

# New Iceland 150

## A Documentary Record of the 2025 Commemorations

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**ABSTRACT:** In 2025, communities across Manitoba and Canada commemorated the 150th anniversary of the founding of New Iceland (*Nýja Ísland*), marking the arrival of Icelandic settlers on the western shores of Lake Winnipeg in 1875. This article documents the breadth of New Iceland 150 programming through a chronological account of public events, scholarly initiatives, exhibitions, tours, cultural celebrations, and digital heritage projects held throughout the anniversary year.

Drawing on community-based collaboration, academic scholarship, and international participation, the commemorations highlighted the historical foundations of Icelandic settlement while engaging with contemporary questions of migration, cultural continuity, language preservation, and relationships with Indigenous peoples. The events reflected New Iceland as a living legacy shaped by print culture, education, diplomacy, and intergenerational memory.

By situating local celebrations within provincial, national, and international contexts, this article demonstrates how the New Iceland 150 commemorations strengthened partnerships, expanded access to heritage materials, and reinforced the ongoing relevance of Icelandic language and culture in Canada. The anniversary year ultimately affirmed New Iceland not as a closed historical chapter, but as an evolving cultural inheritance connecting past, present, and future generations.

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## INTRODUCTION

In 2025, communities across Manitoba and beyond marked the 150th anniversary of the founding of New Iceland (*Nýja Ísland*), commemorating the arrival of Icelandic settlers on the western shores of Lake Winnipeg in 1875. This region, situated within Treaty One Territory and the homeland of the Red River Métis, is also part of the traditional lands of the Anishinaabe, Cree, Dakota, and Dene peoples, whose histories along Lake Winnipeg long predate Icelandic settlement. What began as a government-designated settlement area for Icelandic immigrants became a lasting centre of Icelandic language, culture, and community life in Canada, shaping the social, cultural, and economic landscape of Manitoba for generations.

The New Iceland 150 commemorations unfolded over the course of the year through an extensive program of public events, scholarly conversations, exhibitions, tours, and cultural celebrations. These initiatives reflected both historical inquiry and living tradition, engaging audiences of all ages while also addressing the complexities of migration, settlement, and relationships with Indigenous peoples. Together, they highlighted the resilience of early settlers, the vitality of Western Icelandic culture, and the ongoing importance of language, print, and storytelling in preserving collective memory. This article documents the breadth of New Iceland 150 programming, tracing the anniversary year from its opening events to its closing reflections. By bringing together community-based celebrations, academic scholarship, digital heritage projects, and international participation, the commemorations underscored how the legacy of New Iceland continues to evolve—woven into Manitoba’s diverse cultural fabric while maintaining deep and enduring ties to Iceland.

## FOUNDATIONS AND ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT

Preparations for the New Iceland 150 commemorations were the result of extensive collaboration among community, cultural, and diplomatic organizations across Manitoba and Canada. Key partners included the Icelandic Canadian Frón, the Canada Iceland Foundation, the Honorary Consulate of Iceland in Winnipeg, the Embassy of Iceland in Ottawa, the Gimli Icelandic Canadian Society, New Iceland Heritage Museum, The Icelandic Connection, Icelandic River Heritage Sites, the Icelandic National League of North America, Icelandic Camp, Travel Manitoba, Digital Museums Canada, and the Arborg & District Multicultural Heritage Village.

Together, these organizations coordinated a wide range of initiatives throughout the anniversary year, including exhibitions, guided tours, lectures, digital storytelling projects, educational programming, and community celebrations held across the province.

Heritage Objects, Souvenirs, and Digital Storytelling

The anniversary year was also marked by the creation and circulation of commemorative heritage objects and digital storytelling initiatives. Two lapel pins—featuring the Landing Mural and a “Since 1875” map motif—were produced and widely shared within the

community. Two commemorative beers titled New Iceland 150 were brewed specifically for the anniversary, one by Barn Hammer Brewing in Winnipeg's West End and the other by Interlake Brewing.

