

## LACOMBE MUSEUM TRANSITION OF LEADERSHIP

(Lacombe, AB) – With mixed emotions, the Lacombe and District Historical Society announces the departure of our esteemed Executive Director, Melissa Blunden. Melissa is set to take on the role of Executive Director at the Highland Village Museum in Iona, Nova Scotia, starting in February.

Throughout her 5.5-year tenure, Melissa spearheaded transformative projects that shaped the Lacombe Museum into a dynamic institution deeply connected to its community. Notable achievements include securing a state-of-the-art Collections & Archives storage space, opening the new Flatiron Building Museum during a worldwide pandemic, creating the Heritage Learning Garden at Michener House Museum, and leading the Lacombe Museums Re-Imagined project, along with organizing the popular Harvest Dinner fundraising gala.

Melissa's visionary leadership ensured the museum's growth in membership, staffing, and online presence through strategic use of social media. Her commitment to reconciliation, community engagement, and inclusivity resulted in the establishment of Indigenous-led programs and the Heritage Learning Garden, reflecting her passion for preserving cultural heritage and fostering community connections, as recognized by the Lacombe & District Chamber of Commerce Non-Profit of the Year Award (2022) and the Alberta Museums Associations Recognized Leader Accreditation (2023).

While Melissa's departure leaves a void, and we express our deepest gratitude for her exceptional leadership and wish her continued success in her new endeavor, the Lacombe and District Historical Society warmly welcomes Ms. Samantha Lee as the Interim Executive Director, stepping into this pivotal role for the Lacombe Museums. Celebrating her two-year anniversary as our Community Engagement Coordinator in the fall of 2023, Samantha brings enthusiasm, creativity, and tireless dedication to fostering connections within our community (and beyond). *"Having collaborated closely together on numerous ongoing projects over the past two years, Samantha possesses a wealth of experience and project detail, ensuring a seamless transition,"* remarks departing Executive Director Melissa Blunden.

The Board of Directors is actively conducting a candidate search for a new permanent Executive Director. Collaborating with the Board, Samantha will guide us through this transition, fostering continuity and community connection.

Best wishes to both Melissa and Samantha on their respective journeys!

For more information, please contact:

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### **About the Lacombe Museum**

Located in Lacombe, AB, the Lacombe & District Historical Society (LDHS), operating under the brand name "Lacombe Museum," is an award winning non-profit and an Alberta Museum Association Recognized Museum Leader which oversees the 1894 Michener House Museum, the 1902 Blacksmith Shop Museum, and the 1904 sandstone/brick Flatiron Building Museum. LDHS cares for over 40,000 artifacts and 20,000 records in its Collections Space and the Heritage Learning Garden, encompassing 0.3 acres of educational cultural landscaping on its 1.0-acre site with adjoining gardens. The diverse history of early Lacombe, the Michener Family, and subsequent occupants of the three buildings is represented in the Museum's collections, exhibits, programs, and special events.

More information about the Lacombe Museum can be found at: [www.lacombemuseum.com](http://www.lacombemuseum.com)

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### ***Lacombe & District Historical Society***

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