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## **2016 CCIL Leadership Award Recognizes Public Service in Support of Fort Mac Wildfire Victims**

**EDMONTON (October 24, 2016)** – The Canadian Council of Independent Laboratories today announced the recipient of its 2016 Leadership Award.

Honoured for exceptional public service, the winner was chosen for her part in helping the victims of the wildfire in Fort McMurray this past summer.

The fire, fueled by high winds and a tinder-dry forest, raged into the city on May 3 and forced more than 80,000 residents to flee. In the ensuing weeks, the fire spread across northern Alberta and into Saskatchewan, eventually burning about 590,000 hectares. The Fort McMurray wildfire, which came to be known as the 'Beast', was the costliest disaster in Canadian history. It destroyed about 2,400 homes and buildings with damages estimated at \$3.5 billion.

“At the height of the evacuation, many people were leaving with little more than the clothes on their backs and often with nowhere to stay. It is against this backdrop that **Dr. Brenna Brown** was able to make such a positive difference,” said CCIL President Gordon Leaman in presenting her the award at an event in Edmonton.

As a disaster relief volunteer with Canadian Red Cross, Dr. Brown helped set up emergency reception centres and shelters in Calgary and Edmonton to handle the thousands of evacuees.

Her employer, Paracel Laboratories, generously granted her a paid leave of absence, and for the next two weeks Dr. Brown worked full time on coordinating the huge influx of displaced persons.

She had been a Red Cross volunteer on other disaster relief projects in the past, notably the Slave Lake fire of 2011 and the floods in 2013, but nothing on the scale of the 'Beast.'

Even after resuming to her job, Dr. Brown continued to volunteer at the reception centre until people started to return to Fort McMurray. She says she's motivated by the sense of community that emerges during these times of crisis, and by the outpouring of support from ordinary Canadians.

"Brenna, we're motivated by your commitment," Leaman said in congratulating the award winner.

The CCIL President also thanked the members and their employees who, like other Canadians all across this land, responded to the calamity by opening their hearts, their homes and their wallets. "They raised money for Red Cross, took in those who were homeless, and donated food and clothing. Companies helped in relocating people and supporting fundraising efforts," Leaman noted.

CCIL represents the private-sector, independent testing laboratories in Canada. With more than 330 facilities across the country, CCIL members play a vital role in helping to protect the quality and safety of our built and natural environments.

These laboratories provide a broad array of testing services, working in such fields as construction materials, manufactured goods, minerals, oil and gas, crops, food, air, water, soil and more. Day in and day out, members help safeguard Canadians from illness, disease, product failures, structural collapses, and many other threats.

CCIL established the Leadership Awards to recognize organizations and individuals who exemplify these same values – who demonstrate a commitment to public safety and go the extra mile in serving their communities.

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