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Canwest Alberta Fund One Year Old 24 September 2008

The Canwest Alberta Fund (CAF) is ready to celebrate its first birthday with a new round of investments in Alberta productions.

CAF's next application deadline is 15 October 2008.

The \$10.5m Fund, established by Canwest Media as a result of CRTC Decision 2007-168 and operated as a program of the Independent Production Fund, supports priority television production from Alberta's producers for Canadian broadcasters. The Fund is operated at 'arm's length' from Canwest through a Selection Committee of representative industry experts.

In its first year CAF invested in over forty hours of new programming, ranging from documentaries, dramatic series and mini-series, to adventure programming, comedy and more. The CAF projects also brought a wide variety of broadcasters to the table, including CBC, Food Network Canada, Global, History Canada and APTN.

Some of the successful applicants are returning favourites, such as *Ride Guide Snow* (Ride Guide Productions, Global) that for twelve seasons has followed the best ski and board experiences around the world. *Family Restaurant* (Anaid Productions, Food Network Canada) is back for a third season, but this time, the flavour is Chinese, as the series follows the ups and downs of a new family in the kitchen. In APTN's *Fish Out of Water* (Joe Media Group), host Don Kelly is trying once again to live down his First Nation's name, and prove he can fit into the native world.

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Mixed Blessings (Prairie Dog Productions, APTN) recently wrapped its second cycle of six half-hours in Edmonton and St. Albert, including a hockey game shoot during some of the hottest days of summer. The sitcom series is now in postproduction, with the season launch scheduled for late October. APTN's new sketch comedy out of Edmonton, Caution: May Contain Nuts draws on that city's dynamic core of improv performers, and premiered in September, and even attracted SCTV alumnus Joe Flaherty for a special guest appearance.

Two teams of Alberta's award winning documentary filmmakers are in production with very different projects supported by CAF. Tom Radford and Niobe Thompson have just returned from Siberia's Arctic region with footage for *Inuit Invasion* (CBC), chronicling the 1,000-year-old story of the eradication of the Canadian Arctic's Dorset people by an invading force with superior technology – the Thule Inuit from the Bering Sea. Michael Jorgensen and Carrie Goar of Calgary's Myth Merchant Films begin principal photography in September for *Hitler's Stealth Bomber* (History Canada). If the Germans had had a few more months, the bomber of the title might have changed the course of the Second World War, and modern tests will attempt to prove the bat-winged craft is in fact the world's first 'stealth' fighter plane.

Burn Up, (Seven 24) the international co-production mini-series about the international oil industry aired earlier this summer on Global and the BBC. Seven 24 is also currently in production with a new drama series *The Wild Roses*, (CBC) bringing together Calgary's urban and rural worlds.

"It's obvious the Fund is interested in variety," says Managing Director Jane Bisbee.

"But if there's anything that characterizes all these projects, and demonstrates what the CAF is looking for, it's good storytelling."

The Canwest Alberta Fund guidelines and application forms are available at www.ipf.ca