Several organizations produced additional commemorative materials for public engagement and fundraising, including T-shirts and stickers issued by the Icelandic Canadian Frón, Lögberg-Heimskringla, and the New Iceland Heritage Museum. Community members also contributed photographs, videos, and event documentation through the hashtag #newiceland150, creating an informal but valuable digital archive that now documents the scope, scale, and lived experience of the New Iceland 150 commemorations. *New Iceland 150: A Year of Commemoration and Community Events*

### **Icelandic Heritage Brunch (January 19)**

The Icelandic Heritage Brunch was held at the Scandinavian Centre in Winnipeg and hosted by the Icelandic Canadian Frón. The event welcomed approximately 75 attendees and featured information tables from Lögberg-Heimskringla, the New Iceland Heritage Museum, the Canada Iceland Foundation, the Icelandic Canadian Frón, the University of Manitoba's Icelandic Collection, and The Icelandic Connection. Together, these organizations highlighted Western Icelandic culture and promoted New Iceland 150 initiatives while fostering community connection and collaboration.

### **Gimli International Film Festival Women's Day Screening**

#### ***The Day Iceland Stood Still (March 8)***

On March 8, the Gimli International Film Festival hosted a special International Women's Day screening of *The Day Iceland Stood Still*. Directed by Pamela Hogan, the documentary examined the collective action taken by Icelandic women in 1975 and its lasting impact on gender equality. The screening contributed to New Iceland 150 programming by highlighting Iceland's social history and its relevance to contemporary conversations around women's rights and civic engagement.

#### **Government House Reception (April 24)**

A Government House reception was held on April 24, 2025, to acknowledge the volunteers and committees contributing to New Iceland 150. The event took place at Government House and included remarks from The Honourable Anita Neville, P.C., O.M., Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba.

In her address, the Lieutenant Governor acknowledged that the gathering was held on Treaty One territory and the homeland of the Red River Métis, and recognized that New Iceland is situated on the ancestral and treaty lands of the Anishinaabe, Cree, Dakota, and Dene peoples. She reflected on Manitoba's history as a place of refuge and resilience, noting the arrival of Icelandic settlers 150 years earlier amid volcanic devastation and harsh conditions.

The remarks highlighted the perseverance of the Icelandic community despite early challenges, including disease, crop failure, and economic hardship, and recognized their enduring contributions to Manitoba in the arts, sciences, business, public service, and agriculture. The Lieutenant Governor emphasized how Icelandic heritage has become an integral part of Manitoba's diverse cultural fabric and thanked the Icelandic Festival of Manitoba for organizing the celebration, as well as all those who continue to contribute their stories to the province's shared history.

### **Centennial Celebrations New Iceland/Aldarafmæli Nýja Ísland (May 1)**

The New Iceland Heritage Museum developed a special temporary exhibit titled Centennial Celebrations New Iceland/Aldarafmæli Nýja Íslands, which examined how Icelandic descendants marked New Iceland's centennial in 1975. Focusing on the 1970s, the exhibit reflected on a formative moment when many parents and grandparents of today's community members helped found or support the museum to preserve the story of New Iceland. Now, 150 years after settlement, with five, six, and even seven generations born in Manitoba, the exhibit reinforced the enduring links between generations and the continued relevance of shared memory.

### **Icelandic National League Convention, Gimli (May 1-4)**

The Icelandic National League of North America Convention was held in Gimli from May 1 to 4 and featured a diverse program of presentations, panels, exhibits, and cultural events. Highlights included the documentary *A Song for John Ramsey*, followed by a question-and-answer session with Andy Blicq, as well as contributions from representatives of the Icelandic National League of North America, the Icelandic Hekla Club of Minnesota, and The Snorri Programs.

