visitors came out this past weekend to the Syncrude Festival of Trees and more than 850 people enjoyed the Starlight Gala presented by Syncrude on Saturday night. This holiday season kickoff event netted \$327,000 for the Northern Lights Regional Health Foundation.

"I am absolutely delighted with the immense response of the community," said Vanessa Innes, Executive Director, "the event provided a wonderful focal point for our Open Your Heart campaign to raise \$1 million to replace heart monitoring equipment at the Northern Lights Regional Health Centre," said Vanessa Innes. "This equipment is critically needed at the hospital and thanks to our donors and sponsors we're a lot closer to reaching our goal."

The Syncrude Festival of Trees 2008 raised funds for the replacement and expansion of the cardiac monitoring system (CMS) at the health centre. Heart disease is still the leading cause of death in Canada and the new state-of-the-art technology will allow doctors to intervene quickly to prevent heart attacks.

This fundraising event has put the Northern Lights Regional Health Foundation halfway towards meeting the monetary commitment for this project to the health centre. We have the entire community to thank. 'Open your heart' was the key message shared throughout the Festival and Gala event this past weekend and it seems it really hit home.

The People's Choice for favourite tree went to Suncor Energy Inc for their Christmas Candy Land Tree. The Starlight Gala saw more than 850 guests get dressed up and bid lively on some 40 Christmas trees and a vacation package in the live auction. Guests were entertained by the trio called *A Touch of Class*, and food and beverages were supplied by the Sawridge Inn & Conference Centre.

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