IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Labatt donates “significant and valuable corporate archives” to The University of Western Ontario and, major art and artifact collection to Museum London

LONDON, ON (June 1, 2011) – Labatt Breweries of Canada is donating two of Canada’s most significant collections of historic corporate materials and art to The University of Western Ontario and to Museum London.

Today, Labatt’s President, Bary Benun, officially turned over The Labatt Brewing Company Archival Collection to Dr. Amit Chakma, President and Vice-Chancellor, The University of Western Ontario and the Labatt Material Culture Collection to Brian Meehan, Executive Director and Chief Curator of Museum London at Labatt’s brewery in London, Ontario.

Two decades before Canada attained nationhood, with Queen Victoria just a few years into her reign, John Kinder Labatt founded the enterprise that would become the globally recognized brewery that bears his name. This began an historical collection that would grow into the most significant and valuable corporate collections and archives in Canadian brewing industry history.

Bary Benun, President of Labatt, said, “This is the first historical collection in Canada to represent the brewing industry and we are very pleased to hand over its custodianship to The University of Western Ontario. This means that Labatt’s invaluable corporate legacy will be available to academics and the public alike, providing valuable insight into the brewing industry and business in general, industrial relations, the economy, society and work forces and labour relations of the past 164 years.”

He continued, “We are also delighted and proud to be able to add our artifacts and original art to the Museum London’s renowned collection where it is now accessible to all the people of London and Ontario.”

Among the most significant corporate archives donations, the two collections have been examined by the Canadian Cultural Property Export Review Board which determined them to be of “outstanding significance and national importance” and of “historical cultural significance.” The collections have been appraised at more than $8.3 million. The Labatt Brewing Company Archival Collection is now stored and managed within the Archives and Research Collection Centre at The University of Western Ontario. The Labatt Material Culture Collection will be available to the public at Museum London.

Until four years ago, the material that Labatt had gathered since its founding in 1847, along with other material (some of it from even earlier) acquired as a result of the acquisitions of various smaller Canadian breweries over the years, resided in tens of thousands of boxes, drawers and filing cabinets throughout the country.
With the help of professional archivists Labatt gathered, catalogued, itemized and organized virtually all its irreplaceable corporate documents. The materials illustrate the evolution of corporate governance and management models and include market research; commercial advertising which mirrors Canadian cultural values and trends; research, technology and engineering materials related to brewing processes and innovations; and iconic images of corporate branding, packaging and memorabilia. The collection also provides interesting and meaningful details on key phases in Labatt’s corporate history, including the origins of John Labatt’s brewery in London, John Labatt’s growth to a national brewer, the diversification of John Labatt Limited, and Labatt’s acquisition by Belgian-based Interbrew. The total Labatt Collection material required more than 2,600 boxes.

At the ceremony today, Labatt also donated $200,000 to The University of Western Ontario to assist them in digitizing portions of The Labatt Brewing Company Archival Collection. This will help preserve some of the key content of the collection and make it more accessible.

The material donated to Museum London – the Labatt Material Culture Collection – includes: original art, brewery artifacts and collectibles, and Labatt family memorabilia dating from 1850 to 2005. Each piece in the collection was created, designed or commissioned by Labatt. The original art includes works by renowned Canadian and international artists, photographers, sculptors including: A.J. Casson, Jean Paul Lemieux, Harold Town, Greg Curnoe, Robert Doisneau, Sigmar Polke, Tye Adla, Noah M. Anguhaluq, Barbara Astman, Iain Baxter, Aba Bayefsky, W. Roloff Beny, Brian Boigon, Simon Brascoupe, Robin Collyer, Alasua Amittuq Davidialuk, Mina Sala, Ikseetarkyuk, Suzy Lake, Norval Morrisseau, Neil Newton, Freda Pemberton-Smith, Peter Pitseolak, George Raab, Arnold Shives, Gordon Smith, Serge Tousignant, Bill Vazan, and George Zimbel.

“This is a unique opportunity for Western, especially because we are located in Labatt’s home town and have enjoyed a long relationship with the company,” said Amit Chakma, President of The University of Western Ontario. “In fact, we have benefited greatly from the generosity of the Labatt family and the corporation ever since the founding of our university in 1878. It is an honour to be associated with one of the Canada’s oldest companies, and to be entrusted with the stewardship of a rare and historical collection that has been preserved and maintained in such excellent condition.”

Brian Meehan, Executive Director and Chief Curator of Museum London said, “It is generous of Labatt to share their valuable Material Culture Collection with us. We look forward to sharing these works with the patrons of Museum London.”

Labatt, The University of Western Ontario and Museum London celebrated the donation with local government officials, The University of Western Ontario students and faculty, Museum London employees, local historians and artists, and current and retired Labatt employees at the John Kinder Labatt Room at the brewery.

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Note to Editors:
Historic photos, TV commercials and radio commercials are available at: http://www.labatthistoricgift.ca

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About Labatt Breweries of Canada
Labatt Breweries of Canada is one of the nation’s longest-established and most successful brewing companies. Today, the company is a proud member of Anheuser-Busch InBev, producing over 60 quality beers, employing 3,000 Canadians, and operating seven breweries from coast to coast.

About The University of Western Ontario
The University of Western Ontario is dedicated to advancing knowledge and transforming lives through teaching excellence and research. With more than 1,400 faculty members and 35,000 full-time and part-time students at 12 Faculties and 3 affiliated University Colleges, Western delivers an exemplary university experience by engaging the best and brightest students, faculty and staff. One of Canada’s top ten research-intensive universities, Western is recognized nationally and internationally for its contributions including in the areas of neuroscience, wind engineering, medical imaging, earth sciences and ethics in science that are driving discovery on the world stage.

About Museum London
Museum London is Southwestern Ontario’s leading establishment for the collection and presentation of visual art and material culture. Through public and educational programming, special events and exhibitions, Museum London strives to promote the knowledge and enjoyment of regional art, culture and history. At the heart of a great museum is its collection and Museum London is proud to have one of Canada’s most important art collections, and one of the most significant historical artifact collections in Ontario.