Additional sessions and exhibits explored Icelandic history, language, storytelling, and community engagement. These included the *Njál's Saga Tapestry Exhibit* presented by Claudia Petursson; *Kæra dagbók: The Value of Journals in History* by Katrín Nielsdóttir; *The Icelandic Language in North America* by Kristín Margrét Jóhannsdóttir; *New Iceland: The First Settlers* by Ryan Eyfjord; and *The Day Iceland Stood Still* presented virtually by Pamela Hogan and Hrabba Gunnarsdóttir. Organizations such as Lögberg-Heimskringla, the New Iceland Heritage Museum, Icelandic Roots, the Icelandic Festival of Manitoba, the Icelandic National League of Iceland, Icelandic Camp, the Canada Iceland Foundation, and Iceland River Heritage Sites were also represented.

The convention's keynote speaker was Eliza Reid, and musical entertainment was provided by Sol James and an international cast featuring Richard Gillis.

The convention welcomed several dignitaries, including Icelandic Ambassador to Canada Hlynur Guðjónsson; Icelandic Honorary Consul in Winnipeg Vilhjálmur Wium; Manitoba's Lieutenant Governor Anita Neville; Icelandic Honorary Consul in Minnesota and North Dakota Jeannie Isfeld Entenza; Elder Ruth Christie of Selkirk; RM of Gimli Deputy Mayor Kurt Reichert; Selkirk–Interlake–Eastman MP James Bezan; and Interlake–Gimli MLA Derek Johnson.

### **New Iceland Bus Tour (May 4)**

A New Iceland Bus Tour was held on May 4, offering participants the opportunity to visit significant historical and cultural sites across the region.

Stops included the resting place of Betsey Ramsay, whose family—led by John Ramsay, a prominent member of a Saulteaux Indigenous community—played a crucial role in assisting early Icelandic settlers by sharing winter survival, hunting, and fishing knowledge.

The tour also included the Sigtryggur Jónasson Monument in Riverton, a life-sized bronze sculpture erected in 2012 honoring the “Father of New Iceland,” depicting Jónasson gazing across the Icelandic River toward the land he helped settle.

Participants visited the Engimýri Homestead, established in 1877 by Tómas Ágúst Jónasson and Guðrún Egidía Jóhannesdóttir, and later stops included Hecla and the Hecla Historic Village, which preserves buildings central to Icelandic settlement life, including homes, schools, churches, fishing infrastructure, and community spaces.

Additional destinations included Arborg and the Arborg & District Multicultural Heritage Village; the Riverton Walking Bridge, reflecting over a century of rebuilding in response to flooding; Viking Park in Gimli, developed as part of the Islendingadagurinn 125 legacy; and Tergesen’s General Store, Manitoba’s oldest operating general store and a longstanding cultural landmark.

The tour also highlighted interpretive sites such as the Icelandic Settlement Plaque in Gimli Town Park, Sugar Me Cookie Boutique featuring traditional vinarterta, the Lundi the Moose sculpture in Riverton, and the blue-and-white homestead marker signs installed by the Icelandic National League in the 1980s.

Further stops included Centennial Park in Riverton, Lunder, the Jóhann Magnús Bjarnason Monument—designated a municipal heritage site—and the Lunder Pioneer Museum, which preserves historic buildings, artifacts, and an Icelandic library documenting pioneer life.

### **Fjallkona 2025 – Gunnvör Danielsdóttir Ásmundsson (May 31)**

At the Fjallkona Brunch held on May 31, Gunnvör Danielsdóttir Ásmundsson, President of the Gimli Icelandic Canadian Society (GICS), was formally crowned Fjallkona for 2025. The ceremony recognized her leadership and contributions to the Icelandic community and marked a central cultural moment within the New Iceland 150 commemorations.

### **Jón Sigurðsson Day (June 17)**

Jón Sigurðsson Day programming on June 17 was jointly organized by the Icelandic Canadian Frón and the IODE Jón Sigurðsson Chapter and held at the Scandinavian Centre in Winnipeg. The event featured remarks by Vilhjálmur Wium of the Consulate of Iceland, as well as performances by traditional Scandinavian dancers.

