

Press Release

Touchstones Nelson
Museum of Art and History



Media contact:

Astrid Heyerdahl, Executive Director
Touchstones Nelson: Museum of Art and History
director@touchstonesnelson.ca
250-352-8200

For immediate release

Nelson's Cold War Bunker Opens to the Public

Nelson, BC (September 15, 2020): During the height of the Cold War, in the 1950s and 1960s, nearly 50 bunkers were constructed across Canada. Their purpose was to shelter up to 8,000 officials in the event of a nuclear war, and they were commonly found in secure locations in a well-constructed federal building, such as the Nelson Post Office.



Few people knew about the existence of Nelson's own bunker, until 2013 when Touchstones Nelson Museum began offering private tours. Since then the Museum board and staff have been working to preserve and prepare the space for public viewing. After many years of planning, the Cold War Bunker is opening to the public as a permanent museum exhibition and heritage site.

*Image: The stark furnishings of Nelson's Cold War Bunker are displayed.
Image: Touchstones Nelson Museum, 2019*

"The Touchstones Nelson team is thrilled that after renovations, the development of an exhibition and educational programming development, new collections storage, an updated HVAC system to meet museum-standards, updated washrooms, new lighting, and more, the Bunker will open in October! This project has been a tremendous team effort spanning many years. We have so many people to thank—past staff and Board members; current volunteers, Board and Staff; the Grey Building owners; the City of Nelson; our many funders, and more. We

look forward to welcoming you to the space.” says Astrid Heyerdahl, Executive Director of Touchstones Nelson Museum.

“It has been fascinating uncovering the story of this largely unknown part of Nelson's history,” says Jean-Philippe Stienne, Archivist and Collections Manager at Touchstones Nelson Museum. “I am delighted that we are able to finally share the secrets of the bunker with the community, and welcome visitors into this Cold War era time capsule of the 1960s.”

The exhibition explains the role of the bunker in the context of the extraordinary world wide tensions at that time. Among the items preserved from the original bunker, visitors can view a ‘Mobile Feeding Unit’, a self-contained ration kit that converted to a table; a Geiger counter, and many cold-war related items from the Touchstones Nelson collection, and on loan from other museums. The bunker kitchen and Civil Defence Coordinators Office have been recreated, and include many items that were originally found in the bunker.

“The current Board of Directors, as well as all past Board members, have been fully supportive of this incredible heritage project,” says Sheila Achilles, Chair of the Board. “We are greatly looking forward to opening the space to the public to offer more educational and history interaction. We are proud of the staff and volunteer team who has made this project happen”

The Bunker opens to the public on Saturday, October 17 at 2 pm, with a members-only showing from 11:30-2. Due to distancing restrictions, tours of 10 are booked for 30 minute time slots, which must be registered in advance by visiting [Eventbrite](#) or calling 250-352-9813.