

TOPICS OF NATIONAL INTEREST FOCUS OF GEOGRAPHY AWARENESS WEEK 2009 IN CANADA

“Hockey is a popular topic for a lot of Canadians”, says Dr. Barry Wellar, Program Director for Geography Awareness Week in Canada, “but there are six other topics that are way more important to every Canadian on a day-to-day basis: weather and climate; water; energy; transportation; food and health; and geography.”

The year 2009 marks the third year that theme days have been the core of Geography Awareness Week in Canada, and Barry Wellar says that the unique Canadian approach has been a major success.

“First, we identified five topics that are of national interest to Canadians from coast-to-coast-to-coast, and south to the U.S. border. Every person in this country is affected every day by the weather and climate, the need for water, the need for energy, the need for transportation, and the need for food and health services. We give each topic its own theme day”

“Second, we make extensive use of the Internet to reach into communities and homes all over this country, which has more geography per capita than just about anywhere else. We select ten websites for each theme, and give them recognition as the Canadian websites that do an outstanding job of making the connection between geography and a theme topic.”

“And, third, these websites are operated by governments, businesses, advocacy groups, and so on, and we let them tell the story about how geography is important to them and their operations. This is a very different and very inclusive way of demonstrating the importance of geography to the themes, and to Canadians in all walks of life.”

Geography Awareness Week in Canada also features an Applied Geography Showcase and a Geoskills Showcase, which are innovative ways to make connections with GIS Day.

According to Professor Wellar, “The Internet is a marvellous way to tell the world what geographers do, and how they do it. There will be announcements in the near future inviting international contributions to the two Showcases”.

To visit the Canadian Association of Geographers very informative treatment of Geography Awareness Week, follow this link:

www.cag-acg.ca/en/geography_week.html