On the same day, celebrations at the Icelandic Embassy in Ottawa included a reception at the official residence, where special attention was given to the 150th anniversary of New Iceland, highlighting its national and international significance.

### **Leifur Eiríksson Monument Unveiling, Québec City (July 14-15)**

Icelandic Ambassador to Canada Hlynur Guðjónsson travelled to Québec City to participate in the official unveiling of a new monument to Norse explorer Leifur Eiríksson. Located on the Sentier des Grèves overlooking the St. Lawrence River, the monument commemorates “Leifur the Lucky” as the first European to explore North America around the year 1000. Designed and constructed with support from Alcoa, Eimskip, and Icelandair, the project also symbolized Québec’s friendship with Iceland.

The unveiling was made possible through collaboration with the Commission de la capitale nationale du Québec, led by CEO André Roy, with support from Iceland’s Honorary Consul in Québec City, François Lefebvre. During the visit, Ambassador Guðjónsson met with senior officials from Québec’s Ministry of Economy, Innovation and Energy and the Ministry of International Relations and La Francophonie to discuss future cooperation. Topics included a potential visit by Iceland’s Aluminum Cluster (Álklasinn) and ongoing partnerships involving Icelandic organizations such as Carbfix, Carbon Recycling International, Laki Power, IceWind, Planet Youth, and Landsvirkjun, with broader opportunities identified in energy, cleantech, the blue economy, tourism, the Arctic, and arts and culture.

While in Québec City, the Ambassador also attended a Bastille Day reception hosted by the Consulat général de France à Québec.

### **Gimli International Film Festival (July 23-27)**

The Gimli International Film Festival marked its 25th anniversary from July 23 to 27, featuring Icelandic and Icelandic Manitoban film content as part of its programming. Founded on the belief that film has the power to educate, inspire, and empower, the festival continued its mission of advancing cultural literacy and honoring Manitoba’s diverse creative heritage through community engagement in the media, visual, and performing arts.

While the program emphasized local productions, it also included Icelandic films such as *Odd Fish* and *When the Light Breaks*, reinforcing GIFF’s long-standing connections to Icelandic storytelling and cultural exchange.

### **Icelandic Camp (July 27-August 1)**

Icelandic Camp was held from July 27 to August 1 and reached full capacity, with registrations exceeding available spaces by an additional ten participants. For more than thirty years, Icelandic Camp has brought together youth of Icelandic descent, fostering strong connections to language, history, and cultural traditions. Over six days, campers participated in Icelandic language activities, Viking crafts, storytelling, and outdoor

experiences, cultivating a deeper appreciation for their heritage while forming lasting friendships and connections to the land and Lake Winnipeg.

### **Reception at Consulate General of Iceland (July 31)**

Vilhjálmur Wium, Consul General of Iceland, and Mrs. Guðlaug Erlendsdóttir hosted a reception in honour of Her Excellency Halla Tómasdóttir, President of Iceland. The reception formed part of the President's official visit and underscored the significance of the New Iceland 150 commemorations within broader diplomatic and cultural relations between Iceland and Canada.

### **Presidential Visit to the Icelandic Collection (August 1)**

During her official visit to Manitoba, Her Excellency Halla Tómasdóttir, President of Iceland, toured the Icelandic Collection at the University of Manitoba. The visit highlighted the breadth and significance of the Collection's rare books, manuscripts, newspapers, and archival materials documenting Icelandic settlement and print culture in Canada.

The President expressed appreciation for the extensive work undertaken to preserve, catalogue, and provide access to these materials, recognizing the Collection's role in safeguarding Icelandic language, history, and cultural memory for future generations. The visit underscored the international importance of the Icelandic Collection and its contribution to the broader New Iceland 150 commemorations.

### **Sigtryggur Jónasson Exhibit Enhancement & Presidential Unveiling (August 1)**

On August 1, during the official visit of the President of Iceland, a new commemorative plaque honouring Sigtryggur Jónasson's role in bringing the Canadian Pacific Railway to Arborg in 1910 was unveiled. The enhancement complemented the existing seven-foot bronze statue recognizing Jónasson as the "Father of New Iceland."

