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HISTORY VS. GEOGRAPHY — Which side are you on? The Royal Canadian Geographical Society launches great debate on social networks.

OTTAWA, ONTARIO — August 2009: Across the nation, Canadians are invited to join the great Canadian debate and weigh in on which is more important to our home and native land: history or geography. This new challenge stems from the launch of the newest addition to the Royal Canadian Geographical Society's award-winning website Canadian Atlas Online — "Now with history added."

To help kick off this debate and mark the launch of the website's new animated and interactive historical content, rivals History and Geography will take a cross-country journey, "discussing" the finer points of Canada's people and places and battling it out over social networking sites. Don't expect them to be civil about it. Geography thinks History would be absolutely nowhere without him, while History believes Geography would be just dirt, rocks and trees if he hadn't come along.

But who's right?

"Our hope is that this debate will capture the imagination of Canadians of all ages, and make them want to explore the Canadian Atlas Online," says Louise Maffett, Executive Director of The Royal Canadian Geographical Society. "By adding more historical content, we are providing a fuller, more rewarding user experience and a greater depth of knowledge than ever before."

Canadians can meet History and Geography and follow their voyage through online social networks. They can check out Facebook for profiles and updates, follow their cross-country journey via Twitter, and watch them duke it out in a series of entertaining YouTube videos. There is also a micro-site dedicated to the campaign.

"Geographic literacy is vital to understanding our shared history and culture, but sadly, it is on the decline," Maffett notes. "The Canadian Atlas Online is rich with resources like interactive maps and animated presentations that really make geography — and now history — come alive. Plus there is a learning centre and even games and quizzes. It's just a great place for people to explore and learn about our country."

The Canadian Atlas Online (www.canadiangeographic.ca/atlas) is a free resource of The Royal Canadian Geographical Society in support of its mission to "make Canada better known to Canadians and to the world." The site allows users to explore by map or by five key themes: regions, natural resources, energy systems, people, and building the nation.

The History vs. Geography debate runs until October 20th. History and Geography's journey can be followed at the following URLs:

Microsite: www.canadiangeographic.ca/atlas/debate

YouTube: www.youtube.com/followthedebate

Facebook: www.facebook.com/canadiangeographic

Twitter: www.twitter.com/followthedebate

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR INTERVIEW REQUESTS, PLEASE CONTACT:

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HISTORY VS. GEOGRAPHY

Cross-Country Journey Fact Sheet

Throughout their journey, History and Geography will build their cases for their respective importance to our nation. Watch them spar on YouTube, take jabs on Twitter, and update their progress on Facebook. Here is their projected itinerary:

The Fishers: Maritime Melee

Location: Newfoundland and Labrador

When: Aug. 21-26

What: History and Geography kick-start their nationwide journey in Newfoundland. Is it fish or fishers that make this province so great? Watch them duke it out on YouTube.

The Fur Trade: St. Lawrence Throwdown

Location: St. Lawrence Seaway

When: Aug. 27-30

What: Champlain and other explorers set up their first trading posts in this area, says History. But only because of the promontory on the river which provided a good site for a fortified post, counters Geography. Who'll win this round?

Farming: Fruit-belt Free-for-all

Location: Niagara Peninsula

When: Aug. 31-Sep. 6

What: The Niagara fruit-belt is abundant with cherries, pears, peaches and other fruits. Sounds like Geography has a good case here, but don't count out History. If it wasn't for the hardworking farmers...

Forestry: Pulp and Paper Pugilism

Location: New Brunswick

When: Sept. 7-9

What: The two stubborn debaters argue the relative significance of the area's dense forests (Geography) versus the burgeoning pulp and paper industry (History).

Mining: Fraser Valley Fracas

Location: Fraser River, BC

When: Sept. 10-15

What: History and Geography travel out to beautiful British Columbia to argue if the gold in Them Thar Hills is a great geographical marvel, or just another chain around Mr. T's neck. Watch the video evidence on YouTube.

Fueling Canada: Alberta Altercation

Location: Central plains, Alberta

When: Sept. 16-20

What: Next up, the famous Alberta Oil Sands host the Great Canadian Debate. History tells us oil production quadrupled in the 1950s, but as Geography knows, the sands were here a helluva lot earlier.

Wind Energy: Cowley Confrontation

Location: Cowley, Alberta

When: Sept. 21-23

What: At the site of Canada's first commercial wind turbine farm brags History. Sure, replies Geography, but only because of the abundant Chinook winds blowing through the naturally occurring Crowsnest Pass.

Early Survival: Nova Scotia Skirmish

Location: Nova Scotia

When: Sept. 24-27

What: The debate takes History and Geography back to Nova Scotia, and back in time. History is fascinated with pottery from 1000 BC, while Geography points to the natural wonders that allowed the artisans to flourish.

Early Trade Networks: Hudson Bay Brawl

Location: Hudson Bay

When: Sept. 28-30

What: History notes there were 125 trading posts in operation here in 1851. Of course, Geography knows they were trading natural resources — not stories or phone numbers!

Forged in War: Quebec Quarrel

Location: Quebec City

When: Oct. 1-6

What: With the weather getting decidedly cooler, History suggests a fur coat like the kind that used to be traded in this area, but Geography would rather marvel at rolling hills of the Plains of Abraham, or the elevation of the Citadel. Watch it unfold on YouTube.

Canada From Space: Atmospheric Argument

Location: Space

When: Oct. 7-11

What: Geography revels in the awe-inspiring view of Canada from space. History brings him back to earth by reminding him of human innovation and the Canadarm.

Evolving Cities: Ottawa Onslaught

Location: Ottawa

When: Oct. 12-19

What: Fittingly, History and Geography make their way to the nation's capital for the final stop of the Great Canadian Debate. Who will have the last word? Will anything be solved? Find out in the last of four YouTube videos.

ABOUT THE ROYAL CANADIAN GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY

Since its founding in 1929, The Royal Canadian Geographical Society has worked to impart a deeper knowledge of Canada — its people and places, its natural and cultural heritage, and its environmental, social and economic challenges. Through its national education programs, the Society promotes and improves geographical learning in Canadian schools.

Funding for university student research and expeditions helps expand knowledge of our country. A speaker series and award-winning publications educate the public on topical issues and discoveries. *Canadian Geographic* and *géographica* magazines have made the Society widely known and respected as an independent source for geographical information.

Supported by passionate volunteers across Canada, The Royal Canadian Geographical Society is one of the largest non-profit educational organizations in the country and the only one working to expand geographical knowledge.

ABOUT CANADIAN GEOGRAPHIC

Wholly owned by the Royal Canadian Geographical Society, Canadian Geographic Enterprises (CGE) publishes the award-winning *Canadian Geographic* magazine and *Canadian Geographic Travel*, the leading Canadian travel publication. In addition, CGE operates related websites such as the award-winning Canadian Atlas Online and the Canadian Geographic Photo Club, Canada's largest online photographic community that is also the home of the annual Canadian Geographic Photo Contest and the Wildlife Photo of the Year Contest. CGE's net proceeds support the Society's educational, research, and exploration programs.