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Successful Video Game Developer Expands to Province

The Honourable Paul Oram, Minister of Business, today announced that Other Ocean Group Inc. (OOG), an accomplished video game development company based in California, has chosen to locate a new development studio in Newfoundland and Labrador.

"The Provincial Government is very pleased to support the establishment of this new and exciting business opportunity, which will result in the creation of many well-paying, skilled jobs in the province," said Minister Oram. "Other Ocean Group is a successful firm in a leading-edge, knowledge-based industry with significant potential for growth in North American and global markets – a welcome addition to our dynamic technology sector and just the kind of innovative, growth-oriented company that we want to attract to Newfoundland and Labrador."

The company's St. John's studio, which will operate under the name Other Ocean Interactive, will open this year with recruitment efforts beginning immediately. The studio will specialize in the hand-held, downloadable and small-scale console segments of the video game industry and will produce titles for many platforms such as the Apple iPhone, Nintendo DS™ and Wii™, and Microsoft's Xbox 360. Other Ocean Interactive develops licensed and original games for some of the industry's major publishers, such as Konami, Sega, Midway, and Disney Interactive. Most recently, Other Ocean partnered with SEGA of America to develop the highly-successful *Super Monkey Ball* for the Apple iPhone. The application is currently one of Apple's most popular downloads.

"We are tremendously pleased to be partnering with the province to help establish and grow the video game industry in Newfoundland and Labrador," said Andrew Ayre, owner and CEO of Other Ocean Group. "As Newfoundlanders, we know the determination and drive of the people and we are delighted to be bringing our industry experience home to create well-paying, long-term jobs."

Over a five-year period, the company plans to create 62 skilled jobs in the province that will include video game artists, designers, producers, programmers, and management staff.

The Provincial Government, through the Department of Business, worked to secure OOG's expansion to the province and will invest up to \$2.4 million over five years to assist the company in locating and staffing a studio and positioning itself to compete for global business opportunities. The funding will assist in offsetting initial start-up and

operating costs, including wages, relocation, recruitment, training and marketing, office space and leaseholds, and capital costs.

The arrival of Other Ocean Interactive to the province will also expand the presence of the video game development sector in Newfoundland and Labrador, an industry that worldwide is expected to grow from roughly \$42 billion in sales last year to over \$68 billion in 2012, with console games leading the way in growth, according to a recent PricewaterhouseCoopers report.

“Not only is this an accomplished company with a proven track record in a fast-growing sector; it is also owned and lead by Newfoundlanders and Labradorians,” said Minister Oram. “We are extremely pleased that this opportunity is bringing homegrown entrepreneurs back to invest in our province.”

The funding from the Provincial Government has been made available through the Business Attraction Fund, which was implemented in fiscal year 2007-08 to better enable the province to compete for new national and international inward business investment opportunities. The \$25 million Business Attraction Fund and accompanying \$3 million grants fund provide customized financial assistance in the form of loans and equity investments to companies interested in establishing or expanding operations in Newfoundland and Labrador.

- 30 -

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BACKGROUND

Other Ocean Group

Other Ocean Group (OOG) is a Canadian-owned and controlled company, based in California. The company has developed games and conducted quality assurance for such established publishers as Konami, Sega, Midway, and Disney Interactive, among others. Currently, its Canadian operations include a development studio under the Other Ocean brand and a quality assurance company, Sculpin QA - both are located on Prince Edward Island.

Other Ocean Group was founded in June of 2007 by video game veteran Andrew Ayre. Prior to Other Ocean, Andrew was well-known as a co-founder, co-President, and

Executive Director of Foundation 9 Entertainment, where he helped the company grow into the largest independent video game developer in North America. Andrew has overseen the establishment and growth of several successful video game companies since the early 1990s. He maintains a U.S. west coast business presence near the hub of the industry in Emeryville, California. Andrew is a graduate of Harvard University.

With extensive experience in the entertainment industry and small and medium sized business development, Deirdre Ayre took her place as Studio Head for Other Ocean after spearheading the establishment of its Prince Edward Island studio under Foundation 9 Entertainment, in 2006. In 2007, she was responsible for overseeing the establishment of OOG's video game testing company, Sculpin QA. She is involved with and responsible for all aspects of studio management for the two companies and has overseen the successful development of all video game titles and QA thus far. Deirdre is a graduate of Ryerson University.

Both Andrew Ayre and Deirdre Ayre grew up in Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada.

Other Ocean Group currently employs over 50 people who were hired from Atlantic Canada and internationally from locations such as the United States, South America, India and the United Kingdom.

Studio Credits

The Other Ocean team's first released title was the critically acclaimed *Castlevania™: Symphony of The Night™*, published by Konami on the Xbox LIVE™ Arcade platform. It earned Other Ocean two of 10 Xbox LIVE Awards from Microsoft® at the 2008 Game Developers Conference in San Francisco; Best Classic Game, and Highest Rated Game.

The studio's second achievement was the release of the exciting Midway franchise *Ultimate™ Mortal Kombat®* on the Nintendo DS™. The title was well-received by critics, and praised for its local and online multiplayer features. Soon to follow were the releases of two well-known games from the classic franchises, *TRON* and *Discs of Tron*, published by Disney Interactive on Xbox LIVE™ Arcade.

In July 2008, Other Ocean announced the creation of a specialized Apple iPhone development division within their Charlottetown, P.E.I. studio. This coincided with the release of its ground-breaking title on Apple's state of the art device, *Super Monkey Ball*, published by SEGA. As one of the original applications demoed at Apple's Roadmap event in March 2008, it helped Apple prove the iPhone to be a surprisingly powerful platform, able to support quality games with impressive sound and graphics. *Super Monkey Ball* sold over 300,000 copies in the first 20 days following its release. The game has continued to receive heaps of positive press both nationally and internationally since then and has helped position Other Ocean as a world leader in iPhone video game development.

The studio's next release was the PC hidden objects game, *Enchanted Fairies: Secret of the Fairy Queen*, published by ValuSoft. The game is currently on bigfishgames.com's top 100 PC games, sitting at number 15. It continues to receive praise from its fans.

Upcoming releases for Other Ocean Interactive include: *Ten Pin Alley 2*, published by XS Games for the Nintendo Wii; *Story Hour: Adventures*, and *Story Hour: Fairy Tales*, to be published by Zoo Games for the Wii. Other Ocean is also set to release an Atlantic Canadian inspired game named *Puffins: Island Adventure*, to be published by Majesco Entertainment for the Nintendo DS™. The game is set in Newfoundland and Labrador's Witless Bay Ecological Reserve and features music composition from Great Big Sea front man, Alan Doyle. Other Ocean has collaborated with several Newfoundland and Labrador companies in the development of the Other Ocean owned franchise.

Additionally, the studio is developing several other games that have yet to be announced.

2008 09 09