The sculpture depicts Jónasson at age 23 upon his arrival at the Icelandic River in July 1875 with the scouting party that selected the settlement site. The monument affirms his significance as both a local founder and a figure of national historical importance.

### **Íslendingadagurinn / Icelandic Festival of Manitoba (August 1–4)**

Íslendingadagurinn, the Icelandic Festival of Manitoba, was held from August 1 to 4 as part of the August long weekend and formed a central pillar of the New Iceland 150 celebrations. The festival's theme, "Woven Together: 150 Years, Iceland and Canada / Ísland og Kanada samtengd í 150 ár," reflected the enduring cultural, historical, and community ties between the two countries.

Festival highlights included the Magnús Ver Magnússon Strongman Competition, hosted by four-time World's Strongest Man Magnús Ver Magnússon, as well as dignitary tours of historic sites such as Engimýri House and Fagriskógur House in Riverton. The festival welcomed Her Excellency Halla Tómasdóttir, President of Iceland, who delivered the Toast to Canada during the Traditional Program at Gimli Park, alongside Ambassador of

Canada to Iceland Jenny Hill, who presented the Toast to Iceland. Greetings were also offered by the 101st Fjallkona, Gunnvör Daníelsdóttir Ásmundsson, with additional attendance by Ambassador Hlynur Guðjónsson, Consul General Vilhjálmur Wium, and Manitoba Minister Nellie Kennedy.

New programming introduced for the 150th anniversary included the Moon Shine Nights Cocktail Reception (Tunglskinsnætur) at Johnson Hall and the inaugural Íslendinga-Derby fishing competition at Gimli Harbour. Returning favourites included the Viking Village, Icelandic Fashion Show—featuring the presentation of a new Fjallkona costume from the women of Iceland—the Art Show, cultural workshops, genealogy presentations, concerts, fireworks, parades, races, and extensive family programming throughout Gimli.

### **Heritage Pavilion (August 3-4)**

The Heritage Pavilion was held as part of Íslendingadagurinn and featured information tables from Icelandic clubs, organizations, and vendors. Participants promoted Icelandic and Western Icelandic culture and history, offering festival-goers opportunities to engage directly with community groups and learn more about the region's shared heritage.

### **The President's Reception (August 4)**

The President's Reception was held on August 4 at the Waterfront Centre and served as the closing event of the Icelandic Festival of Manitoba. Hosted annually by the Festival President, the reception included the President of Iceland in 2025 and provided an opportunity for invited guests to reflect on the festival and the significance of the New Iceland 150 celebrations.

### **Arborg & District Multicultural Heritage Village Special 150th Programming (August 5)**

On August 5, the Arborg & District Multicultural Heritage Village hosted a cross-cultural outdoor celebration honouring both the Indigenous peoples of the region and the arrival of the first Icelandic settlers in 1875. The program featured performances by the United Thunder Indigenous Dance Troupe, presentations by Annríki Þjóðbúningar og Skart showcasing Icelandic traditional dress, live music by Jason Lepine (fiddle) and Lionel Desjarlais (guitar and vocals), and an Indigenous ribbon skirt presentation. The event emphasized shared histories, cultural respect, and ongoing relationships.

### **Folklorama: Icelandic Pavilion (August 10 –16)**

The Icelandic Pavilion at Folklorama was held from August 10 to 16 with the theme Immigration. Programming highlighted stories of migration, resilience, and cultural continuity. Through food, music, dance, and interpretation, the pavilion explored how Scandinavian traditions—including Icelandic, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, and Finnish—have blended with Canadian life, emphasizing the lasting cultural impact of immigration.



### **Echoes of Asgard (August 28)**

Echoes of Asgard, an exhibition by artist Inga Torfadóttir, opened on August 28 in the Icelandic Reading Room on the third floor of the Elizabeth Dafoe Library. Presented by the University of Manitoba Libraries, the exhibition explored Nordic heritage through artwork inspired by Icelandic folklore, landscapes, and mythology. The exhibition was free and open to the public and offered a contemporary, personal interpretation of Icelandic cultural themes.

### **Culturama 150th Tribute (September 26, 2025)**

On September 26, a special New Iceland 150 tribute was presented by Svava Simundson as part of Culturama programming at the Arborg & District Multicultural Heritage Village. The event welcomed approximately 400 attendees and celebrated the region's diverse cultural history. The Heritage Village provided an interpretive setting showcasing historic buildings, artifacts, and stories representing Icelandic, Indigenous, Ukrainian, Polish, and other communities, reinforcing the village's role as both an educational museum and a living space for shared cultural memory.

### **New Iceland in Canada - 150th Anniversary Reflections (September 29)**

On September 29, a scholarly webinar titled New Iceland in Canada – 150th Anniversary Reflections was hosted by the Embassy of Iceland in Ottawa to coincide with the 150th anniversary of the founding of New Iceland. The webinar examined the establishment of Nýja Ísland in 1875, when Canada set aside land for Icelandic immigrants along the western shores of Lake Winnipeg—an episode recognized by Parks Canada as a distinctive chapter in the settlement of the Canadian West.

The program explored the push and pull factors behind Icelandic emigration in the 1870s, as well as emerging research on Icelandic settlers' relationships with Indigenous peoples. Presentations included contributions from Ólöf Garðarsdóttir, author of *The Icelandic Emigration to the Americas, 1860–1914: From an International Perspective*, and historian Ryan Eyford, whose work focuses on New Iceland and its historical legacy.

### **Lunch & Bus Tour of Icelandic Winnipeg (October 11, 2025)**

To mark the 150th anniversary of Icelandic settlement in Manitoba, the Icelandic Canadian Frón hosted a New Iceland 150 Winnipeg Tour on October 11. Led by historian and editor Stefán Jónasson, the guided bus tour traced the urban footprint of Icelandic immigrants and their descendants, highlighting the people, institutions, and spaces that shaped Winnipeg's Icelandic cultural life.

The tour began at the Independent Order of Good Templars Hall on Sargent Avenue and continued to sites commemorating figures such as William Stephenson, Dr. Paul Thorlakson, and Baldur Stefansson. Participants visited key cultural landmarks including First Lutheran Church, the former home of women's rights advocate Margret Benediktsson, the historic Columbia Block that housed Lögberg and Heimskringla, the Scandinavian

Cultural Centre, the Jón Sigurðsson Monument, and the Upper Fort Garry Gate. The itinerary also included former residences of Laura Goodman Salverson, Charlie Thorson, and Neil Bardal, as well as stops at the Icelandic Collection at the University of Manitoba and the Jón Bjarnason Academy.

### **Winnipeg Tour Photography Exhibition (October 11–November 16)**

The Canada Iceland Foundation supported the New Iceland 150 Winnipeg Tour through a grant that enabled professional photographic documentation of the project. Photographer Signý Thorsteinsson captured images of key sites along the tour route, creating a lasting visual record of Icelandic presence in Winnipeg.

The photographs were later framed and exhibited at the Scandinavian Cultural Centre from October 11 to November 16. The exhibition extended the reach of the tour beyond the day of the event and demonstrated the role of photography as an important tool for heritage documentation and interpretation.

### **Gala Fundraiser (October 19)**

The New Iceland Heritage Museum held its annual Gala Fundraiser on October 19 at the Johnson Hall Waterfront Centre. The evening combined dinner, entertainment, and a friendly competitive element, bringing community members together to celebrate and support the museum's work. The event included cocktails followed by dinner and served as an important opportunity to recognize the museum's achievements and ongoing role in preserving Icelandic heritage.

### **Signing Ceremony of a Memorandum of Understanding (October 21)**

A formal signing ceremony for a Memorandum of Understanding between the Rural Municipality of Gimli and Reykjavík City Hall, in partnership with the Town of Akureyri, was held virtually on October 21. The agreement aimed to strengthen cultural and municipal collaboration and marked both the 150th anniversary of the Icelandic landing in New Iceland and the 50th anniversary of the Gimli-Akureyri sister-city relationship.

### **Walk to the Rock (October 21)**

The annual Walk to the Rock took place on October 21 in Gimli to commemorate the anniversary of the Icelanders' first arrival in New Iceland. Participants gathered at the Waterfront Centre and walked to Willow Island, the site of the Big Rock Pioneer Memorial. The event concluded with refreshments and a gathering at the Waterfront Centre and remained a meaningful tradition within the Icelandic Canadian community's annual heritage observances.

### **Canada and Iceland in World War 1 and World War 2 (November 12)**

In the spirit of Remembrance Day, a webinar held on November 12 explored Icelandic-Canadian contributions to the First World War and the interactions between Icelanders and the Canadian Armed Forces in Iceland during the Second World War. The program featured presentations by Canadian and Icelandic scholars Madison Herget-Schmidt (University of Manitoba) and Karen Lilja Loftsdóttir (Queen's University). Hosted by the Embassy of Iceland in Ottawa, the webinar highlighted shared military histories and deepened understanding of Iceland-Canada connections during both global conflicts.

### **Icelandic Language Day (November 16)**

Icelandic Language Day on November 16 marked the official release of the full Icelandic-language version of *Our Valuable Inheritance: Icelandic Language Publishing in Manitoba*. The trilingual digital exhibition—presented in English, Icelandic, and French—had launched a soft release in August 2025 and was fully unveiled in Icelandic on this national day of linguistic celebration.

The exhibition features digitized manuscripts, newspapers, pamphlets, diaries, and personal documents, alongside contextual essays, transcripts, and detailed metadata. It provides an accessible foundation for understanding Icelandic print culture in Manitoba and served as a digital complement to the year's in-person *New Iceland 150* programming. The project traces the development of Icelandic-language publishing from the arrival of thousands of Icelandic migrants in North America between the early 1870s and the First World War. It documents how newspapers and printed materials helped settlers preserve their language, maintain cultural and spiritual connections, and adapt to life across Manitoba and the broader Icelandic diaspora. Opening remarks for the Icelandic Language Day programming were delivered by Vilhjálmur Wíium.

### **City Hall Luncheon (December 4)**

A City Hall Luncheon was held on December 4 to formally conclude the *New Iceland 150* anniversary year. The event brought together Manitoba-based Icelandic organizations for a city-wide gathering celebrating 150 years of Icelandic heritage in the province. Winnipeg Mayor Scott Gillingham attended the luncheon, which provided an opportunity to reflect on the year's commemorations and the enduring contributions of the Icelandic community in Manitoba.

## CONCLUSION

The New Iceland 150 commemorations demonstrated the depth, resilience, and continued relevance of Icelandic heritage in Manitoba and across Canada. Through a year of gatherings, scholarship, artistic expression, and community celebration, the anniversary honoured both the hardships and achievements of those who settled New Iceland in 1875, while also recognizing the generations that followed and the evolving contexts in which their stories are told.

Taken together, the events of 2025 revealed New Iceland not as a fixed historical moment, but as a living cultural legacy shaped by language, print culture, education, diplomacy, and community collaboration. The anniversary year also underscored the importance of engaging with complex histories, including relationships with Indigenous peoples, and of situating Icelandic settlement within broader narratives of migration, reconciliation, and shared stewardship of place.

As the commemorations concluded, the legacy of New Iceland 150 continued through strengthened partnerships, expanded digital access to heritage materials, and renewed public interest in Icelandic language and culture. These outcomes ensure that the story of New Iceland remains not only remembered, but actively carried forward—connecting past, present, and future generations in meaningful and enduring ways.

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